

Committee for Finance and Personnel

Report on Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Public Sector Volume Two

Other Papers (*continued*) and Assembly Research Papers

Ordered by the Committee for Finance and Personnel
to be printed 4 March 2015

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Committee Powers and Membership

Powers

The Committee for Finance and Personnel is a Statutory Departmental Committee established in accordance with paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Belfast Agreement, Section 29 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and under Assembly Standing Order 48. The Committee has a scrutiny, policy development and consultation role with respect to the Department of Finance and Personnel and has a role in the initiation of legislation.

The Committee has the power to;

- consider and advise on Departmental budgets and annual plans in the context of the overall budget allocation;
- approve relevant secondary legislation and take the Committee Stage of primary legislation;
- call for persons and papers;
- initiate inquiries and make reports; and
- consider and advise on matters brought to the Committee by the Minister of Finance and Personnel.

Membership

The Committee has eleven members, including a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson, with a quorum of five members. The membership of the Committee during the current mandate has been as follows:

Mr Daithí McKay (Chairperson)¹

Mr Dominic Bradley (Deputy Chairperson)

Mrs Judith Cochrane

Mr Leslie Cree MBE

Ms Michaela Boyle²

Mr Paul Girvan

Mr John McCallister^{3 4}

Mr Ian McCrea^{5 6}

Mr Máirtín Ó Muilleoir^{7 8}

Mr Adrian McQuillan

Mr Peter Weir⁹

1 Mr Daithí McKay replaced Mr Conor Murphy MP with effect from 2 July 2012
 2 Ms Michaela Boyle replaced Ms Megan Fearon with effect from 2 December 2013
 3 Mr Roy Beggs replaced Mr Ross Hussey with effect from 23 April 2012
 4 Mr John McCallister replaced Mr Roy Beggs with effect from 15 October 2012
 5 Mr Ian McCrea replaced Mr David McIlveen with effect from 16 September 2013
 6 Mr David McIlveen replaced Mr David Hilditch with effect from 1 October 2012
 7 Mr Raymond McCartney replaced Mr Mitchel McLaughlin with effect from 6 October 2014
 8 Mr Máirtín Ó Muilleoir replaced Mr Raymond McCartney with effect from 10 November 2014
 9 Mr Peter Weir replaced Mr William Humphrey with effect from 1 October 2012

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AA	Administrative Assistant
AO	Administrative Officer
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CCMS	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
CIPD	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
CHR	Corporate Human Resources
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DCAL	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
DE	Department of Education
DEL	Department for Employment and Learning
DETI	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
DoE	Department of the Environment
DFP	Department of Finance and Personnel
DHSSPS	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
DoJ	Department of Justice
DRD	Department for Regional Development
DSD	Department for Social Development
ELB	Education and Library Board
FSA	Food Standards Agency
GB	Great Britain
GMI	Grant Maintained Integrated
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs
HR	Human Resources
HRPTS	HR, Payroll, Travel and Subsistence Reporting System
HSC	Health and Social Care
IME	Irish Medium Education
IPH	Institute of Public Health in Ireland
LPAA	Lifestyle and Physical Activity Assessment
MHFA	Mental Health First Aid
MLAs	Members of the Legislative Assembly
NI	Northern Ireland
NIAO	Northern Ireland Audit Office
NICS	Northern Ireland Civil Service
NIPSA	Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
OHS	Occupational Health Service
OFMDFM	Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister
PfG	Programme for Government
PPS	Public Prosecution Service
PSG	Permanent Secretaries Group
RaISe	NI Assembly Research and Information Services
RTU	Regional Training Unit
SART	Sickness Absence Recording Tool
VES	Voluntary Exit Scheme
VG	Voluntary Grammar
WELL Programme	NICS approach to promoting health and wellbeing for staff



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Appendix 5

Other Papers (*continued*)

WCPA Report on Substitution Cover for Teachers 2002-2003



House of Commons
Committee of Public Accounts

The management of substitution cover for teachers

**Twenty-seventh Report of Session
2002-03**

HC 473



House of Commons
Committee of Public Accounts

The management of substitution cover for teachers

**Twenty-seventh Report of Session
2002–03**

*Report, together with formal minutes, oral and
written evidence*

*Ordered by The House of Commons
to be printed 4 June 2003*

HC 473
Published on 27 June 2003
by authority of the House of Commons
London: The Stationery Office Limited
£0.00

The Committee of Public Accounts

The Committee of Public Accounts is appointed by the House of Commons to examine "the accounts showing the appropriation of the sums granted by Parliament to meet the public expenditure, and of such other accounts laid before Parliament as the committee may think fit" (Standing Order No 148).

Current membership

Mr Edward Leigh MP (*Conservative, Gainsborough*) (Chairman)
 Mr Richard Bacon MP (*Conservative, South Norfolk*)
 Mr Ian Davidson MP (*Labour, Glasgow Pollock*)
 Geraint Davies MP (*Labour, Croydon Central*)
 Rt Hon Frank Field MP (*Labour, Birkenhead*)
 Mr Nick Gibb MP (*Conservative, Bognor Regis and Littlehampton*)
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 Mr Gerry Steinberg MP (*Labour, City of Durham*)
 Jon Trickett MP (*Labour, Hemsworth*)
 Rt Hon Alan Williams MP (*Labour, Swansea West*)

The following was also a member of the Committee during the period of this inquiry.

Angela Eagle MP (*Labour, Wallasey*)

Powers

Powers of the Committee of Public Accounts are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 148. These are available on the Internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publications

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including press notices) are on the Internet at http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/committee_of_public_accounts.cfm. A list of Reports of the Committee in the present Session is at the back of this volume.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee is Nick Wright (Clerk), Leslie Young (Committee Assistant) and Ronnie Jefferson (Secretary).

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk, Committee of Public Accounts, House of Commons, 7 Millbank, London SW1P 3JA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 5708; the Committee's email address is pubacom@parliament.uk.

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Summary

The education system depends heavily on substitute teachers providing cover for the absence of colleagues to maintain the smooth running of its schools. This dependence has been increasing in recent years. On average, pupils in Northern Ireland's schools spend approximately 10% of their school year being taught by teachers providing substitution cover.

In 2000–01 substitution cover in Northern Ireland cost £38 million and equated to an additional 1,735 full-time teachers. £24 million was paid by schools, principally on short-term sickness absences, maternity cover and cover for vacant posts. The remaining £14 million, met by the Boards and the Department, was for long-term sickness and absences due to teacher training. Expenditure on teaching staff providing substitution cover has risen rapidly over recent years, increasing by 29% in real terms since 1996–97. In addition just over £1 million was spent in 2000–01 on temporary teachers sourced through employment agencies.

On the basis of a Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General¹ the Committee took evidence from the Department of Education (Northern Ireland), the Education and Library Boards and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools on three main issues: assuring the quality of substitute teaching; the re-employment of prematurely retired teachers; and the management of teacher attendance at school.

The over-riding impression the Committee formed about the management of teacher substitution and sickness absence in Northern Ireland is one of complacency. While the need for substitution cover has been growing steadily over recent years and sickness absence is currently running at alarmingly high levels among teachers, we found that sufficient attention has not been given to these issues as key management priorities. There are three areas which we consider require particular attention.

- **Lack of review of substitute teaching**

The central concern about the use of substitution cover is how such teaching will affect the quality of pupils' education. In view of this, the Committee found it surprising that the Department's School Inspectorate had not undertaken an evaluation of the management and effectiveness of substitute teaching. We consider that the lack of attention to these issues could compromise the quality of experience which pupils have in the classroom. We note that the Inspectorate intends to carry out a review of substitute teaching during the 2003–04 school year and we wish to be kept informed of the outcome of this exercise.

- **Inadequate control over the premature retirement of teachers**

The Committee is disturbed that the Department's failure to live up to undertakings given to our predecessor Committee in 1992 may have led to substantial resources being

¹ C&AG's Report, *The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers* (NIA 53/02, Session 2002–03)

unnecessarily committed. Given the high level of redundancies in recent years, a requirement that retraining and redeployment of teachers should always be considered before redundancy decisions are finalised, appears to have been largely ignored. In response to our questions, it has been estimated, using what we regard as conservative assumptions, that the establishment of a redeployment “pool” of teachers instead of approving their redundancies could have yielded savings in the order of £3.6 million in 1999–2000. In addition to this, despite an assurance that the re-employment of prematurely retired teachers would be limited to exceptional cases, we found that the practice had actually increased during the same four-year period.

- **Ineffective management of sickness absence**

The health record of teachers can have an important influence on the behaviour and performance of children. The reasons for this range from the ability of teachers to provide positive role models for their pupils to the potentially serious impact on a child’s education, if continuity in teaching and learning is broken. Teachers in Northern Ireland took on average 10 working days sickness absence in 2000–01, ranging from 6.8 working days’ to 14.7 across regions and school sectors. This compares with an average sickness absence rate of 6 days per teacher in England. The Committee believes that these statistics indicate that the management of sickness absence among teachers has not been accorded sufficient priority within the education system. For instance, no targets have been set to bring sickness levels down or into line with England. It is essential that teachers’ health problems are identified and acted upon and that greater commitment is shown towards managing sickness absence more effectively. Strategies that have a clear impact on reducing teacher absences have the potential to save millions of pounds in salaries paid to absent teachers and to reduce the costs of substitute cover.

1 Assuring the quality of substitute teaching

1. We were surprised to find that the Department's Education and Training Inspectorate had not undertaken a separate review of the quality of substitute teaching within Northern Ireland schools. Instead, the Department told us that if substitute teachers were in a school at the time of an inspection their teaching would be inspected as part of that process. The evidence from the annual inspection programme was that substitute teaching was not identified as a particular problem area.² By contrast, we note that a recent report by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED)³ has focussed attention on the question of the quality of supply teachers in England; for example, it found that the quality of some pupils' work had declined in approximately half of the secondary schools it inspected as a result of being taught by temporary teachers for a significant period of time. Moreover, it found that temporary teachers teach a higher proportion of unsatisfactory or poor lessons than permanent teachers; twice as many in primary schools and four times as many in secondary schools.

2. There also appears to be some divergence between the view of the Inspectorate on the quality of substitute teachers and that of schools. Half of the schools surveyed for the Comptroller and Auditor General's report felt that there were usually not enough or never enough good quality substitute teachers available.⁴ Similarly, the Committee noted the statistical analysis carried out by the Department for the C&AG's Report which indicates some link between the use of substitute teachers and reduced pupil attainment levels.⁵

3. The Committee notes that school inspection in Northern Ireland has less independence than its counterparts in England and Wales where it is carried out by OFSTED—a non-ministerial government department. In Scotland also, the Inspectorate has been established as an executive agency. We are concerned that in Northern Ireland, the Inspectorate's status may mean that its relationship with the Department has become too cosy which may have implications for how it approaches issues such as substitute teaching.

4. While the shortage of good substitute teachers was seen by many schools to be a problem, we note from the Comptroller and Auditor General's Report that there are weaknesses in what is offered to substitute teachers in order to improve their performance in terms of induction, training and performance appraisal.⁶ Furthermore, we consider it a serious shortcoming that few schools carry out a formal evaluation of the performance of substitute teachers.⁷

² C&AG's Report, para 2.42; Qq 2–4

³ OFSTED Report, *Schools' use of temporary teachers* (HMI 503, December 2002)

⁴ C&AG's Report, para 2.40; Qq 4–5

⁵ C&AG's Report, para 2.53 and Appendix 3

⁶ *ibid*, paras 2.25, 2.35, 2.46

⁷ Q 6

6

5. The C&AG's Report draws attention to a marked increase in the use of recruitment agencies as a source of teachers to provide substitution cover. The regulation of those agencies needs to be rigorous. Recent research in England has raised concern over the failure of some agencies to carry out basic checks on teachers.⁸ In the Committee's view the use of agencies simply mirrors the centralised "pooling" system operated by the Boards prior to the introduction of local management arrangements. We were told that the Department and the Boards intend to use new technology with a view to piloting the establishment of a Substitute Teachers' Register which schools could access to meet their substitution needs.⁹

⁸ C&AG's Report, paras 2.18-2.19

⁹ Q 101

2 Re-employment of retired teachers

6. We pressed the Department on the high level of premature retirements among teachers—70% of all retirements in 1999–2000—and whether it was convinced that these were all justifiable. The Department pointed to a reduction in the percentage of teachers who retired early in the interests of the efficient discharge of the employer’s function, but said that significant numbers of teachers were now being affected by redundancy as a result of a number of factors such as falling school rolls and movements of population.¹⁰ We found the Department’s explanation unconvincing. We note with some concern that the statistics suggest that efficient discharge cases may have simply been re-categorized as redundancy cases over the course of recent years;¹¹ moreover, the Department’s explanation that high levels of early retirement among teachers are forced on employers by falling school roles does not stand up to close scrutiny. The statistics presented in the C&AG’s Report clearly indicate that the number of permanent teachers within the system has remained constant during recent years.¹²

7. We also find it difficult to accept that the 50% of teachers who retire early for reasons other than infirmity are not needed in the education system. The C&AG’s Report shows that the need for substitute teachers has been growing significantly.¹³ Redundancies among teachers between 1996–97 and 2000–01 have meant that the taxpayer has paid expensive enhancements to dispose of a quarter of a million teaching days, only to see many of these teachers re-engaged by schools as substitutes.¹⁴ In view of the savings made by some English education authorities that have established redeployment “pools” of teachers on which schools can draw to meet their substitution needs, we asked the Department and the C&AG whether any costing of such an option had been attempted.¹⁵ According to figures supplied by the Department,¹⁶ a typical enhancement could comprise the following elements:

	£
Pension enhancement	2,455
Lump Sum	7,367
Statutory redundancy payment	<u>15,317</u>
	25,139

During 1999–2000, 286 redundancies were approved, however, the Department pointed out that it was very unlikely that all of these redundant teachers could have been redeployed. For instance, due to family circumstances, it would be unreasonable to expect

¹⁰ Qq 7–8

¹¹ Q22; C&AG’s Report, Appendix 4

¹² C&AG’s Report, para 2.1, Figure 3; Qq 102–105

¹³ C&AG’s Report, para 1.4, Figure 1; Q 23

¹⁴ Qq 104–105

¹⁵ Qq 33–41

¹⁶ Ev 14

some teachers proposed for redundancy to relocate, while it is unlikely that there would be an exact match between teachers' qualifications/experience and available posts. Moreover, the Department also said that potential savings from redeployment would be offset to some extent by the cost differential of retaining older teachers on higher salaries and the administrative costs of managing a redeployment pool. However, as a broad indicator of potential savings, if it is assumed that 50 % of the teachers made redundant in 1999–2000 would be redeployed, then annual savings would be around £3.6 million.¹⁷

8. The Department also indicated that to introduce such a system would require legislative change. The Committee takes the view that the potential savings which a re-deployment pool could generate far outweigh cost offsets and we consider that a legislative barrier should not be an impediment to bringing arrangements into line with Great Britain.

9. We are incredulous at the Department's suggestion that redundancies in schools are fuelled by a need to protect young teachers from compulsory redundancy. We find it hard to see how strategic planning can be at all effective if older teachers have to be given expensive redundancy packages in order that younger teachers can be employed. In our view operating such a system amounts to little more than throwing taxpayers' money down the drain and demonstrates that the whole process of managing teachers totally lacks a proper strategic overview.¹⁸

10. In redundancy cases the decision to retire a teacher proposed by a school rests with the employing authorities—the Boards and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, the Boards being responsible for meeting the additional compensation costs. Following a Report by this Committee in 1992,¹⁹ the Department reminded employers that re-training and redeployment options should always be considered before decisions on redundancy are finalised. Moreover, it also gave an undertaking that the School Inspectorate would monitor and evaluate the assessment by schools of teachers proposed for redundancy.²⁰ Given the high level of teaching redundancies in recent years, the Committee finds it difficult to believe that the feasibility of redeployment has been adequately assessed as part of the necessary only for the teacher to be almost immediately re-employed as a substitute.²¹

11. The Department advised employers in 1984 and 1988 that teachers who had been retired prematurely should be re-employed only in exceptional circumstances. The Report by our predecessor Committee in 1992 also called on the Department to ensure that this guidance was observed. The C&AG found that as a proportion of all temporary days, those worked by prematurely retired teachers have actually risen from 10% to over 13% between 1996–97 and 2000–01.²² We are concerned that this may indicate that young teachers are being squeezed out of permanent employment opportunities. Statistics produced for the Committee by the Department show that three years after graduation two-thirds of newly

17 Ev 16

18 Qq 24–27, 104–105

19 17th Report from the Committee of Public Accounts, *Department of Education Northern Ireland: Premature Retirement of Teachers* (HC 84, Session 1992–93)

20 Department of Finance and Personnel, Memorandum on the 17th and 18th Reports from the Committee of Public Accounts, (Cm 226, Session 1992–93), paras 10–11

21 Q 57

22 C&AG's Report, paras 3.6–3.8

qualified teachers have secured permanent positions, leaving one-third on temporary contracts.²³

²³ Ev 15-16

3 The management of sickness absence

12. Teachers in Northern Ireland took on average 10 working days sickness absence in 2000–01. There is also a wide variation in teacher absence between regions and sectors within Northern Ireland ranging from 6.8 working days to 14.7.²⁴ In general, sickness absence in Northern Ireland is significantly higher than the average 6 days taken by teachers in England. In particular, the Committee found it difficult to understand why the number of sick days per teacher in Northern Ireland should be double that in London. The main explanation offered by the Department centred on the sick leave taken by female teachers as a result of childbirth and the fact that, in Northern Ireland, females make up a higher proportion of the teaching workforce. However, when we explored this issue in more depth with the Department it was accepted that extended maternity leave was only one of many factors involved.²⁵ What those other factors are was not explained to the Committee's satisfaction.

13. There are big financial gains to be made by reducing the high level of sickness absence among teachers. For instance, if sickness absence was reduced to the equivalent levels in Great Britain, pro rata savings on substitute teachers would be approximately £4 million, while the teaching and learning benefits of £6 million worth of permanent teachers' time would not be lost to the classroom. The Department has yet to set targets for reducing sickness absence among teachers in order to try and bring it into line with levels in England.²⁶

14. We questioned the extent to which the variations in sick leave within the Northern Ireland school system had been investigated by the Department. The Department has not undertaken any specific investigation of this but told the Committee that it had carried out a survey into the health and well-being of teachers in Northern Ireland.²⁷ We welcome the fact that through this exercise the Department has identified some effective practices for managing sickness absence which it considers it can learn from.

15. There is a need for the Northern Ireland teachers' employers to explore the potential for making counselling services available to teachers as a way of tackling sickness absence.²⁸ The Department told the Committee that the survey of teachers' health and well being had supported its approach of trying to develop new practices and methodologies through schools in order to address the problems of teacher sickness and absence.²⁹

24 C&AG's Report, paras 4.4–4.5

25 Qq 10, 46, 67–77

26 C&AG's Report, paras 4.7, 4.14–4.23; Q 53

27 Qq 44–45; Department of Education, *The Northern Ireland Teachers' Health and Wellbeing Survey* (PriceWaterhouseCoopers, December 2002)

28 C&AG's Report, para 4.28

29 Q 53

4 Availability and reliability of management information

16. The primary source of information about substitute cover and sickness absence is derived from the Department's payroll and personnel system. However, the system was not specifically designed to support the management of these two elements. The C&AG's Report points out that, while the Department has set up an extensive menu of reports which can be accessed to explore aspects of sickness absence, employers had expressed a need for greater access and the ability to use information to provide more meaningful monitoring reports.³⁰

17. We noted that, where a school does not provide the Department with a reason for the absence of a permanent teacher, the related period of substitution is classified on the system as being cover for a vacant post. Recognising the limitations of the payroll and personnel system as a tool for managing substitution, the Department told us that it is currently looking at implementing a new management information system to take account of such deficiencies.³¹

³⁰ C&AG's Report, paras 4.15–4.16

³¹ Qq 107–112

Conclusions and recommendations

Assuring the quality of substitute teaching

1. Given that substitute teachers constitute a much larger proportion of the teaching workforce in Northern Ireland than England, the Committee is surprised that the Inspectorate has not addressed the issue of substitute teaching earlier. The Department has assured us that it has now commissioned the Inspectorate to undertake a review and this will take place during the 2003–04 academic year.
2. We believe that greater independence from the Department would improve the Northern Ireland Inspectorate’s standing both within and beyond the education community.
3. There should be better mechanisms in place to support substitute teachers. We find it remarkable that substitute teachers can be put in regular charge of classes without proper induction, training and performance evaluation. We are pleased that the Department is to give serious consideration to formalising the evaluation of substitute teachers and we look forward to it taking prompt action on the outcome of its deliberations.
4. The Committee stresses that the regulation of employment agencies supplying teachers needs to be robust. We also welcome the fact that the Boards will be establishing a pilot scheme to examine the cost/benefits of setting up their own “pooling” arrangements whereby head teachers could access a centralised database to book substitute teachers on-line.

Re-employment of retired teachers

5. The manner in which the Department has operated the Teachers’ Premature Retirement Scheme has led to a massive drain on educational resources. There must be higher priority uses for this money in a region such as Northern Ireland rather than handing out bounties to teachers who still have a contribution to make to the schooling system. In allowing teachers to pursue an early retirement strategy which is lucrative to them but at the expense of the taxpayer, the Department is failing in its duty as a custodian of the public purse. The Committee pointed out to the Department the savings made by some English education authorities that have established redeployment “pools” of teachers. We recommend, therefore, that the Department should examine thoroughly the cost/benefits of establishing redeployment “pools” of teachers in order to decide whether to take powers to facilitate their introduction within the Boards.
6. We are concerned that the Department is failing to adequately assess its teaching requirements. The witnesses did not convince us that they had the strategic overview which we believe is essential for effective planning of teacher numbers and the proper management of substitution and absenteeism. We recommend that the Department comes to an early decision about the teaching workforce it needs and takes urgent action to strengthen its strategic planning to achieve it.

7. One of the most disturbing features to emerge from this session is that the Department has not been successful in complying with undertakings it gave to this Committee in 1992 that strict controls would be exercised over the re-employment of teachers who had benefited from premature terms and that the process for approving redundancies would be suitably policed. We do not expect to revisit these issues eleven years later only to find that the situation has actually deteriorated. We expect the Department to take firm steps to ensure that employers give the proper degree of preference to unemployed teachers before considering re-employing those who have been retired with enhanced terms. We acknowledge that two-thirds of newly qualified teachers achieve permanent posts within three years of graduation. However, for the remainder, there remains a strong suspicion that their permanent employment is being displaced by long-term substitution among prematurely retired teachers. In this regard, we recommend that the Inspectorate re-establishes its role in the monitoring and evaluation of the premature retirement of teachers. In view of the Department's poor record of action, we are asking the C&AG to give particular attention to monitoring these issues.

Managing sickness absence

8. Sickness absence rates among teachers in Northern Ireland are much higher than their counterparts in England and the Committee is disturbed that the Department has failed to set targets for their reduction. We recommend that the Department develops an action plan and establishes sickness reduction targets aimed at achieving the savings identified in the C&AG's Report.
9. In the Committee's view, reducing sickness absence is not rocket science. The Department needs to explore with the employers and schools the reasons for high sickness absence rates and ensure that Boards and schools benchmark their management practices against those with better records, both within Northern Ireland and across Great Britain, in order to identify and remedy their deficiencies.
10. The Committee agrees that teachers' employers should pilot the use of counselling services in schools. We recommend that they and the Department should promptly review the results of the pilots and expand the provision of these services where there is a clear business case for doing so.
11. It appears that a culture of high absenteeism may have been allowed to develop in some parts of the teaching workforce in Northern Ireland, which gives rise to a particular concern about how this will impact on pupils' learning. Even if teacher absenteeism does not induce similar behaviour among pupils, it is clear that schools and the education system in general have a key role to play if this culture is to be changed.
12. We were told by the Treasury Officer of Accounts that the high rates of sickness absence among teachers are mirrored throughout the public sector in Northern Ireland. This is an obvious concern to us and we have asked that the C&AG reports back to the Committee on this in due course.

14

Availability and reliability of management information

13. A basic step in managing both teacher substitution cover and sickness absence would be to establish accurate and comprehensive information on their levels, patterns and costs. The Department needs to take urgent action to ensure that improved recording arrangements are introduced so that reliable and easily accessible data is available on the use of substitution cover and the nature of sickness absence.

Formal minutes

Wednesday 4 June 2003

Members present:

Mr Edward Leigh, in the Chair

Mr Brian Jenkins
Mr George Osborne
Mr David Rendel

Mr Gerry Steinberg
Jon Trickett
Mr Alan Williams

The Committee deliberated.

Draft Report (The management of substitution cover for teachers), proposed by the Chairman, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the Chairman's draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 17 read and agreed to.

Conclusions and recommendations read and agreed to.

Summary read and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Twenty-seventh Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chairman do make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That the provisions of Standing Order No. 134 (Select Committees (Reports)) be applied to the Report.

Adjourned until Monday 9 June at 4.30 pm

Witnesses

Wednesday 26 February 2003

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Mr Gerry McGinn and **Mr John Caldwell**, Department of Education (Northern Ireland), **Mr Donal Flanagan**, Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, and **Mr Jackie Fitzsimons**, South Eastern Education and Library Board

Ev 1

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Fourth Report	Private Finance Initiative: redevelopment of MOD Main Building	HC 298 (<i>Cm 5789</i>)
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Eleventh Report	Facing the challenge: NHS emergency planning in England	HC 545 (<i>Cm 5802</i>)
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Twenty-first Report	The operations of HM Customs and Excise in 2001–02	HC 398
Twenty-second Report	PFI refinancing update	HC 203
Twenty-third Report	Innovation in the NHS—the acquisition of the Heart Hospital	HC 299
Twenty-fourth Report	Community Legal Service: the introduction of contracting	HC 185
Twenty-fifth Report	Protecting the public from waste	HC 352
Twenty-sixth Report	Safety, quality, efficacy: regulating medicines in the UK	HC 505

The reference number of the Treasury Minute to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number

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Twenty-seventh Report	The management of substitution cover for teachers	HC 473
Twenty-eighth Report	Delivering better value for money from the Private Finance Initiative	HC 764

The reference number of the Treasury Minute to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number

Public Accounts Committee follow up report on The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers

Public Accounts Committee

The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-Up Report

Together with the Minutes of Proceedings of the Committee
relating to the Report and the Minutes of Evidence

Ordered by The Public Accounts Committee to be printed 4 November 2010
Report: NIA 20/10/11R Public Accounts Committee

**REPORT EMBARGOED
UNTIL 00.01 AM ON
Thursday 25 November 2010**

Session 2010/2011

Second Report

Committee Powers and Membership

The Public Accounts Committee is a Standing Committee established in accordance with Standing Orders under Section 60(3) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. It is the statutory function of the Public Accounts Committee to consider the accounts, and reports on accounts laid before the Assembly.

The Public Accounts Committee is appointed under Assembly Standing Order No. 56 of the Standing Orders for the Northern Ireland Assembly. It has the power to send for persons, papers and records and to report from time to time. Neither the Chairperson nor Deputy Chairperson of the Committee shall be a member of the same political party as the Minister of Finance and Personnel or of any junior minister appointed to the Department of Finance and Personnel.

The Committee has 11 members including a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson and a quorum of 5.

The membership of the Committee since 9 May 2007 has been as follows:

Mr Paul Maskey ⁵ (Chairperson)
Mr Roy Beggs (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Gregory Campbell MP ¹⁶	Mr John Dallat
Mr William Irwin ¹⁴	Mr Trevor Lunn
Mr Patsy McGlone ^{2 & 8}	Mr Mitchel McLaughlin
Mr Adrian McQuillan ¹⁵	Mr Stephen Moutray ¹²
Ms Dawn Purvis	

- 1 Mr Mickey Brady replaced Mr Willie Clarke on 1 October 2007
- 2 Mr Ian McCrea replaced Mr Mickey Brady on 21 January 2008
- 3 Mr Jim Wells replaced Mr Ian McCrea on 26 May 2008
- 4 Mr Thomas Burns replaced Mr Patsy McGlone on 4 March 2008
- 5 Mr Paul Maskey replaced Mr John O'Dowd on 20 May 2008
- 6 Mr George Robinson replaced Mr Simon Hamilton on 15 September 2008
- 7 Mr Jim Shannon replaced Mr David Hilditch on 15 September 2008
- 8 Mr Patsy McGlone replaced Mr Thomas Burns on 29 June 2009
- 9 Mr David Hilditch replaced Mr George Robinson on 18 September 2009
- 10 Rt Hon Jeffrey Donaldson replaced Mr Jim Wells on 18 September 2009
- 11 The Lord Browne replaced Rt Hon Jeffrey Donaldson on 19 April 2010
- 12 Mr Stephen Moutray replaced Mr Jonathan Craig on 19 April 2010
- 13 Mr Jim Shannon resigned from the Public Accounts Committee on 1 August 2010
- 14 Mr William Irwin replaced Mr David Hilditch on 13 September 2010
- 15 Mr Adrian McQuillan replaced The Lord Browne on 13 September 2010
- 16 Mr Gregory Campbell MP was appointed as a member of the Committee on 13 September 2010

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The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-Up Report

List of Abbreviations used in the Report

C&AG	Comptroller and Auditor General
DE/the Department	Department of Education
ESA	Education and Skills Authority
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate
LMS	Local Management of Schools
PAC	Public Accounts Committee
TOA	Treasury Officer of Accounts

Executive Summary

1. In 2003 the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) at Westminster reported that there was ineffective management of teachers' sickness absence, inadequate control over the re-employment of prematurely retired teachers and a lack of a review of substitute teaching in Northern Ireland. The Department of Education accepted the Committee's conclusions and indicated that a range of actions would be put in place to deal with the weaknesses identified. Given such assurances, the current Committee expected the Department to have delivered measurable progress.
2. On the basis of a follow-up report by the Comptroller and Auditor General¹ the Committee was concerned to find that little substantive progress had been made and concluded that the management of teacher absence and substitution cover is an area where there continues to be scope for improvement and savings to be achieved.
3. The Committee is disappointed that the Department, employing authorities and schools have still to realise the full benefits of a £1.1 million investment in a new management information system – *Resourcelink*, the implementation of which had already taken considerably longer than first anticipated. These potential benefits include being able to improve the analysis of trends in teacher absence and substitution cover and general processing of information.
4. In order to limit the potentially negative impact that the disruption an absent teacher can have on pupil learning, the Committee calls for specific action on two fronts – ensuring that avoidable and preventable teacher absences are minimised and ensuring that high quality substitution cover is provided when necessary. This will require a more effective analysis and benchmarking of teacher absence data to provide evidence about what initiatives are most effective in curbing teacher absence patterns. It should also involve enhancing the process of accountability for the quality of substitute teaching through more periodic inspection by the Department's Education and Training Inspectorate and closer support and supervision of those providing substitution cover in schools.
5. Previous PAC sessions at Westminster have recommended stricter controls over the re-employment of teachers who have benefited from premature retirement terms. However, attempts to curb the practice have met with little success and the amount of substitution cover provided by prematurely retired teachers has actually increased since the Comptroller and Auditor General's original report in 2002.
6. The Committee believes that fundamental changes will be required in regulating the circumstances under which prematurely retired teachers can be re-engaged by schools if the Department is to finally get to grips with this issue. Moreover, with nearly two and a half thousand newly qualified teachers desperately seeking teaching opportunities, re-employing retired teachers for substitution cover is not only a tragedy for young teachers but has implications, too, for the wider debate on teacher supply and demand and the future of our teacher training institutions.

1 The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-up Report, Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, 26 May 2010

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation 1

7. Drawing on good practice examples from other sectors, it is imperative that the system for coding teacher absence is streamlined. The Committee recommends that the Department should develop and implement, by April 2011, a standard, easy-to-use system for recording the reasons for teacher absence and substitution cover.

Recommendation 2

8. Given the greater confidence expressed by the Department about the new management information system, the Committee recommends that the Department should ensure that the system starts to produce regular benchmarking reports for employing authorities and schools showing, as a minimum, the headline rates of absence, associated substitution cover costs and the predominant reasons for absence.

Recommendation 3

9. The Committee also recommends that, to keep these issues in the spotlight, the Department should report annually to the Assembly on the trends and patterns of substitution cover and the level of teacher absence.

Recommendation 4

10. The Committee recommends that the Inspectorate puts in place an inspection process which is capable of providing periodic assurance that the quality of substitution cover in schools meets required standards of teaching and learning. The Committee also sees a role for unannounced inspections as a means of getting a more informed view of what happens in the classroom when teachers provide substitution cover. Given that substitutes will always be a feature of schooling, it is essential that their role is not neglected and that comprehensive arrangements are in place to monitor their performance so that any emerging or existing problems can be effectively addressed.

Recommendation 5

11. In addition to external quality assurance by the Inspectorate, the Committee recommends that schools themselves apply good practice principles in order to maximise the effectiveness of the teachers they use to provide substitution cover. This good practice should include: careful induction; mentoring by a clearly identified senior teacher; constructive feedback; provision of information about the abilities and attainment of pupils; access to professional development opportunities; and close monitoring by school senior management. Where substitution cover has been a feature in the running of a school, we recommend, also, that the quality of this provision should be reviewed as part of the school's annual report to parents.

Recommendation 6

12. The Committee recommends that the Department and teacher employing authorities need to explore variations in sickness absence and benchmark the levels against each individual employing authority and local authorities in England to test whether there is any best practice, either locally or further afield, that can be drawn on to drive forward further improvements and consistency of approach.

- Recommendation 7**
13. The Department and employing authorities need to hold schools to account for compliance with the new sickness absence procedures. Towards this end, the Committee recommends that the internal audit functions in employing authorities should provide assurance, on an annual basis, that sickness absence policies and procedures are in place and operating effectively in schools.
- Recommendation 8**
14. The Committee recommends that the Department clearly define and narrowly prescribe the “exceptional circumstances” in which prematurely retired teachers can be re-employed. It is equally important that the Department provides a strong level of challenge to schools that are not adhering to this guidance.
- Recommendation 9**
15. The Committee recommends that a flat-rate for all substitution cover should be established, based on the salary levels applicable to newly qualified teachers.
- Recommendation 10**
16. The Committee recommends that the Department should consider amending the LMS regulations to prevent the practice whereby schools “top up” the payments made to prematurely retired teachers out of LMS budgets.
- Recommendation 11**
17. Given the persistent scale of over-supply of teachers here, the Committee recommends that more radical proposals on the network of institutions providing initial teacher training are brought forward to deal with the situation.

Introduction

1. The Public Accounts Committee met on 16 September 2010 to consider the Comptroller and Auditor General's report "The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-up Report". The witnesses were:
 - Mr Paul Sweeney, Accounting Officer, Department of Education (DE);
 - Mr John McGrath, Deputy Secretary (DE);
 - Mrs La'Verne Montgomery, Director of Education Workforce Development (DE);
 - Mr Kieran Donnelly, Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG);
 - Ms Fiona Hamill, Treasury Officer of Accounts (TOA).
2. The Committee wrote to Mr Sweeney on 22 September 2010 with queries following the evidence session. He replied on 7 October 2010.
3. Schools experience fluctuations in the numbers of teaching staff available for work at different times of the week or year. As a result, they often meet these fluctuations by using teachers, not contracted to an individual school, on a temporary basis to provide substitution cover. Such cover may include both those teachers carrying out ad hoc work when the regular teacher is not available (for example, due to illness or professional training), and those covering for a longer period of time due to long-term absences or recruiting difficulties.
4. In taking evidence on the C&AG's report, the Committee focused on three key areas:
 - Managing the costs and quality of substitution cover;
 - The Re-Employment of Prematurely Retired Teachers;
 - Initial Teacher Training.

Managing the Costs and Quality of Substitution Cover

Introduction

5. The direct financial costs of teacher absence are anything but trivial. Since the Public Accounts committee at Westminster reported on this subject in 2003,² the amount paid for teachers providing substitution has grown massively, from £38 million in 2000-01 to £66 million in 2008-09. The Department told the Committee that the increase could be explained largely by an increased entitlement to maternity leave for teachers and cover needed for the professional development of the workforce.
6. While the Committee acknowledges that substitution cover is a normal and unavoidable part of school management, in its view, this spending represents an untapped source of efficiency savings. It believes that the right combination of initiatives could free-up part of this £66 million to meet other educational needs while reducing pupils' exposure to teacher absence.
7. The Department told the Committee that, while it was not a "magic bullet", the continuing absence of a single employing authority, the Education and Skills Authority (ESA), has meant that it has not been able to get to grips with workforce issues such as substitution cover. The Department indicated, too, that there was an unknown opportunity cost in relation to the lack of a common approach to the management of substitution cover rather compared with the differential approach taken by individual employing authorities.

Management Information

8. The day before the meeting to discuss this report, the Department alerted the Committee and the NIAO to the fact that certain information it had supplied to NIAO, which was published in the report, was inaccurate. This led to an under-statement in the report of the number of temporary days prematurely retired teachers had worked in 2008-09. The Committee considers this to be a worrying development, particularly given that the report was 15 months in clearance. Without reliable management information, the Department can neither manage the education services properly nor account for its stewardship. The Department gave assurances to the Committee that more stringent checks are now in place to ensure that such a mistake does not happen again.
9. The Department acknowledged that the information on what drives the demand for substitution cover within schools is unacceptably imprecise and ambiguous. The Committee was staggered to learn that there are almost 800 different categories against which the reasons for substitution can be recorded by schools. This wide and disparate range of costing codes has made it extremely difficult to analyse the "raw" statistical data in any meaningful manner. Moreover, where schools have failed to provide sufficient explanation for substitution cover in their returns to the Department, this information has been lumped together into the default categories of "vacant posts" and "other". As a result, in 2008-09, these categories accounted for over 50 per cent of all expenditure on substitution cover. Furthermore, the Committee is amazed that the Department has persisted with a manual system which requires significant amounts of manpower in order to input data received from schools and to produce information that is of little use to decision makers.
10. The Department assured the Committee that it was rationalising the existing codes and that a more limited series of codes would be in place by 1 April 2011. Towards this end the

² The management of substitution cover for teachers, Committee of Public Accounts, 27th Report, Session 2002-03, HC 473

Department has held preliminary discussions with its counterparts in Scotland and intends to widen this research to include the coding structures used in England, Wales and the Republic of Ireland. It will also give consideration to the model of classification used in the Northern Ireland Civil Service and other public sector bodies.

Recommendation 1

11. **Drawing on good practice examples from other sectors, it is imperative that the system for coding teacher absence is streamlined. The Committee recommends that the Department should develop and implement, by April 2011, a standard, easy-to-use system for recording the reasons for teacher absence and substitution cover.**

12. In 2003 the Department gave the Westminster PAC an undertaking that it would take urgent action to address the deficiencies in its management information system. *The Resourcelink system*, originally planned for implementation in 2005 and costing £1.1 million, is still not fully functional for all school sectors. This represents a serious failure in the Department's management of this important area. Schools under the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools, meanwhile, have to use a manual work-around to get access to the system.

13. It is deeply depressing to the Committee that after a number of PAC reports which have been critical of aspects of IT systems, problems have occurred once again. We question the purpose of our hard work if departments accept all our recommendations but still cannot ensure a minimum standard of competence.

14. Due to the delay in the implementation of the Resourcelink system, the ability of the Department and the teacher employing authorities to take a strategic and managed approach to controlling the demand for substitution cover has been limited. Accurate management information would assist the Department and employing authorities to improve their understanding of the demand for substitution cover and use this to develop cost-effective ways of controlling substitution costs.

15. As outlined in paragraph 12, the Department has promised substantial progress in improving the systems for managing information on substitution cover and intends to have new arrangements to collect and interrogate information on the causes of teacher absence in place by the beginning of the next financial year. The Committee welcomes this assurance and expect that improvements should be both made and easily identifiable to a future Committee hearing.

Recommendation 2

16. **Given the greater confidence expressed by the Department about the new system, the Committee recommends that the Department should ensure that the system starts to produce regular benchmarking reports for employing authorities and schools showing, as a minimum, the headline rates of absence, associated substitution cover costs and the predominant reasons for absence.**

Recommendation 3

17. **The Committee also recommends that, to keep these issues in the spotlight, the Department should report annually to the Assembly on the trends and patterns of substitution cover and the level of teacher absence.**

Ensuring the Quality of Substitution Cover

18. The Committee has a real concern about the negative impact of the excessive use of substitution cover on educational standards. A similar concern was highlighted by the Westminster PAC in 2003 and as a result an investigation was carried out by the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) in 2004. No specific work has been carried out since to assure the Department of the quality of substitution cover, despite the fact that a larger proportion of teaching days are now provided by substitute teachers than at the time of the Westminster PAC report. The Department told the Committee that the quality of teaching by substitute teachers is collated within ETI's annual report and the Chief Inspector's biennial report to the Department, and not separately.
19. The Department told the Committee that in any given year it will carry out about 1,000 unannounced visits to schools, more than 200 planned visits and just over 80 follow-up visits. As part of this programme the Department argues that inspection will include some classrooms staffed by substitute teachers. The Committee takes the view that, given there are 1,250 schools, such inspection coverage is uneven and cannot provide the Department and parents with sufficient and regular assurance on the quality of substitution cover in schools.

Recommendation 4

20. **In order to ensure that greater quality control is brought to bear, the Committee recommends that the Inspectorate puts in place an inspection process which is capable of providing periodic assurance that the quality of substitution cover in schools meets required standards of teaching and learning. The Committee sees a particular role for unannounced inspections as a means of getting a more informed view of what happens in the classroom when teachers provide substitution cover. Given that substitutes will always be a feature of schooling, it is essential that their role is not neglected and that comprehensive arrangements are in place to monitor their performance so that any emerging or existing problems can be effectively addressed.**
21. Teachers employed to provide substitute cover form an important part of the workforce. The C&AG's report indicates that pupils will spend an average of one year being taught by a substitute. As a result it is imperative that school management should ensure that the teachers they employ receive the full support of principals and Boards of Governors.

Recommendation 5

22. **In addition to external quality assurance by the Inspectorate, the Committee recommends that schools themselves apply good practice principles in order to maximise the effectiveness of the teachers they use to provide substitution cover. This good practice should include: careful induction; mentoring by a clearly identified senior teacher; constructive feedback; provision of information about the abilities and attainment of pupils; access to professional development opportunities; and close monitoring by school senior management. Where substitution cover has been a feature in the running of a school, we recommend, also, that the quality of this provision should be reviewed as part of the school's annual report to parents.**

Sickness Absence

23. Sickness absence represents a significant element in the use of substitution cover and the Comptroller and Auditor General's report has calculated potential savings of almost £10 million if reductions in its incidence can be achieved. The Committee was encouraged to hear that, since the Comptroller and Auditor General's report, the cost of sickness absence had fallen by over £3million.
24. As already discussed at paragraphs 8 - 14, accurate data is vital to enable detailed study of the main causes and patterns of teacher absence and the calculation of the cost effectiveness of initiatives to identify those best targeted for maximum effect. The Department told the Committee that it was confident that figures for sickness absence are more precise because there is cross-referencing of manual submissions by schools with sickness certificates. However, the Committee remains unconvinced that an absence recording system which has, for example, eight ways of describing a back complaint provides data on sickness absence which can be relied on as robust and accurate.
25. Successful management of sickness absence depends on school management applying policies and procedures appropriately and consistently, informed by regular, good quality, timely data. The Department acknowledges that the Comptroller and Auditor General's report identified the need for benchmarking performance and the Department points to the workshops it has organised as a way of sharing good practice across the employing authorities. Since the Westminster PAC report in 2003, the Department has also introduced a number of significant reforms: self-certification is now required from the first day of sickness absence; trigger points are in place to identify casual and long-term absence; and return to work interviews are being implemented across the system.
26. In the Committee's view, there has been inadequate sharing of good practice across the employing authorities in the past. For instance, the department told the Committee that only 2 of the 6 employing authorities are currently achieving the target of an average 6 days sick leave per annum while CCMS will have to improve its performance by 32 per cent to meet the target. There is obviously further scope for looking closely at sick absence management practices and increasing the sharing of good practice

Recommendation 6

27. **The Committee recommends that the Department and teacher employing authorities need to explore variations in sickness absence and benchmark the levels against each individual employing authority and local authorities in England and elsewhere to test whether there is any best practice, either locally or further afield, that can be drawn on to drive forward further improvements and consistency of approach.**
28. The C&AG's report identifies the crucial role played by clear, coherent policies and their effective application in reducing sickness absence in schools. The new teacher attendance procedures agreed with the teaching trade unions in 2008 are a welcome development, however, the Committee points to the past failure of schools to comply with attendance policies and stresses again the importance of the effective application of these procedures by schools.

Recommendation 7

29. **To address this issue, the Department and employing authorities need to hold schools to account for compliance with the new procedures. Towards this end, the Committee recommends that the internal audit functions in employing authorities should provide assurance, on an annual basis, that sickness absence policies and procedures are in place and operating effectively in schools.**

The Re-employment of Prematurely Retired Teachers

30. In 2003, the Committee's counterpart at Westminster expressed its dismay and opposition to the re-engagement of teachers who had benefited from premature retirement. The Department said that it has consistently made it clear to employing authorities and schools that prematurely retired teachers should only be re-engaged in what it refers to as "exceptional circumstances". It also pointed out that, as the Northern Ireland Substitute Teachers Register identifies teachers who are in receipt of pension, any school employing such teachers for substitution cover is doing so willingly and knowingly.
31. The Committee was aghast to see from the C&AG's report that many schools still favour prematurely retired teachers over newly qualified teachers for substitution cover. Indeed, the Department informed the Committee that there would have been savings of £6million in 2008-09 if newly qualified teachers had provided substitution cover instead of prematurely retired teachers.
32. Where substitution cover is longer-term (i.e. over 20 days) the Education and Library Boards or Department are responsible for meeting the costs and payment is capped at Point 4 on the teachers' salary scale to discourage the re-employment of prematurely retired teachers. However, the Department acknowledges that, although the cap has been in place since 1999, it has had little impact and many schools continue to "top up" payments to retired teachers out of Local Management of Schools (LMS) funds, increasing the cost of substitution to the taxpayer.
33. The Committee recognises that it would not be desirable to completely eliminate the use of prematurely retired teachers as substitutes and that this would breach age discrimination legislation in any case. However, it makes little sense to the Committee that such a disproportionate amount of substitution cover work goes to prematurely retired teachers while young, newly qualified teachers are kept out of the system. This runs counter to what a dynamic teaching workforce should be about. The Committee acknowledges that providing substitution cover is a job which requires a high level of skill in teaching, classroom management and communication but does not believe that this necessarily means that it is better undertaken by experienced teachers, particularly those who retire early.
34. The C&AG's report shows that many schools continue to welcome older retired teachers because of their experience, however, the Committee considers that there can often be concerns that such teachers may be out of touch with latest professional developments and much less enthusiastic and energetic than their younger counterparts.
35. The fact that so many of our newly qualified teachers are unemployed or under-employed is a tragedy not only for the individual teachers but also for the school system here and our pupils. In the Committee's view, there is an obligation on the part of the Department to provide a fair and appropriate level of opportunity for these new teachers. The Committee acknowledges that the Department has put a range of procedures in place to try and curb the use of prematurely retired teachers as substitutes and improve the opportunities for their younger counterparts.
36. In the Committee's view, however, it is time for the Department to bear down much more heavily on this problem and rethink the fundamental assumptions behind the current system and make some far-reaching changes to the way substitution cover is managed. The Department acknowledged that, as it has responsibility for developing the regulations on the re-employment of prematurely retired teachers, it is within its powers to end the practice. The Committee is disappointed that the Department did not show the will, following the previous report, to amend the premature retirement regulations to ensure that any teachers who had benefited from enhanced settlements, in particular, were barred from subsequent re-employment as a substitute teacher.

Recommendation 8

37. **In the first place, the Committee recommends that the Department clearly define and narrowly prescribe the “exceptional circumstances” in which prematurely retired teachers can be re-employed. It is equally important that the Department provides a strong level of challenge and sanction to schools that are not adhering to this guidance.**

Recommendation 9

38. **In addition, the Department needs to consider a further reduction in the level at which employing authorities reimburse substitution costs to schools. At present this is capped at point 4 in the teacher’s salary scale. The Committee recommends that a flat-rate for all substitution cover should be established, based on the salary levels applicable to newly qualified teachers.**

Recommendation 10

39. **While recognising the benefits of the autonomy granted to schools through LMS regulations, the Committee recommends that the Department should, nevertheless, consider amending the LMS regulations to prevent the practice whereby schools “top up” the payments made to prematurely retired teachers out of LMS budgets.**
40. The Committee is especially concerned by the re-employment of teachers who had retired under the “efficient discharge” scheme. During 2008-09, 33 teachers who had retired prematurely on grounds of efficient discharge were re-employed to provide substitution cover. The Department told the Committee that, of these teachers, 22 were former Principals and FIVE were former Vice-Principals. The Department’s view was that as the efficient discharge related to the management function performed by these teachers it did not mean that their competency in the classroom was in question.
41. The Committee acknowledges the Department’s explanation. However, when the employment opportunities for so many newly qualified teachers are limited, this manifestation of re-employment, and the potential for higher costs it involves, are difficult to justify. It is important, therefore, that the Department closely monitors the re-employment of those who have retired under efficient discharge terms, particularly those who served as Principals and Vice-Principals, and challenges schools to ensure the circumstances are exceptional.

Initial Teacher Training

42. The re-employment of prematurely retired teachers for substitution cover brings into sharp relief the whole issue of teacher workforce supply and demand. Along with a general decline in overall pupil numbers over the last few years, re-employment adds to the contraction of opportunities for newly qualified teachers in securing employment as full-time teachers. The failure to fully utilise the skills of those who have been trained at public expense is a significant waste of public resources.
43. In relation to this, the Department said it had kept a close watch on events in Scotland where newly qualified teachers are entitled to one year's compulsory induction in school after qualification. However, according to the Department this has not shown any great success in improving the long-term employment prospects of newly qualified teachers. Rather, it simply delays unemployment for a year.
44. The difficulty newly qualified teachers have in securing substantive posts is demonstrated in statistics from the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland which the Department provided to the Committee. The Department told the Committee that of 792 teachers who graduated in 2009 from training institutions in Northern Ireland and elsewhere, only 200 (25%)³ had obtained either a permanent or part-time post by February 2010. More generally, 2456 teachers who had graduated over the period 2004-2009 had still not been able to obtain a teaching post in 2009-2010.
45. In turn, this has implications for teacher training provision. The Department told the Committee that it had pared back intake levels at local teacher training institutions by 27 per cent between 2004-05 and 2009-2010 – from 880 to 640 students and stated that any further reductions would have implications for the viability of institutions providing initial teacher training.
46. The Committee acknowledges that the impact of over-supply of teachers, on one hand, and the changing demography of school-age children, on the other, suggests that the scale and cost of teacher education is at a level where the continuing viability of local teacher training institutions is untenable. The Committee understands that the Department of Education in conjunction with the Department of Employment and Learning has issued a consultation document⁴ on the future delivery of teacher education. The Committee acknowledges it is imperative that the Department confronts the future of teacher training here in order to ensure that a robust long term solution is found to the issue which satisfies the duty to provide value for money to taxpayers.

Recommendation 11

47. **Given the persistent scale of over-supply of teachers here, the Committee recommends that more radical proposals on the network of institutions providing initial teacher training are brought forward to deal with the situation.**

3 In response to an Assembly Question (AQO 399/11) the Department provided an update to the Assembly on the number of newly qualified teachers who had been unable to secure a permanent teaching post. Of the 792 teachers (735 of whom graduated from institutions within Northern Ireland) who are registered with the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland, 293 secured a permanent teaching post by September 2010.

4 Teacher Education in a Climate of Change: The Way Forward, Department of Education and Department of Employment and Learning, June 2010



Appendix 1

Minutes of Proceedings Relating to the Report

Thursday, 9 September 2010
Room 144, Parliament Buildings

Present: Mr Paul Maskey (Chairperson)
Mr Roy Beggs (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr John Dallat
Mr Trevor Lunn
Mr Patsy McGlone
Mr Mitchel McLaughlin
Mr Stephen Moutray

In Attendance: Miss Aoibhinn Treanor (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Phil Pateman (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Miss Danielle Best (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Darren Weir (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: The Lord Browne
Mr David Hilditch
Ms Dawn Purvis

2:01 pm The meeting opened in closed session.

7. Briefing on NIAO report 'The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-up Report'.

2:46 pm The meeting went into closed session after initial remarks by the C&AG.

2:46 pm The Chairperson declared an interest as a family member is the vice principal of a school.

2:46 pm The Deputy Chairperson declared an interest as a family member is a teacher.

2:59 pm The Deputy Chairperson declared an interest as he is a Governor of Glynn Primary School.

Mr Kieran Donnelly, Comptroller & Auditor General; Mr Sean McKay, Director; and Mr Roger McCance, Auditor; briefed the Committee on the report.

The witnesses answered a number of questions put by members.

[EXTRACT]

The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-Up Report

Thursday, 16 September 2010 The Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

Present: Mr Paul Maskey (Chairperson)
Mr Roy Beggs (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Gregory Campbell MP MLA
Mr William Irwin
Mr Trevor Lunn
Mr Patsy McGlone
Mr Mitchel McLaughlin
Mr Adrian McQuillan
Ms Dawn Purvis

In Attendance: Miss Aoibhinn Treanor (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Phil Pateman (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Miss Danielle Best (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Darren Weir (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr John Dallat
Mr Stephen Moutray

2:02 pm The meeting opened in public session.

2. Evidence Session on the Audit Office Report 'The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-up Report'.

2:04 pm The Chairperson declared an interest as a family member is the vice principal of a school.

2:04 pm The Deputy Chairperson declared an interest as a family member is an ex deputy headmaster and also a former member of an Education and Library board.

2:05 pm Mr McGlone entered the meeting.

The Committee took oral evidence on the above report from:

- Mr Paul Sweeney, Accounting Officer, Department of Education (DE);
- Mr John McGrath, Deputy Secretary Department of Education (DE); and
- Mrs La'Verne Montgomery, Director of Education Workforce Development, Department of Education (DE).

The witnesses answered a number of questions put by the Committee.

2:27 pm Mr Campbell left the meeting.

2:37 pm Ms Purvis left the meeting.

2:40 pm Ms Purvis entered the meeting.

2:44 pm Mr McGlone left the meeting.

2:50 pm Mr McGlone entered the meeting.

2:57 pm Mr McGlone left the meeting.

3:04 pm Mr McGlone entered the meeting.

3:14 pm Mr McLaughlin left the meeting.

Minutes of Proceedings Relating to the Report

3:20 pm Mr McLaughlin entered the meeting.

3:32 pm Mr Irwin left the meeting.

3:50 pm Mr McLaughlin left the meeting.

4:00 pm Mr McLaughlin entered the meeting.

4:05 pm Mr McGlone left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request further information from the witnesses.

[EXTRACT]

The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-Up Report

Thursday, 23 September 2010 Room 144, Parliament Buildings

Present: Mr Paul Maskey (Chairperson)
Mr Roy Beggs (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr John Dallat
Mr Trevor Lunn
Mr Mitchel McLaughlin
Mr Patsy McGlone
Ms Dawn Purvis

In Attendance: Ms Aoibhinn Treanor (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Phil Pateman (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Miss Danielle Best (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Darren Weir (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr Gregory Campbell MP MLA
Mr William Irwin
Mr Adrian McQuillan
Mr Stephen Moutray

2:03 pm The meeting opened in public session.

7. Issues arising from the oral evidence session on 'The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-up Report'.

Members considered an issues paper from the oral evidence session on 'The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-up Report'.

[EXTRACT]

Thursday, 4 November 2010
Room 144, Parliament Buildings

Present: Mr Paul Maskey (Chairperson)
Mr Gregory Campbell MP MLA
Mr John Dallat
Mr Patsy McGlone
Mr Mitchel McLaughlin
Mr Adrian McQuillan
Mr Stephen Moutray
Ms Dawn Purvis

In Attendance: Miss Aoibhinn Treanor (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Phil Pateman (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Miss Danielle Best (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Darren Weir (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr Roy Beggs (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr William Irwin
Mr Trevor Lunn

2:08 pm The meeting opened in public session.

6. Consideration of the Draft Committee Report on 'The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-up Report'.

Paragraphs 1 – 13 read and agreed.

2:49 pm Mr McGlone entered the meeting.

Paragraphs 14 – 46 read and agreed.

Paragraph 47 read, amended and agreed.

Consideration of the Executive Summary

Paragraphs 1 – 9 read and agreed.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the correspondence for inclusion in the report.

Agreed: The Committee ordered the report to be printed.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the report would be embargoed until 00.01 am on Thursday, 25 November 2010.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to launch the report with a press release to be agreed at a later meeting.

[EXTRACT]



Appendix 2

Minutes of Evidence

16 September 2010

Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Mr Paul Maskey (Chairperson)
 Mr Roy Beggs (Deputy Chairperson)
 Mr Gregory Campbell
 Mr William Irwin
 Mr Trevor Lunn
 Mr Patsy McGlone
 Mr Mitchel McLaughlin
 Mr Adrian McQuillan
 Ms Dawn Purvis

Witnesses:

Mrs La'Verne Montgomery	<i>Department of Education</i>
Mr John McGrath	<i>Education</i>
Mr Paul Sweeney	

Also in attendance:

Mr Kieran Donnelly	<i>Comptroller and Auditor General</i>
Ms Fiona Hamill	<i>Treasury Officer of Accounts</i>

1. **The Chairperson (Mr P Maskey):** We now move to the evidence session on the Audit Office report entitled 'The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-up Report'. I ask members to express any interests that they may have in the matter. I have a brother who is the vice-principal of a school; I am not sure whether that is an interest. However, I would like to put it on record.
2. **Mr Beggs:** My dad is a former deputy headmaster and a former member of an education and library board.
3. **The Chairperson:** Thank you for that, Roy. Mr Paul Sweeney, the accounting officer in the Department of Education, is here to respond to the report. You are very welcome. Will you introduce your team?
4. **Mr Paul Sweeney (Department of Education):** Thank you, Chair. I am accompanied by Mr John McGrath, who is deputy secretary in the Department, and Mrs La'Verne Montgomery, who is assistant secretary.
5. **The Chairperson:** You are all very welcome. I will start by asking some questions, after which members will follow with their own lines of questioning.
6. With regard to figures 12 and 13, which are at paragraphs 4.2 and 4.3 of the report, you recently advised the Committee that you supplied the Audit Office with incorrect data on the number of temporary days that prematurely retired teachers worked during 2008-09. Members, you should all have a copy of that correspondence, which has been tabled. It is worrying that such important information, which is in some reports, especially the Audit Office's, has been recorded incorrectly. I appreciate that you notified the Committee about that mistake as soon as you realised that the figures were wrong. How long did it take you and the Audit Office to clear the report?
7. **Mr Sweeney:** The report was published in May. I do not know the specific answer to that question, but I imagine that there would have been an iterative process of at least several weeks prior to that.
8. **The Chairperson:** Was that May 2010?
9. **Mr Sweeney:** Yes. I imagine that the fieldwork would largely have been done —
10. **The Chairperson:** The reason that I ask that is because paragraph 2.1 shows that the cost for substitution cover has increased from £38 million in 2001 to £66 million in 2008-09. If we go back to the figures that were wrong, and it is important that we get the figures correct, the report was with you and the Audit Office for a considerable time. The Comptroller and Auditor General just said to me that the report took 15 months to clear. Surely during those 15

- months there was ample opportunity to get the facts and figures in the report correct. You came to us with a letter, which we appreciate, saying that the figures were wrong. However, I received that letter only today, but the report took 15 months to clear. Perhaps you will give us an explanation for that.
11. **Mr Sweeney:** During summer 2010, colleagues in Waterside House reran and updated the figures for 2009-2010, which are not the subject of the report. At that time, they became aware that there had been an error in agreeing the figures for 2008-09 in that teachers who had been re-employed had not scored in the year 2008-09. I thought that that was important. Frankly, I became aware of that this week, and I rang the Comptroller and Auditor General immediately. I thought that it was important that I apprised him and the Committee Clerk immediately.
12. Therefore, the matter arose after the report had been finalised. Colleagues were updating figure work for this year, and they became aware that there had been a miscalculation. As soon as I became aware of that, I thought that it was important to apprise the Comptroller and Auditor General and the Committee immediately.
13. **The Chairperson:** Has any mechanism been put in place to ensure that such mistakes do not happen again? Although it is not your issue, over the years, a number of incorrect facts and figures have been given in response to Members' questions. It is important that all Departments' facts and figures are correct.
14. **Mr Sweeney:** I absolutely concur with that. Every step should be taken to ensure that figure work is correct and that if errors are identified, they are drawn to your attention immediately.
15. **The Chairperson:** Therefore, will there be much more stringent checks to ensure that those mistakes do not happen in future?
16. **Mr Sweeney:** Yes.
17. **The Chairperson:** OK. Thank you.
18. Paragraph 2.1 shows that the cost for substitution cover increased from £38 million in 2000-01 to £66 million in 2008-09. Perhaps you can explain how that cost has risen to such a level. What are you doing to keep some control of it?
19. **Mr Sweeney:** I want to draw members' attention to figure 3, because it is important. In 2008-09, the total cost for substitution was just over £66 million. If the figure of £34 million for 2000-01 is expressed in real terms, the figure in that table should read £46.9 million. Therefore, there has been a 41% increase in substitution costs in real terms from around £46.9 million in 2000-01 to just over £66 million. In real terms, that is an increase of about £20 million in substitution costs. There are two primary reasons for that, and, although I could go into some details, for now, I will just highlight them. I could develop the fact that maternity costs have increased significantly, but I want to draw attention to the fact that substitution costs are not necessarily an inefficient or ineffective way to manage the education workforce. Indeed, in many instances, substitution costs are highly desirable, because they enable schools to undertake school improvement programmes and staff to undertake staff development and curriculum programmes. In addition, they release teaching principals to spend less time in the classroom and more on strategic planning. Therefore, I would like to disaggregate, on the one hand, teacher substitution money that was an investment in developing schools and the workforce to the betterment of pupils and, on the other hand, essential cover for sickness absence and matters such as maternity leave.
20. Chair, I shall dwell a little on maternity leave and the Department's policy to raise standards by investing in the workforce. I draw your attention to a number of high-level points. In the period that you mentioned, maternity leave increased by 53%. Whereas in 2000-01 there were, on average, 610 applications

for maternity leave per annum, there are now 933 per annum. Not only that but maternity leave entitlement has increased. In 2001, a maximum of 18 weeks was allowed. In 2003, the figure went up to 26 weeks, and, by 2007, the maximum maternity leave was 39 weeks. In 2006-07, 2.5% of people took more than 26 weeks maternity leave, and by 2008-09, 73% of teachers who were off on maternity leave took more than 26 weeks. Therefore, there has been a significant increase in maternity leave, equivalent to about 35,000 days a year, and, as figure 3 shows, those statistics go some way to explaining the increase.

21. Turning to deliberate departmental policies, which are about investing in the professional development of the workforce with a view to raising standards, I shall cite a few examples. In 2006-07, the Department put £4.5 million into training teachers to deliver the revised curriculum. That was equivalent to nearly 20,000 days. For three years in a row, we have been putting in about £4.5 million, and, in 2008-09, the figure increased to about £5 million. That was done to enable teachers to come to terms with the requirements of the revised curriculum.
22. I mentioned that we have been investing in releasing more time for teaching principals, particularly those in small schools. Consequently, in the period that we are covering, and certainly from September 2008, approximately 700 principals have been able to avail themselves of an additional two days a week release time from teaching to focus on strategic planning.
23. Largely speaking, the £20 million increase is explained by those two elements. In addition, in 2009-2010, the in-year figure dropped from £66 million to about £64 million. We are also seeing, and this will be important to ensure that we monitor costs very carefully, better use being made of things such as online training and the Regional Training Unit (RTU), which has been running summer schools for teachers. We need to monitor costs constantly and look at more cost-effective ways to invest in the workforce that do not require as much teacher substitution.
24. **The Chairperson:** The end of my question was to have been about the cost-effective initiatives that the Department has looked at, and you mentioned one, namely, keeping the figures under control. Going from £38 million to £66 million over seven or eight years seems like a big increase, and it is one area in which cost-effective measures need to be put in place. I am grateful that the in-year figure has reduced. Did you say that it reduced by £2 million this year? Is that correct?
25. **Mr Sweeney:** Yes, for 2009-2010.
26. **The Chairperson:** Any reduction in cost is welcome. You mentioned training. Are there any other measures that could reduce the costs even further?
27. **Mr Sweeney:** I want to get behind the idea of more online training and making better use of summer schools.
28. **Mr McGlone:** If I picked you up correctly, you mentioned that part of the additional increase of £20 million could be accounted for by external training for school principals. Has there been a substantial increase for that between 2008-09 and this year? Figure 3 shows that the cost of relief for teaching principals in 2008-09 was £179,743. I presume that that is the relief that you are talking about.
29. **Mr Sweeney:** Yes. On that point, there is an issue with figure 3, in the sense that, although some of the reasons for substitution have been categorised, there are elements that lack precision. That is dealt with in the report.
30. **Mr McGlone:** On that point about precision, if I picked you up correctly, you explained that some of the additional £20 million, but not all of it, could be accounted for by increased release of school principals for training and so on. I presume that that fits into the category of "Relief for teaching principal", so a considerable amount must have gone

into that. It does not seem to fit readily with the figure of £179,000 that is given, because it leaves over £19-odd million to be explained elsewhere. I am not too sure where that huge amount of money has come from and where the other explanations for the £19-odd million increase comes from.

31. **Mr Sweeney:** In real terms, the increase is from around £34 million to around £66 million, and those bottom line figures are not in dispute at all. However, the report draws attention to the fact that a great deal of caution needs to be exercised about the reasons given for substitution, and I reinforce that point. I will cut to the chase, because the report draws attention to this: around 53% of the total expenditure has been allocated under the categories of “Vacant posts” and “Other”. As the report rightly says, the use of those categories is a default option.
32. Part of the difficulty has been the lack of precision, or, to use the term that the report uses, “ambiguity”, in the reasons given for substitution. Around nearly 500 different codes are used that could give a reason for substitution. As a result, there has been a lack of commonality in how people have been making returns. Although we can stand over the figures on areas such as the level of sickness and maternity leave with some authority, other areas are under-represented in the way that that table has been presented. They have been included as a default mechanism under headings such as “Vacant posts” and “Other”. The kernel of that is the lack of sufficient coding and the lack of precision in the reasons given for substitution.
33. You rightly drew attention to the fact that the table gives the impression that the category of “Relief for teaching principal” accounts for less than £200,000, when in reality, in the later part of 2008-09, from September 2008 onwards, the Department was putting in approximately £5 million to enable relief for teaching principals. Likewise, the category of “Teaching/curriculum” is listed as costing around £2.6 million. As I said earlier, on the revised

curriculum alone, the Department was putting in around £4 million, and that figure jumped up to £5 million. I know that that is a long-winded explanation, but I wanted to say that the default mechanism for the categories of “Vacant posts” and “Other” accounts for 53.4% of that expenditure.

34. **Mr McGlone:** I should say that I do not think that there are many interpretations of the term “Relief for teaching principals” as a descriptor. Forgive my ignorance on these matters, but where does that information that describes the various vacancies and substitute cover costs by category come from? Who provides that information? The Committee has heard that some of the information that has been provided today is correct, and I hope that it is, but it also heard that the other information was not.
35. **Mr Sweeney:** Approximately 1,250 schools make monthly returns to Waterside House. Largely speaking, the system is manually based with some IT backup that, until fairly recently, was 20 years old. In making those manual returns, the system would have looked for a valid reason to be given for substitution, and if that reason was not properly identified, it would have been put into the default box and recorded in either the “Vacant post” or “Other” categories. I have drawn attention to the report’s identification of the lack of precision and the need to eradicate some of the ambiguity in that area. Some of the headings lack precision because the Department gets returns from 1,250 schools. There are 500 different codings, and if the coding is not absolutely clear-cut, the system that was in place would have placed the return into that default mechanism. That is unacceptable, but it was the reality up until now.
36. **Mr McGlone:** Am I right to presume that that category has now changed from “Relief for teaching principal” to something else?
37. **Mr Sweeney:** In the body of the report, it is shown that the system is in the

- process of changing. However, at this stage, we still have a considerable way to go.
38. **Mr Campbell:** It is nice to see Mr Sweeney and his team again. Mr Sweeney, you used the phrase “in real terms” to explain the distinction between the £38 million and the £46 million that you discussed. Is “in real terms” just another way of taking account of inflation, or is there any other reason for the factual statement of £38 million up to £66 million really being £46 million up to £66 million?
39. **Mr Sweeney:** Thank you for your comments. That figure just takes account of inflation to give real-term prices by 2008-09. In that period alone, teachers’ salaries increased in real terms by some 26%.
40. **Mr Campbell:** Therefore, is the £8 million differential between the £38 million and the £46 million that you referred to exclusively to do with inflation? Is there no other reason? Is there nothing other than inflation that falls under the term “real terms”?
41. **Mr Sweeney:** No.
42. **The Chairperson:** OK; we will continue. Paragraph 2 of the executive summary to the report points to research that indicates that substitution cover can have a negative impact on learning, as pupils can spend a significant proportion of their time in school being taught by a substitute. How would you satisfy yourself that the preparation in the deployment of substitute teachers has had a positive impact on pupil learning?
43. **Mr Sweeney:** I rely heavily on the role of the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) in its assessment of school performance. As you know, the inspectorate can make scheduled visits, but it can also make unannounced visits that include dropping in randomly to classrooms that may be fronted up either by full-time regular teachers, if I can use that phrase, or by substitution teachers. The Department has not received an intelligence base from its conversations with the inspectorate that suggests that the way in which teacher substitution has been managed in Northern Ireland has had an empirically detrimental impact on the quality of teaching in schools. I want to point out that a great deal of emphasis is placed on properly managing substitution so that it is not simply a case of putting in a teacher to control a class. Rather, the emphasis has to be on bringing added value and teaching the class.
44. Therefore, based on the assurances that I got from the inspectorate, I have been advised that part of an inspection would look at how substitution teachers are managed in any given school, and, if there were cause for concern, the inspector would draw that to the attention of the board of governors. With in extremis cases, the inspector would enter the school to make a formal intervention if necessary.
45. The report rightly draws attention to two US-based studies that make the obvious point that teaching is critical to educational outcomes. I am not being complacent about that; however, I have not seen any empirical evidence or report — certainly not from the inspectorate — to suggest that the way that substitution is managed in Northern Ireland is having a detrimental impact.
46. **The Chairperson:** Has the inspectorate given you any recommendations as to the length of time that a class should be under the supervision of a substitute teacher?
47. **Mr Sweeney:** Yes, we spoke to the inspectorate about that in preparation for this meeting. The inspectorate explained to me that, if there were a particularly high level of substitution in a school in any given year, the board of governors would be spoken to. To use an example rather than a specific school, if the school had a high level of substitution, the inspector would draw the attention of the board of governors to the fact that those staff were the equivalent of four full-time teachers. He would draw the governors’ attention to the importance of managing that.

48. I disaggregated between substitution that was about investment, the school improvement and staff development, but some matters, such as the management of absence in particular, can often be unpredictable. Sometimes there will be a casual absence of one or two days, but sometimes absence will be for a prolonged period. An absence could start off being for two weeks but could be prolonged, so there is an element of unpredictability. That is why the Department issued guidance about the proper management of the substitution of teachers and how important it is that substitution is not seen as some kind of add-on. Quality control must be brought to bear.
49. **The Chairperson:** Paragraph 4.10 refers to falling school enrolments as a factor in the availability of employment opportunities for newly qualified teachers. However, figure 3 at paragraph 2.3 shows that substitution cover for vacant posts cost over £23 million in 2008-09. How can you have a workforce planning system that churns out newly qualified teachers every year with little prospect of their getting any permanent teaching jobs? That is a serious issue that must be addressed. How many teachers have qualified over the past three years, and do you have any record of how many of them have had employment opportunities in schools?
50. **Mr Sweeney:** This is a very important area. I should say that the Department has made it consistently clear that preference should be given to recently qualified teachers and that prematurely retired teachers should be re-engaged only in exceptional circumstances. A Public Accounts Committee report that was published away back in 1992 drew attention to that matter. However, the reality is that a significant amount of prematurely retired teachers are still being re-engaged.
51. To focus on your question about newly qualified teachers, I have some figures that may be of assistance to the Committee. We took advice from the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland (GTCNI). It told us that, of the 792 teachers who graduated in 2009 from institutions in Northern Ireland and elsewhere, only 200, which is 25%, have obtained either a permanent or part-time teaching post. Indeed, 2,456 teachers graduated in the five-year period 2004-09, and, in the academic year 2009-2010, they have not been able to obtain a teaching post of a permanent or significant nature.
52. There is a real issue with newly qualified teachers finding it very difficult to get substantive posts. That is partly because of the demographics.
53. Partly because of that, the Department, as the report states, has decreased by 27% the number of people who undertake initial teacher education. For example, in 2004-05, the various local institutions provided training to 880 people. That dropped to approximately 640 in 2009-2010, so there was a 27% reduction in the number of people who were put through initial teacher education.
54. **The Chairperson:** There is still a very large number of people who leave university as qualified teachers but cannot get employment, whether full time or part time. They cannot even fill some of the substitution vacancies in our schools.
55. **Mr Sweeney:** Yes.
56. **The Chairperson:** In 2008-09, substitution costs totalled £23 million. Is there a difference in pay scales between those who have retired recently, and newly qualified teachers? Newly qualified teachers cannot get experience or avail themselves of employment opportunities. There are figures for recently qualified teachers, but are there figures of retired teachers who are doing substitute teaching?
57. **Mr Sweeney:** Yes. I could give some examples. However, we have been bearing down very heavily on the that recently. In 2005-06, something like 581 teachers retired prematurely, some 325 of whom were re-employed to various degrees. That may have ranged from one day up to several weeks. In 2006-

- 07, 552 retired prematurely and 246 were re-employed to various degrees; in 2007-08, 555 retired prematurely and 248 were re-employed; in 2008-09, 316 retired prematurely and 146 were re-employed; and in 2009-2010, 180 retired prematurely and 77 were re-employed. In 2010-11, no one retired prematurely. We can go into the various reasons for that. The Department has made a stark calculation that will be helpful. In 2008-09, for example, if the teachers who retired prematurely and subsequently re-engaged in the workforce had have been covered by newly qualified teachers, it could have cost £6 million less in that year.
58. **The Chairperson:** Is that for newly qualified teachers?
59. **Mr Sweeney:** Yes. That is the approximate differential.
60. **The Chairperson:** Why is that not happening, then?
61. **Mr Sweeney:** We operate under the Minister's direction and control. She has made it very clear where her preferences lie. The Department's preference is that prematurely retired teachers should be used only in exceptional circumstances. However, to make a counter-argument in the interest of balance, the context is one of autonomy. A common funding formula allocates a per capita allocation to schools, which is within a regime of local management of schools, and rightly so. An element of autonomy is given to the board of governors and principal in any given school as to how they wish to use their allocation. For example, the report draws attention to trying to restrict the re-employment of prematurely retired teachers. We think that it should be capped at pay point 4. However, the reality is that boards of governors and principals can, under that autonomy, take a conscious decision to re-employ a more experienced or prematurely retired teacher.
62. I do not have and I have not sought the permission of the person who sent this letter to the Department recently. It is a principal of a large post-primary school in Northern Ireland. I am not going to identify the school or the principal, but it would be useful to draw from the letter. The principal has argued in reaction to a monthly letter from the Department to those schools that we think are transgressing against the need to prioritise newly qualified teachers. This person says —
63. **Mr McLaughlin:** Chairperson, do you have any view on whether we can accept this letter, unless it can be entered as evidence? There is a difficulty for us. If Mr Sweeney does not have permission, we may be on thin ice.
64. **The Chairperson:** If it is going to be read out, I dare say that it would have to be submitted as evidence for inclusion in our report.
65. **Mr Sweeney:** Could I make a general point, then? I am trying to make a counter-argument, because I have made a very strong case for the employment of newly qualified teachers. I will cast the letter aside because I want to make a general point. The point is that, bearing in mind that we have given autonomy to schools and boards of governors within a certain framework, there are principals who, rightly, will say that they need flexibility. Very often, specialist classes need experienced, specialist teachers at short notice, and, perhaps, newly qualified teachers are not readily available, or the nature of the specialism that needs to be addressed requires a very experienced person.
66. I am trying to speculate why, given that this has been a focus of PAC interest since at least 1992, insufficient progress has been made, even though the Department has made its objectives very clear. We have to respect the fact that, under the local management of schools regime, principals and boards of governors, in any given situation, seek to make decisions. The more inspired leaders will achieve a balance, bringing in newly qualified teachers where it is possible to do so under the tutelage of a head of a department. Undoubtedly, however, in some instances, a judgement will be made that, given

- the nature of the class, the specialism or the local context, they will rely on, perhaps, prematurely retired teachers. We have to make sure that people are getting the balance right and that that balance is not out of kilter or being abused.
67. **The Chairperson:** OK. I ask you to be brief. You mentioned a cap at pay point 4. When was that brought in?
68. **Mr Sweeney:** It was introduced in 1999.
69. **The Chairperson:** It has not made much of a difference, has it?
70. **Mr Sweeney:** No. Approximately two thirds of the teachers who are registered with the Northern Ireland substitute teachers' register — and are, therefore, actively seeking work — are over 30. At the age of 30, those teachers would reach pay point 4. Pay points 1, 2 and 3 largely comprise people who are recently qualified and are working their way through their 20s. A number of levers are being contemplated. Should we cap it at pay point 3 or pay point 2? There is an element of autonomy under the common funding formula that gives principals and boards of governors discretion in prioritising their expenditure.
71. **Mr McLaughlin:** So they can top up?
72. **Mr Sweeney:** They can, and they do.
73. **Mr McLaughlin:** Is that why the cap did not make a difference?
74. **Mr Sweeney:** Yes. They can top up beyond pay point 4, at pay point 5 and 6. Presumably, and, one would hope, it is a deliberate decision, to do that because they will have some discretionary funding in their local management of schools funding formula.
75. **The Chairperson:** OK. Members may wish to go into that issue in a bit more depth.
76. **Mr McLaughlin:** We have already touched on some of the issues that I intended to raise. The description of the 500 codings — it is a theme that runs through earlier reports and the current report — suggests that there is a difficulty with basic data, and how it helps us to resolve outstanding issues.
77. The question of vacancies and substitutions is proving a difficult nut to crack. There are 500 codings. Has it occurred to anybody that that is too many? Reducing that down to generic descriptors might help everybody, including local schools and the boards. Can you explain why it has taken so long to sort that out? Is there anything comparable in how other professions manage vacancies, casual sickness, maternity leave, and so on?
78. **Mr Sweeney:** In assisting the Committee this afternoon I do not want to make excuses, but, at one level, I want to be respectful to my colleagues whose primary function is to ensure that 20,000 teachers get paid every month. That is about £1 billion a year. Some 19,000 pensioners, who were teachers, get paid as well. I think that we do that well. However, what we are doing insufficiently well, if that is not an understatement, and where there is significant room for improvement, is in the managing of information and the quality of data that, up until now, has been provided by the schools on a manual basis. There is a wide range of coding. We do not take any satisfaction from that, but there are eight ways of describing a back complaint. That is one subset of a code.
79. **Mr McLaughlin:** Your head must be fried. Who is responsible for the 500 codings? Who stands over that and says that that is the system that is to be used?
80. **Mr Sweeney:** I am responsible for making it into a more regular arrangement. It built up over time.
81. **Mr McLaughlin:** Is it the Department? Is it the autonomous school boards? Did the board or the Department come up with 500 codings? I want to know how that happened.
82. **Mr Sweeney:** I do not know. I imagine that it grew topsy-turvy over a period of years.

83. **Mr McLaughlin:** Could it grow even more? curriculum. That is how it has grown over time.
84. **Mr Sweeney:** Although it was also clear when the PAC reported on the issue in 2003, the report makes it clear that the current system is not acceptable; it is not serving its purpose. That is the good news. We must make dramatic improvements. I will point to some improvements.
85. **Mr McLaughlin:** I want to stick to this subject, Paul, if you do not mind. Have you compared the system with other education authorities? Are they operating with something like 500 codings in the managing of absences?
86. **Mr Sweeney:** I do not believe that we have done that.
87. **Mrs La'Verne Montgomery (Department of Education):** If it is helpful, I can give some of the background on why we have 500 codings.
88. **Mr McLaughlin:** I do not want to stop you helping us with this, but it seems that there is confusion within the Department in managing this. It is not that people are not trying to manage it, but there is enough confusion, and I do not want to end up confused. You might give me an explanation that, perhaps, will not help me. I am trying to find out whether there is better practice elsewhere. You have had this perennial difficulty. We do not know where it came from, and we do not know whether other people are managing it better. Is that representative of a Department that is trying to sort out the problem?
89. **Mrs Montgomery:** Part of the difficulty is that there are a number of employers and employing authorities. They have developed their own coding system. The fact that there are five education and library boards means that there can be five codes for a bad back, as Mr Sweeney mentioned. As funding streams have come on board, there is a separate code for the teaching principal relief time, for instance, that we have talked about. There is also a separate code for curriculum development under the entitlement framework in the revised
90. We are looking at, as you described, the practices that other professions adopt for coding absences. For example, the NICS system includes nine or 10 distinct codings to deal with absences, particularly in respect of sickness. We include other types of absence, such as absence owing to professional development, so, although we do not believe that we can get the figure down to nine or 10, we certainly want to reduce it considerably, and it is our intention to do so. We intend to develop our codings and ensure that employing authorities and schools implement them.
91. **Mr McLaughlin:** Bearing in mind the historical complexity of the various authorities that have been established here, can we take it that the Department accepts that 500 codings are absolutely too many for anybody to manage properly and that they do not give us the type of data that we can rely on as robust, systematic and scientific?
92. **Mrs Montgomery:** Absolutely, and, for schools, employing authorities and, indeed, the Department, so that it can interrogate the information robustly, we are committed to reduce them to a manageable number.
93. **Mr McLaughlin:** We do not know what the Department is doing in other areas or where this comes from, but is that, in fact, the Department's position? What is the state of play? Who is researching that for you, and are alternative models being considered?
94. **Mrs Montgomery:** Yes.
95. **Mr McLaughlin:** Can the Committee have confirmation of that? You may have to correspond with us about the matter.
96. **Mrs Montgomery:** Yes, certainly; we will ensure that it is in place for the beginning of the next financial year.
97. **Mr McLaughlin:** That is the kind of positive answer that I was looking for, so, thank you.

98. **Mr Lunn:** On the same theme, out of 500 codings, Paul said that eight refer to back problems. If you had asked me what the most common cause of absence is liable to be, I would have thought that back problems would have been quite high on the list, along, perhaps, with flu. If there are only eight such codings, then 492 others do not refer to people's backs. It is a fascinating. You have answered the question that was in my head 10 minutes ago. What is the most common cause of absence?
99. **Mr McLaughlin:** Exhaustion as a result of trying to figure out which of the 500 headings to use.
100. **Mr Sweeney:** The most concerning cause is stress in the classroom.
101. **Mr Lunn:** Are there 150 types of stress problems?
102. **Mr Sweeney:** I do not know.
103. **Mrs Montgomery:** No, stress is coded as stress. The highest level of absence is probably due to maternity leave, although a person is either pregnant or not.
104. **Mr Lunn:** Those are two headings straight away: maternity and stress. That will enable you to get rid of about 300.
105. **Mr McLaughlin:** I do not wish to return to the earlier discussion; however, in figure 3, the heading "Other" jumps out. It seems that 500 codings are not sufficient, so you have to lump some of them under "Other". The logic of that is that the list of codings has to be streamlined, just to help everyone to understand what we are dealing with in respect of levels, costs and lost opportunities. I am talking about reducing the number of people who go through teacher training. I understand perfectly the need to respond to demographics, but doing that could be a way to address the fact that teachers cannot get employment because, at the other end of the scale, retired teachers are being re-employed. There is a huge cost opportunity there for the whole education system, so we need to shake ourselves and do something about it.
106. Paragraph 2.3 of the report is very important, because it goes to the heart of a lot of the issues. It refers to the fact that substitution costs have nothing to do with vacant posts. Is the issue of sickness absence understated owing to the lack of clarity in categorisation? It appears that it is difficult for the Department to be able to define precisely the extent of that issue.
107. **Mr Sweeney:** I can give assurance to the Committee, because I precipitated the discussion by drawing attention to the need to exercise caution, but we can speak with authority on a number of areas. Sickness returns and MAT B1 forms, which are for maternity leave, are made manually to Waterside House. However, the original copies of all doctors' certificates for sickness absence and all necessary original documentation for maternity leave are submitted and cross-referenced.
108. I said unashamedly that we need to be cautious about some of the categories and that the category of "Other" was used as the default option. However, the figures on sickness and maternity are more precise because of the cross-referencing. That is also material because, after 100 days of sickness, a person receives half of their pay and, after a further 100 days of sickness, a person receives no pay. The figures need to be precise, and that is achieved by cross-referencing the manual submission from the schools with the original documentation, the sickness certificates and the maternity forms.
109. **Mr McLaughlin:** Paragraph 2.8 points out that it has taken six years to introduce the new payroll system to provide better data on teacher absence and substitution cover but that the system still does not work to its full potential. How can the time lag in the introduction of the new system be explained or justified?
110. **Mr Sweeney:** I shall outline the chronology. That is not meant to be

- a robust defence; it will be a factual résumé of the insufficient momentum over that period.
111. **Mr McLaughlin:** Can the detail be usefully submitted so that you can speak to the headlines? I am conscious that I may be abusing the Chairperson's patience.
112. **Mr Sweeney:** I will speak only to the headlines.
113. **Mr McLaughlin:** Yes, and, if possible, submit the detail to the Committee. Thank you.
114. **Mr Sweeney:** After the PAC report in 2003, there was a great deal of activity, and a project manager was put in place. By the end of 2003, we had a business case. By 2005, the review of public administration and the whole idea of a significant reform of education, which was predicated on the establishment of the education and skills authority (ESA), was material. The whole rationale was that ESA would become the single regional employing authority for all of the sectors across Northern Ireland.
115. We were making headway until 2005, when we went into what I would describe as a bit of organisational planning blight, wondering how we needed to revisit the business plans to take account of that significant proposed review of public administration. A new business case was not approved until 2007. An implementation team was put in place, and the new system went live for full-time teachers in April 2009, and for part-time teachers in November 2009. It should not have taken six years; it should have been done much faster.
116. **Mr McLaughlin:** What is the cost of the new system?
117. **Mr Sweeney:** The new system has a trade brand called ResourceLink, which is an off-the-shelf system, rather than a bespoke system. It was procured through Northgate. From June 2007 to March 2010, it cost £1.1 million to put in place.
118. **Mr McLaughlin:** Paragraph 2.7 points out that Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) establishments do not have access to the system. How can the Department manage substitution cover in those schools?
119. **Mr Sweeney:** The CCMS schools make up around 33% of the cohort and they make manual returns. I do not want this to come across as some sort of lame excuse, but I think that it is material. The decision around the establishment of ESA provided one conundrum in that, had the legislation been brought forward, CCMS would have been dissolved. The conundrum was whether to invest in becoming fully compatible with ResourceLink when the planning was predicated on CCMS going out of existence. A dedicated work team in ESA was looking at how to bring forward a more strategic approach to discharging the role of regional employer for all those sectors.
120. To deal with the current situation, we have put in place a modest workaround costing £14,500, which will mean that CCMS can link in, albeit in a slightly restricted way, to ResourceLink from which they can get readouts. They will have to continue to manually input data, but they can get electronic readouts of the composite analysis. That was a bit of a workaround, given the organisational planning blight that we are in because of the impasse over proceeding with the proposed education reform Bill.
121. **Mr McLaughlin:** Is there a consistent take-up of that, or is that another issue that comes under the heading of the autonomy of local boards? Do all the CCMS schools now have access to the analysis? I realise that inputting data is a different kind of system.
122. **Mr Sweeney:** They are all manually inputting.
123. **Mrs Montgomery:** From October, CCMS — and what I mean by CCMS is the diocesan offices feeding through to the headquarters based in Holywood — would be able to access reports directly

through the ResourceLink system in exactly the same way as the education and library boards.

124. **Mr McLaughlin:** Will that give us total cover right across the region?
125. **Mrs Montgomery:** Yes.
126. **Mr McLaughlin:** Are they all using the system? Is it a question of them opting in or out?
127. **Mrs Montgomery:** No. They are all using the system.
128. **Mr McLaughlin:** Although you are not going to be fully cranked up until October; is that right?
129. **Mrs Montgomery:** That is correct.
130. **Mr McLaughlin:** The report, as you have referenced two or three times this afternoon, highlights the significance of ESA and of getting a homogenous model. That is my strong view as well. Have you estimated the opportunity costs as a result of the delay in introducing ESA? Schools are operating with systems that are obviously in need of radical reform. In some instances, a look at the statistics shows that it is not fit for purpose; we are just not getting the management tools.
131. **Mr Sweeney:** We have ballpark figures. The underlying business case was prepared by Deloitte in 2007. That stated that by the time ESA was fully in place, one could save around £20 million a year on the administration costs of middle management in delivering education. The Department has taken out £13 million that we believed we could have saved, had ESA been in place. Next year, our assumption is that around £20 million will be taken out of the education budget, predicated on ESA being in place and achieving that level of efficiency. We have the worst of all worlds at the moment.
132. Financially, the Department has planned to take the benefits as though ESA was in place. However, the reality is that it is not in place, so we have brought forward a convergence delivery plan, which is a best effort in the circumstances.
- However, it is a suboptimal arrangement; of that there is no doubt. So the answer to your question is: yes, approximately £20 million could be saved by having ESA in place.
133. **Mr McLaughlin:** That does not seem to take account of the subject of today's inquiry, which is substitution, aspects of sickness absence, etc, and the opportunity costs of training young teachers, as well as qualified teachers who are having difficulty finding employment. It does not factor in any of those costs.
134. **Mr McGrath:** One rationale for the ESA was that we would have had a single employing authority with a common approach to manage the entire teaching workforce and that within that, we would move away from the problems with codification and of having too many cooks. Therefore, we believe that the absence of the ESA has meant that we have not been able to grip a lot of workforce issues, including recruitment, retention and supply, in a strategic way.
135. Therefore, there is an opportunity cost, but we cannot quantify it at this stage. However, the longer the delay goes on and the fact that we have a system of multiple employers, some of whom are doing their own thing, will mean that we will be prevented from getting that strategic grip on the workforce. We are moving to try to do that with the creation of a workforce directorate in the Department that is headed by Mrs Montgomery.
136. **Mr Lunn:** Would the ESA, as it is currently predicated, get over the problem of individual schools and boards of governors still deciding whether to use a substitute teacher who has retired rather than a newly qualified one? Is there something in there that would make a difference?
137. **Mr McGrath:** Not specifically, because the review of public administration (RPA) changes would still leave the local management of schools (LMS) in place. One of the fundamentals of the RPA was to have greater autonomy for schools,

which meant autonomy in the sense that they take responsibility for their decisions but they are also accountable for their outcomes. The ESA would be in a position to take a more common approach on bearing down on schools and boards of governors by addressing issues on school improvement, quality of outcomes and teacher-absence management. That is where such an approach would come from. There would be a common approach across the North rather than the differential approach that has been adopted by five boards, the CCMS and voluntary grammars.

138. **Mr Lunn:** Paul mentioned that bearing down on schools had some effect, particularly over the past couple of years, in the use of newly qualified rather than older, retired teachers. However, that does not have a legal basis and so cannot be enforced. It sounds as though that could not be enforced even if we manage to get ESA established.
139. **Mr McGrath:** As Mr Sweeney indicated, a balance has to be struck between the need to ensure that newly qualified teachers get opportunities and, in many cases, the desire of schools to ensure that the standard of teaching does not drop. I am sure that we all support that. We may have referred to the argument that one particular principal made, which was largely about the need to strike a balance. If a school is replacing a teacher who is on maternity leave or who teaches a specialist subject, there may be an argument about the quality of outcomes that supports using some prematurely retired teachers. That balance has to be struck. I do not think that it would be possible or desirable to completely eliminate the use of prematurely retired teachers, but I think that you want evidence that each school has looked at the situation carefully and has struck the appropriate balance in the appropriate circumstances.
140. **Mr Lunn:** I will come back to that.
141. **Mr McQuillan:** You spoke about the ESA, but I come from the opposite side of the line that says that the ESA is the answer to all our problems. You are saying that the ESA would make things so much easier and better. How confident are you about that? I am not very confident that you can do that, because you have been trying to solve the problem, particularly of using retired teachers, since 1997. We are now sitting here in 2010 and the problem is still not solved. If the ESA were in place tomorrow, how confident would you be that you could solve at least that problem?
142. **Mr McGrath:** We do not envisage that the ESA is the magic bullet for dealing with the issue of prematurely retired teachers.
143. **Mr McQuillan:** That is what it sounds like.
144. **Mr McGrath:** I would be careful. I say again: I do not think that we will get to the point where we never use prematurely retired teachers, because, as we discussed earlier, there is an issue on the standard of teaching and the outcomes of schools, which is the most fundamental issue. If some schools judge in a carefully considered way that using retired teachers in certain circumstances is more important to the quality of outcome than using newly qualified teachers, it is very difficult to simply operate around that by diktat. As I said, I think that the issue would be to test each school to ensure that they are making carefully considered judgements that are based on quality rather than on simple familiarity.
145. **Mr McQuillan:** How do you educate the principals about that? It is the principal's judgement. It is not really the board of governors' call; ultimately, it is the principal's call. How do you convince them that a newly qualified teacher is as good as, if not better than, a prematurely retired teacher?
146. **Mr McGrath:** First, it is the board of governors' responsibility to address such issues.
147. **Mr McQuillan:** It is the responsibility of the board of governors, but who takes that decision in the morning when

- a teacher phones in sick? It is the principal who takes the call.
148. **Mr McGrath:** I think that we would expect a school to have a policy for that that the board of governors has endorsed. At the bottom of all this, every highly experienced and quality teacher, retired or not, started off as a newly qualified teacher. Therefore, we would want boards of governors to recognise that we need to grow the teachers of tomorrow and that not allowing newly qualified teachers through the door is very short-sighted. That is the sort of considered approach that we want to see from boards of governors. Each board needs to look at the issue and determine what its policy will be so that, when the phone rings in the morning, as you said, the principal will operate within a policy that the school has set, rather than in an ad hoc way.
149. **Mr Beggs:** I was going to ask this question later, but it is appropriate to do so now. There is huge variation between different education authorities in the average pay that substitution teachers get. Do you agree that it would send a clear message to schools that if they wish to use experienced teachers, they would have to use a significant amount of money from their discretionary budget to pay for them? We are told that, in one board area, for example, the average pay each day is £132 and that £18 an hour is the lowest hourly cost. Those figures seem reasonable. You indicated that 2,500 qualified teachers are floating around. Do you think that they would be interested in getting £132 a day? What does cap 4 actually mean?
150. **Mr Sweeney:** Earlier, as a layperson, I said that a teacher, as a result of experience and having reached the age of 30 —
151. **Mr Beggs:** Clear financial direction could be given on this matter. If considerable amounts of money had to come from discretionary payments, perhaps cap 4 is too high. What does it mean in hourly and daily rates? If it were lower and you were taking money from other school resources for this, you would not do it.
- Do you accept that if a lower rate for substitute teachers were to be available, schools would increasingly choose younger teachers?
152. **Mr Sweeney:** I thought that I had covered that ground when I said that there is a level of autonomy —
153. **Mr Beggs:** Yes, but do you accept that that autonomy should involve schools deciding whether to take more money from their discretionary resources? What does cap 4 mean for pay?
154. **Mr Sweeney:** It is in the report; I think that it is about £137.
155. **Mrs Montgomery:** It is £132.75.
156. **Mr Beggs:** Could you attract some of those 2,500 teachers by offering a lesser sum? By reducing the figure — guess what? — even more of a school's discretionary money would have to go if it wants an experienced teacher. Consequently, to avoid using that money up, schools might actually go for younger teachers.
157. **Mr Sweeney:** This may help. On a monthly basis, those schools that are not operating within the Department's broad guidelines are held to account for the extent to which they have called upon substitution and the extent to which they are using money for it. However, autonomy means that it lies with each principal to make those decisions. An opportunity cost exists: in his or her judgement, a principal could bring in an experienced teacher who, for the sake of argument, costs not £132 but £150. Perhaps the principal has taken a punt on someone whom he or she does not know, and, by bringing him or her in on the cheapest option, the opportunity cost may be chaos in the classroom. That is a judgement call that, as a boring bureaucrat in Rathgael House, I am not going to make. Autonomy lies with principals and boards of governors. Nevertheless, it is incumbent on the Department to bear down on costs, and we are doing that by challenging schools and their respective governing bodies to strike a balance on the cost of substitution. That is the

- framework within which we operate. I do not want to be terribly bullish because, for the most part, you go for the cheapest option, but that may not be the best option on every occasion.
158. **Mr McGrath:** It is a fair point to link it. A school has the discretion to make decisions about how to use its entire budget. If a school were spending sums that are significantly above previous levels and were running a deficit, it would have serious questions to answer about why it was running that deficit and incurring expenditure that could be reduced by taking account of the issues that Mr Sweeney discussed. As things get tighter in the future, the linkage between quality, cost and familiarity issues with prematurely retired teachers will get starker.
159. **Mr McGlone:** I am not sure which side is the Government here. With due respect, Mr McGrath, you said that you expect schools to have a policy on young teachers and the re-employment or employment of people who have, on the face of it, already retired from teaching. That is a big issue. Any number of bright young people are coming out qualified and are being afforded little or no chance on foot of this. However, I am hearing that we need to give the teachers of tomorrow a chance. I think that you said that you expect schools and boards of governors to have a policy on this matter.
160. What is the Department doing to ensure that policies and practices are in place and to provide a very incisive and clear definition of the exceptional circumstances under which schools can re-employ or employ a teacher who has previously been employed and has ostensibly retired? I have not heard anything to suggest that there are clear-cut criteria that outline the circumstances under which schools can employ a person who has retired and that describe how the evaluation is made about someone who may not have any experience.
161. I listened very carefully to the figures that you gave, and 50% of those
- who retire early from the teaching profession, by and large, go back to act as substitute teachers. That is based on a quick calculation of the figures that we heard. Therefore, I see young people being given little or no chance, yet retired people are coming back into teaching. What strict guidance has been given to schools, and what criteria have been developed? Is there a clear definition of what an exception is or of what exceptional circumstances are?
162. **Mrs Montgomery:** It is important to recognise that, this year, 14% of all the substitution cover that was given was provided by prematurely retired teachers. The remainder was covered by other teachers, either newly qualified teachers or experienced teachers who are not seeking full-time employment. When a principal uses the Northern Ireland Substitute Teacher Register (NISTR) to book a substitute teacher, it is flagged up for them immediately whether that teacher has retired prematurely. Therefore, when it is making its decision, the school knows whether the person whom it may appoint has prematurely retired. At that point, the principal makes the choice.
163. We monitor the re-employment of prematurely retired teachers, and, on a monthly basis, we challenge schools and ask them for an explanation as to why they have chosen to employ a prematurely retired teacher as a substitute.
164. **Mr McGlone:** I have written down that, of 180 substitute teachers, 79 had previously been employed in the teaching profession and had retired. Therefore, I am not too sure about those figures. I know that you challenge schools. However, you work for a Government Department. What are you doing to tell schools how things should be done? What clear direction is there to outline the exceptional circumstances under which schools have the right to employ a person who has previously been a teacher and has now retired?
165. **Mrs Montgomery:** It is important to make it clear that there is nothing to

- stop a school employing a prematurely retired teacher. Those people are still eligible to teach. Quite often, they have made a decision to come out of permanent employment, and they have the right to seek temporary or substitute employment. From a legislative perspective, we can do nothing to stop that. Indeed, it would be age discrimination if we were to say that schools could not employ prematurely retired teachers. We are mandating the use of NISTR, the substitute teacher register. When a school goes to book a substitute, it is flagged up immediately whether that person has prematurely retired. It is then the principal's choice whether they wish to employ that person.
166. **Mr McGlone:** Are you saying that you are firefighting after the event?
167. **Mrs Montgomery:** We are certainly challenging schools to ensure that there are exceptional circumstances under which prematurely retired teachers are being re-employed. Equally, we cannot stop the employment of prematurely retired teachers because, as I said, that would be age discrimination.
168. **Mr McGlone:** I do not want to labour the point, but you could perhaps give us a flavour of what exceptional circumstances are. I would be interested to hear what they are.
169. **Mrs Montgomery:** Certainly. Quite often, it is to do with —
170. **Mr McGlone:** You do not necessarily have to do it now. I would like to hear what those exceptional circumstances are because you have obviously done some research into it somewhere. Could that information be provided to the Committee?
171. **The Chairperson:** You could correspond with us with those details.
172. I ask that members be brief with their supplementary questions as there are still a lot to get through.
173. **Mr Irwin:** Many of us were aghast at the level of re-employment of teachers who had retired early. I understand fully the Department's dilemma, because if a school is within budget, it is difficult for you to tell them what to do with that money. However, I feel that every effort should be made to take a new look at the matter. The issue is not only about the £6 million in savings that could be made; money is one thing, but look at the young people who have come out of university after qualifying and cannot get a job. It is very unfair to those young people that others are filling these posts. The Department must make every effort to look at that.
174. **Mr Sweeney:** If I can come at that from a slightly different angle, we have talked —
175. **The Chairperson:** Paul, I ask you to be brief in your reply, because we have covered a lot and we need to move on.
176. **Mr Sweeney:** To be brief, we have tried to use a number of levers in bearing down on the problem. Until 2008, the costs of premature retirement were borne by the teachers' pension scheme. The report rightly says that that was often a soft option. We have been bearing down on that so that from 2008, the employing authorities have to cover the costs of any added years that are awarded. From April 2010, the employers have to meet the costs arising from pensions being paid early, which virtually doubles the cost. A number of years ago, approximately over 500 people each year were prematurely retired. The reason that I cited those figures is because by bearing down in the way that we have and by saying that someone cannot retire at 50, because 55 is now the minimum age, in the year that is in it, there have been no premature retirements this year. We believe that the figure will remain low, if it will exist at all, in the future.
177. **Mr Irwin:** Would that help in the long term?
178. **Mr Sweeney:** Structurally, we are using whatever levers are available to us, because there are legislative anti-discriminatory issues to consider. We are using the levers that are available to us and are exploring others, such as

- the pay scale issue and the possibility of being more interventionist in that. We are exploring what other steps might be taken within the law. There is a very clear trend here: no teachers have retired prematurely this year, and that trend is likely to continue at a very low level, if it continues at all.
179. **Mr Beggs:** Will you accept that it is really the principal who decides which teacher is employed? You do not phone up the board of governors and have a meeting to decide who is going to be employed. Do you agree that it is the headmaster or headmistress who takes that decision? Do you also agree that governors have, in effect, very little say in the matter? That is, of course, unless you can tell me that many schools have policies on this issue. I am not aware of any policy on the issue. Who is the key person?
180. **Mr Sweeney:** It really depends on the nature of the absence. Earlier Mr McQuillan said that if a teacher rings up in the morning and theirs is a casual absence, you deal with that. Maternity cover can be very much planned. Sadly, someone could be off perhaps with a terminal illness or a debilitation that was going to last for several months, and there could be a much more planned approach to that. The principal, in conjunction with the board of governors, would look at a range of options. Therefore, there must be proper due processes to fill such long-term, albeit temporary, standing arrangements as opposed to casual one- or two-day absences.
181. **Mr Beggs:** Am I right to say if there were interviews for appointing someone for a long-term period, you cannot take the cost that that person would be on board at present? However, if there were a cap, some of those more experienced teachers would, perhaps, not be prepared to work for a lesser sum and at least money could be saved. Is that not factually correct? The system that is in place gives an unlimited sum, depending on experience and irrespective of who is employed.
182. **Mr McGrath:** The practice is that retired teachers are paid a salary that is equivalent to that on which they retired.
183. **Mr Beggs:** Why?
184. **Mr McGrath:** That is the practice.
185. **Mr Beggs:** They may get a pension on top of that and, therefore, be paid twice.
186. **Mr McGrath:** There are bars in place. We are considering introducing a flat rate for substitution in the future. Therefore, if someone who is retired is not prepared to work for the flat rate, there is another disincentive in the system. We are beginning to look at those sorts of issues.
187. **Mr Beggs:** We learned earlier that it took the Department 15 months to clear the report. I am astonished that any report takes that amount of time to clear. That means that 15 months passed before your Department and other Departments could learn lessons from the report. That is entirely unacceptable, and we, as the PAC, will comment on that later.
188. The £66 million cost of substitution cover is an additional burden on the Department of Education and represents teachers who have been put in post frequently on a temporary short-term basis. Do you accept that, if you can reduce that figure, there will be more consistency of teaching in schools?
189. **Mr Sweeney:** I come back to the point that substitution is not a bad thing per se; elements of it are very enlightened.
190. **Mr Beggs:** I appreciate that. However, if a school frequently has to get a substitute teacher in for a particular task, such as for class work or for whatever reason, the pupils will not be getting continuity in their education. Surely that is a bad thing. If several different teachers look after a particular class, it would be difficult for those children to reach their full potential.
191. **Mr Sweeney:** As a layperson who has never been in front of a class, my instinctive answer to that is yes. However, I will qualify that, because it is

- a matter of judgment for the principal. The Department's role through the inspectorate is to ensure that, through random reviews of school performance and so on, the use of substitution causes no detriment to the pupil.
192. **Mr Beggs:** What proportion of the £66 million could be reduced to bring about efficiency without compromising the quality of teaching for the pupils concerned? What is your target?
193. **Mr Sweeney:** There are a number of areas to consider, including sickness absence, which I imagine the Committee will want to explore in more detail. We have set a target that we believe could bring sickness absence down. That cost £11 million in 2008-09, but it has dropped to just below £8 million. Therefore, we are making headway on sickness absence.
194. We have made some investment in the workforce through the revised curriculum and so on. I said earlier that we must explore ways to achieve the same outcome more cost-effectively, such as through the use of online training. There are some very good modules in that area. In the summer past, the Regional Training Unit ran a number of summer schools, and about 2,000 teachers went through those. Again, that is very cost-effective.
195. Therefore, we are looking at every opportunity to bear down on costs. We see a strong case for making the investment in school improvement, curriculum development and staff development. I shall quickly give you some figures. Typically, teachers appear in front of a class for a maximum of 195 days a year, five of which are Baker days. Over and above that, a teacher can take up to five days for school improvement and professional development. Teachers must work a minimum of at least 180 days per annum.
196. Built into the management of the educational workforce is a premise that it is really important that we make that ongoing investment in the profession. Earlier, members drew attention to benchmarking with other professions, and I think that such investment is wholly consistent with other professions.
197. **Mr Beggs:** Zooming in on some of the detail, the costs of vacant posts has gone up from £11 million to £23 million. Why has there been such a dramatic increase?
198. **Mr Sweeney:** We covered that earlier. That is the default mechanism. As a result of a wholly inadequate coding system, we use —
199. **Mr Beggs:** We heard about the 500 different codes. Will you give us a written breakdown of the 500 codes and their costs, so that we can look at the figures for ourselves? I am serious; I would like to see the codes and have a breakdown of how the £23 million and the £13 million in the category "Other", for that matter, have been spent.
200. **Mr Sweeney:** Yes, of course. However, I think that it is more important to focus on the improvements that we are putting in place. I want to counterbalance the topsy-turvy world that developed by looking at the regime that we are putting in place and at the world that we are trying to move towards.
201. **Mr Beggs:** I appreciate that; I am just picking up a few points. If we go back to the subject of Waterside House, there is a manual system to record the 500 codes. I am astonished; no business would operate like that with its employees. You indicated that the education authorities that were drawing the money off were dictating to you what the system should be. Why did someone not work out years ago that there was a better way to manage the place? Were civil servants just comfortable ticking boxes and spending public money? I am glad that things are starting to be addressed, but, frankly, that was a ridiculous way to spend money.
202. **Mr Sweeney:** A balance needs to be struck. Earlier, I said that the wages still go through, which is really important. The core function of Waterside House is to pay 20,000 teachers and 19,000 pensioners monthly, which come to £1

- billion. That core business is delivered. Without sounding complacent, I must say that there has been a high level in the quality of performance at Waterside House and a low level of complaints.
203. Over 20 years, there has been a largely manually based scheme with an element of IT backup, which, 20 years on, is nearly obsolete. We have put ResourceLink in place, which is an off-the-shelf computer-based system. That has taken a lamentably long time to put in place, and it is not exactly where it needs to be to ensure that we get the best use of it.
204. **Mr Beggs:** When did you see the need for that system? Was it when the report was produced? What is the function of accounting officers and managers in the Department? Surely the Department should be dealing with these issues before the Audit Office discovers them. Do your managers not think that it is up to them to be efficient and to invigorate and come up with new systems?
205. **Mr Sweeney:** Again, we covered that ground. The 2003 report drew attention to the problem. At that time, the Department made a commitment to put the new system in place by 2005. We failed to do that, and it did not go live until April 2009. We have covered that ground substantially.
206. **Mr Beggs:** I do not accept that as an excuse for its taking so long. However, I shall move on.
207. I understand that teachers usually do a significant amount of cover for colleagues, so there may even be other classes that are not being taught properly due to absences. However, such classes will not appear in the figures, because substitute teachers have not been brought in. For instance, classes could be doubled up or there could be a study class with a teacher standing at the front. Do you have any figures on the degree to which that might be happening in our schools?
208. **Mr Sweeney:** I mentioned earlier the verb “to learn”, as opposed to just watching a class. The Department
- has issued guidance about the management of substitute teachers. Although substitution is desirable and sometimes essential, it should not be second best. I get assurance through the inspectorate’s scheduled and unannounced visits. That involves dropping into classrooms, some of which are fronted by regular teachers and some of which are fronted by, on a random basis, substitute teachers. There should be no diminution in the quality of learning in a class just because it has a substitute teacher. The whole emphasis of the autonomy of local management in schools is that, if the principal makes that judgement call and pays over the daily rate, it is done, presumably, on the predication that the class requires that level of expertise. We have put that framework in place, but the judgement call lies with the principal and the board of governors.
209. **Mr Beggs:** I accept that it will not always be possible to achieve the perfect match. However, is there any mechanism to record in any school whether, for example, a maths class too frequently does not have a maths teacher or a French class does not have a French teacher? Does the new system record that and trigger it to the Department?
210. **Mr Sweeney:** Such information is elevated through the inspectorate route. I gave an example, without being school specific, about an inspector who had to make a board of governors aware that the school’s level of substitution was equivalent to four full-time teachers. If the inspectorate finds out that, as a result of proliferation of or a high level of substitution, the quality of teaching is detrimental to the pupils, the inspectorate has a very clear onus to draw that to the attention of the board of governors and the Department.
211. **Mr McQuillan:** How often does the inspectorate call into schools unannounced? In my experience, that is always planned well in advance.
212. **Mr Sweeney:** I said earlier that there are approximately 1,250 schools. In any given year, the inspectorate will carry out

- about 1,000 unannounced visits, more than 200 planned visits and just over 80 follow-up visits.
213. **Mr McGlone:** I have a general observation. The report mentions Cognos and ResourceLink, and paragraph 2.8 mentions software problems six years on from the previous PAC report. I do not know how many times the PAC will hear about computer problems and software problems. That needs to be addressed on a wider cross-departmental basis. I do not know how we get competent people in place who know a bit about software and computer issues. It is astounding how many times that has come up; it has a huge cost to the public purse. I do not know how you will feed that back into the system, but you should make a note of it. It is incredible.
214. When we compare absence levels with those in Scotland and Wales, we see that the sickness absence that is detailed for some English schools in figure 10 seems to indicate that, for whatever reason, something positive is happening in schools in England to enable them to keep absence rates low. If that was not the case, we would probably not be having such a big conversation. Clearly, somebody needs to look into the parallels and the read-across. Is there any reason why that is the case? If so, I presume that the Department has looked into it, given that the report has been around long enough. Are there any good-practice lessons, good procedures or good exercises that the Department can learn from? If so, what are they and what is the Department doing about it?
215. **Mr Sweeney:** It is useful to benchmark, and the report does that very well. It is, nevertheless, an area where there needs to be a great deal of qualification. I take the view that, given the size of the teaching force in Northern Ireland and the ratio of rural to urban schools, we are probably more akin to Wales. This is not meant to be a self-serving statement, but, if we were to benchmark against Wales, we would come out reasonably well.
216. Undoubtedly, the trailblazer is England, which has got down to an average of five days a year. The context is that there has been a very significant remodelling of the workforce in England, particularly in the deployment of teacher assistants and higher level teacher assistants. There is a great deal more scope for teachers to get assistance in releasing themselves for professional development. The other big difference is that, in England, there has been approximately a 9% increase in the teaching profession from 1997 to 2006. Conversely, in Northern Ireland, the profession has contracted by around 5% in that time. It is useful to benchmark, but we must be careful to qualify that, rather than using an overly simplistic comparator.
217. **Mr McGlone:** With all respect Paul, I would have thought that, the minute that that was flagged up, someone at the Department would have said that it should be looked into. You said that there are hugely more numbers of teachers in England. One would think that that would mean that the proportion of incidences would be possibly or potentially around the same or higher, but sickness absence rates in England are 3.2 percentage points lower than they are here. I am a bit saddened to hear that the Department has not said that England is possibly doing something right and looked to find out what is being done there. If there is not a direct read-across, someone should at least say that they will go over and see what is happening in England and show the reasons why there is not a direct read-across.
218. You are asking us to treat the figures with caution, and we can only do that if there is some substance behind that to show us that people from the Department have been to England, spoken to some of the English authorities where the sickness rates are at their lowest and found out x, y and z. Potentially, you could have found out that x, y and z could have been translated into something positive here. A blank statement from the Department asking

- us to treat the figures with caution tells me nothing. I will treat them with caution, but that can be caution in either direction. It can be caution in favour of improvement or caution in the other direction to say that we do not treat them as a direct read-across.
219. However, I expect the Department to show some degree of leadership in those matters by saying that there is scope for improvement and giving the reasons for that. I have not heard that yet. Is it the Department's intention to find out why the figures from England are so relatively low and to come back and see if there is any read-across, experiences or lessons that could be learned from Britain?
220. **Mr Sweeney:** Rather than being cautious, let me be slightly bold. We looked at the targets in England. At one time, a target was set in England for achieving an average of six days. As I said earlier, an average of five days is now being achieved. Over the period that the report covers, we have been able to reduce absence from an average of 10.1 days to an average of 7.55 days. Therefore, we have achieved a 25% reduction in the period that is covered by the report.
221. As far as aligning ourselves with the stretching target that has been set in England is concerned, the good news that I can give the Committee is that two of the five education and library boards are achieving the target of an average of six days per annum and one of the boards is tantalisingly close to that. We are bearing down heavily on the management of absence through sickness.
222. We will take advice on best practice from any good quarter. We have been focusing largely on looking at good exemplars in Northern Ireland and on organising workshops, and so on, so that we can share that good practice across the boards and across the other employing authorities such as CCMS. Every opportunity is being taken to bear down on the management of absence. I could go further, Chairman, but you
- asked me to be brief. If you wish me to go further on that specific area, I can.
223. **The Chairperson:** I asked you to be brief, but do not hold back anything. You need to put across any information that you have.
224. **Mr Sweeney:** The Department has set the target of an average of six days to be achieved by 2010-11. A number of the employing authorities are on course to do that, but a number are not. Each year, the management of absence has to be a type of key performance indicator in resource allocation plans, which is a business planning process. I hold those bodies to account on a quarterly basis. I have just held my first suite of meetings with the education and library boards, the CCMS, and so on. That used to be done twice a year, but it is now being done four times a year. The management of absence through sickness is one of the key areas on which we are really bearing down. I get tremendous co-operation from the employing authorities in that regard.
225. **Mr McGlone:** To conclude, do you have it in your mind to look at some of the English authorities?
226. **Mr McGrath:** We would be very happy to look at them, benchmark and seek good practice. However, we are trying to bear down on targets. There are a lot of examples of what is good policy for managing sickness absence, and Mrs Montgomery can add to that. The report rightly points to the efforts that are being made in the Civil Service. A lot of the basic building blocks and the framework are clear; it is about making sure that those are applied from the top down, which is from the Department to the employing authorities. However, it is also about making sure that each board of governors in each school addresses those issues and bears down on that, because that is where the results will come from.
227. **Mrs Montgomery:** Mr Sweeney talked about the remodelling of the workforce that took place in England. That had a major impact because it released

- teachers from the bureaucratic burden of administrative tasks and it doubled the support staff workforce in England over that period. We believe that that had a major impact on teacher attendance. We have looked at that, and we intend to carry out a major school workforce review to ensure that the lessons from the national agreement in England and Wales will be applied in Northern Ireland.
228. We had a similar approach with the Curran report, but there were difficulties in relation to financial implications. The NIAO report states that any implications for finance should, effectively, be self-financing, so we need to save money in relation to teacher sickness absence and re-designate that back into the system. However, it is really important to note that, since the printing of the PAC report in 2003, we have made major reforms in respect of managing attendance in Northern Ireland. We reviewed the managing attendance policy and closed a number of loopholes that existed in the previous policy. For example, we now have self-certification from the first day of absence, which was missing from the previous policy. We have trigger points that identify casual as well as long-term absence. We have return-to-work interviews, which are being implemented right across the system. We have the monitoring that is presented by the Department on a quarterly basis, whereby we identify schools that consistently have high levels of absence. The traffic light system designates red, amber and green, with those categorised as red having eight days or more. We are taking steps to address that, and it is evident in the fact that teacher attendance has improved and absence has been reduced by 25% since the previous PAC report.
229. It is not that we are not making best efforts; it takes time for the impact of those changes to be seen in the figures. Certainly, there is a cultural issue in relation to supporting principals to manage attendance. That was seen previously as something for the Department or the employing authorities to do. We now work much closer with boards of governors, and the management of attendance is a standing item. At all governor meetings — three times a year — we have asked that one governor be, in effect, the attendance tsar, responsible for supporting the principal in managing attendance.
230. Another issue on which we are working with schools to develop is their need to have information at their fingertips. Therefore, the C2K system — the schools information management system that all schools use — contains a managing attendance module. The report refers to the pilot scheme for managing attendance that the Western Education and Library Board carried out using that information system. We intend to roll that system out to all schools, so that, rather than us feeding information into the system before it is fed back to them, they will have it at their fingertips. Therefore, there have been considerable improvements in managing attendance.
231. **Mr McGlone:** You mentioned C2K. Is that the system that CCMS has a problem in accessing?
232. **Mrs Montgomery:** No. All schools have access to C2K, which is the schools information management system. About 80% of schools use about 70% of its functionality, and we want to increase that usage. It is being used predominantly for pupil information, but we want schools to use it to manage their workforces more effectively.
233. **Mr McGlone:** Which system did CCMS have difficulty with?
234. **Mrs Montgomery:** The CCMS did not have access to ResourceLink, which is the teachers' payroll system, but, from October, it will have exactly the same access to reports as the education and library boards.
235. **Mr McGlone:** I do not know how you will feed this in, but we have left the issues with computer systems and software development hanging. Is there any

- means or mechanism, at permanent secretary level or wherever, to ensure that we do not end up looking at the same computer software issues again? That is all that I will say about that, because it is an incredible waste of money.
236. Paul Sweeney touched on figure 9, which shows the range of teachers' sickness absence by employing authority. You said that the boards were working pretty well. Has there been any, or is there room for, improvement by CCMS, which, according to those figures, seems to have high average absence rates?
237. **Mr Sweeney:** The target is to get down to an average of six days per annum. The CCMS is running at 8.82 days per annum, so it is not on target. In order to achieve the target, it needs a 32% in-year improvement, which would be a heroic achievement. Faced with that, I sought an assurance from CCMS — which it gave — that it is absolutely determined to work towards achieving the target, even though there has been slippage.
238. The CCMS has taken the following steps. First, it acknowledges that there is a serious issue, which is important because it is not a case of it being in denial. I have received the chief executive of CCMS's personal commitment that he is seized with the importance of working with the Department in that respect. He is working closely with the five unions that make up the teacher negotiating committee. He is also working very closely with the boards of governors in schools. Recently, he piloted with the Regional training Unit a training programme geared towards 30 principals, so that they could focus on the systems and procedures for managing absence. CCMS has established a management strategy group, which has set specific targets for schools. It has a dedicated senior officer who has the lead responsibility and reports directly to the chief executive. More recently, CCMS requires boards of governors of schools with a sickness absence in excess of six days per annum to set a performance objective for the principal, so that that principal works towards the reduction of absence and the average of six days per annum or better. CCMS are now arranging a meeting with the chairs of boards of governors and principals in each of the schools that are in excess of six days, to ensure that all existing policies and procedures are being fully implemented.
239. Therefore, although I have taken the view that CCMS is out of kilter — because I said earlier that a number of boards are now achieving the target, but CCMS has slipped — I have seen some of the documentation that it has issued to schools with a high level of absence, and my view is that all reasonable steps are being taken by that organisation. That said, it will take some time for it to achieve the target of six days per annum. Therefore, although there have been high levels of absence, I assure the Committee that there is no complacency and the issue is, rightly, being afforded the attention that it requires.
240. **Ms Purvis:** Following on from what Patsy said, I want to focus on sickness absence and maternity leave. The figures in the report are quite encouraging and show that there has been a 50% reduction in female teachers taking sick leave immediately after maternity leave; however, those figures are for the year 2007-08. Do you have figures for 2008-09 and 2009-2010? Did those years show the same level of improvement?
241. **Mr Sweeney:** Perhaps my colleague La'Verne can help me, because I do not have those figures. However, it is important that we get those figures and that they be provided to the Committee.
242. **Mrs Montgomery:** We know that those rates are still decreasing. Perhaps you could point me to the section of the report that you referred to.
243. **Ms Purvis:** It was paragraph 3.22.
244. **Mrs Montgomery:** The figures that I have show that 31% of those teachers

- who took maternity leave in 2004-05 took sick leave before returning to work, and that figure fell to 19% in 2008-09. Updated figures for 2009-2010 are not yet available.
245. **Ms Purvis:** That paragraph goes on to relate the Department's concern at the possible evidence of some teachers being content to end their maternity leave early to avail of more generous sick leave. What evidence have you gathered to show that, and how is it being managed?
246. **Mrs Montgomery:** That relates to a recent tribunal case that was taken against the Department and the employing authority. That case concerned an individual teacher who came off maternity leave, had a doctor's certificate that she was fit to resume work, and subsequently produced a doctor's certificate for an illness that was non-maternity related. At that time, the individual was being paid statutory maternity pay, because she was still in her statutory maternity period. However, the tribunal found that it was a case of gender discrimination, and that when a female teacher is fit to return to work but subsequently becomes ill due to a non-maternity related illness, they are entitled to receive sick pay.
247. The Department's concern is that the system could be misused if it became widely known that staff would receive full sick benefits if they return to work after a pregnancy and then go off sick with a non-maternity related illness. Full sickness benefits entitle an individual to full pay for the first 100 days and half pay for the following 100 days, and the difficulty is that that provision is now in case law, and the Department has no choice but to implement it.
248. **Ms Purvis:** Do you have evidence that that is occurring and perhaps increasing? How will you manage that, or does the Department have no choice?
249. **Mrs Montgomery:** There is no choice in the sense that, when an individual has a doctor's certificate stating that the illness is a non-maternity related illness,
- the only challenge open to the employer at that stage is a referral to the Occupational Health Service. However, it is very rare that an occupational health physician would take a different position from that of a general practitioner.
250. **Ms Purvis:** Paragraph 3.25 of the report outlines the situation in respect of the Southern Board, which has the largest spend on health promotion for teachers, but the highest level of teachers who are off sick. Again, those figures are for 2007-08. Have those figures improved for the Southern Board? Was there a particular reason why the Southern Board had such levels of sickness-related absence?
251. **Mr Sweeney:** There has been an improvement of about 10%. The level of average sickness absence dropped in 2009-2010 to about 7.11 days.
252. **Mrs Montgomery:** Mr Sweeney referred earlier to a workshop that we held recently with all the employing authorities. We asked that very question of the Southern Board. Sometimes, raising awareness can have the effect of increasing absence in the first instance prior to its having an impact on the system. That was the explanation that was provided by the Southern Board at that time.
253. **Mr McGrath:** It is not unknown — it has happened in the Department — for health roadshows to be run that encourage staff to get health MOTs and general checks only for them to discover underlying issues. It happened in our Department last year. It is the law of unintended consequences.
254. **The Chairperson:** There is nothing like being kept in the dark.
255. **Ms Purvis:** We are talking about mushrooms again.
256. Do you have any evidence to suggest that health promotion is working when it comes to reducing sickness levels? I accept that when you first do something like that, people go and get MOTs, find something wrong, and try to address it. Is there any evidence to show that, after

- that initial blip, health promotion has a beneficial effect in reducing sickness levels?
257. **Mr McGrath:** I believe that promoting well-being in the workforce produces positive outcomes. It is important to focus on having a healthy workforce, because that links to standards of teaching and standards of outcomes. There is plenty of evidence that emphasis on improving health and reducing stress in the workforce, supporting staff who are in stressful situations and giving good leadership can help the general well-being of the workforce and avoid some conditions. We want to do more work on the overall well-being of teachers rather than always talking about the sickness issue.
258. **Mrs Montgomery:** In April 2009, we introduced a 24-hour telephone counselling service. Our figures for 2009-2010 suggest that that has had an impact on teacher attendance. The converse has, effectively, happened in the maintained sector, because it did not have access to that service until April 2009. It had been available to the education and library boards up until that date. The picture is similar: when something new is introduced, there is a high uptake, and it has an impact, but it takes time to have an impact on attendance figures. We will, perhaps, see that this year and in the following year.
259. **Ms Purvis:** I want to ask you about the teacher attendance procedure. You told us earlier about what is being implemented across the boards. Paragraph 3.31 of the report points to a failure among some schools to adopt and promote the attendance procedure:
- "For example, an internal audit investigation by the Southern Board revealed...only 69 per cent of controlled schools were found to have adopted the absence policy and only 44 per cent carried out return to work interviews."*
260. You said that that was being implemented across the board; perhaps you have more up-to-date figures that we could have. However, why is compliance a problem in the first place?
261. **Mrs Montgomery:** I think that part of the difficulty in the past was that the managing attendance policy, which was established in 1999, was not an agreed policy. By that I mean that it was not agreed through the teachers' negotiating committee. It was seen as a management policy. The difference in the new 2008 managing attendance policy is that it was fully negotiated and agreed through the negotiating machinery. Therefore, we have secured buy-in from the workforce, as represented by the teacher unions, which have engaged with us on the implementation of the policy.
262. However, a cultural shift is involved. Traditionally, schools did not want to deal directly with those matters; they wanted the employing authority to support them in that. We are working with the system to support that cultural shift through developments with boards of governors and, as I mentioned earlier, the governor tsar on training for principals. In fact, the RTU ran its induction programme for newly appointed principals today, and the issue was discussed at that session. It will take time for schools to accept that ownership and appreciate that it is their responsibility. Obviously, the Department is ultimately accountable, but the responsibility must lie with individual schools and boards of governors.
263. **Ms Purvis:** How will you measure compliance? For example, the report recommends a review of the implementation of the policy and the internal audit programme for school visits. Have you looked at that recommendation? Will you incorporate that?
264. **Mr Sweeney:** You are right to point that out. The report came out in May 2010, and, subsequently, one board has done an internal audit review of its policies and procedures on managing absence. Again, training was drawn out as an issue. Therefore, we have now written to the education and library boards to advise them that they must now ensure that, in future internal audits, they provide the details of their findings on

the management of absence directly to the Department. We want much more adherence and, as you say, compliance with the policies and procedures that are in place. We think that the suite of policies and procedures is reasonably good, but the issue is compliance. Training is coming through as an issue. If we ask people to do a difficult job, they should be skilled up to do it. The boards have now factored that into their internal audit plans, and they have been advised that we wish to see the findings, specifically from those internal audit reports, that relate to the management of absence.

265. **Mr Lunn:** All my questions relate to pages 36 and 37 of the report, if you want to look at them. As we know, the information in figures 12 and 13 has been updated. I know that you have dealt with some of this already, but forgive me, we are two hours into the meeting. Those figures show that there has been an increase in the proportion of substitution days worked by prematurely retired teachers. In fact, on those new figures, I think that the rate has gone back up to 14.4%, which is the highest level since 2002.
266. Paragraph 4.1 says that prematurely retired teachers should be re-employed in “only the most exceptional circumstances”. We have heard that phrase a couple of times today. I see that that point was, apparently, first emphasised in 1984, which is 26 years ago. It was reiterated in 1988, 1992, 1996, 2002 and, more recently, in 2006. However, there has been no progress. In fact, the situation has gone backwards in the past 10 years. I know that you already outlined some of this, but tell me again why there has been such little progress and what you can do to ensure that that ideal is achieved.
267. **Mr Sweeney:** I will bring you up to date. In figure 13, the listed “62,310” in the 2008-09 column should read “67,927”. As you know, that was a result of the error that I drew to the Committee’s attention. That was the figure in 2008-09, and the figure for 2009-2010 is 57,116. Without being in any way
- complacent, we are seeing results from what I call the levers that we can pull, such as increasing the prematurely retired age from 50 to 55 and putting the burden of cost on the employing authorities as part of the hard-charge regime. We have seen the figures drop, and so far there have been no prematurely retired teachers so far this year. In the figure for 2009-2010, you can see that our tactic of being much more interventionist is starting to bear fruit.
268. Your more substantive point is that, over a long period of time, the mechanism of early retirement was seen as a soft option, as the report rightly states. Although the Department has made its best endeavours to instruct boards of governors and schools that the mechanism should be used only in exceptional circumstances, we saw the trend continue. However, I think that we have now arrested that trend considerably with the steps that we have taken. There is evidence to suggest that, and we are exploring other levers that we might be able to use, all while operating within equality and employment legislation.
269. **Mr Lunn:** The changes in the teacher pension arrangements have been the major factor. In other words, you have taken away the incentive for them to retire and then come back. If that had not happened, the teachers’ pension scheme would probably be heading towards needing state assistance, because it is that bad. That is why you have produced none this year. You could say that by using that one tactic, you will eventually squeeze the re-employment of prematurely retired teachers out of the system. We will wait and see.
270. You would not believe the number of times we hear how a situation has improved since the completion of a report; it is one of the most common themes in evidence to the Committee. I am glad to see that the 67,000 has come down to 57,000; let us hope that the trend continues.

271. **Mr Sweeney:** If current patterns continue, it will still take 15 years to exhaust it.
272. **Mr Lunn:** It has been a 26-year problem, so 15 years is not that bad.
273. **Mr Sweeney:** That is a fair point.
274. **Mr Lunn:** Perhaps I am being naive, but over the 26-year period, would it have been illegal to place a stipulation on a prematurely retired teacher's conditions? If someone were retiring prematurely and were due to receive an enhanced pension, could you not have changed the conditions so that they could not have applied for re-employment?
275. **Mr Sweeney:** That could have been done by agreement.
276. **Mrs Montgomery:** It could have been done, but it would have meant changing the regulations.
277. **Mr Lunn:** Why was it not done when it was such a problem for such a long time? It seems to be very basic, notwithstanding the problem of excluding newly qualified teachers, which we will come back to. The fact that someone could walk out the door with an enhanced pension and get re-employed 29 days later does not seem right. I am really surprised that, over all those years, nothing was done about it, except to continue to give departmental advice to schools, which were apparently perfectly happy to ignore that and continue with what I can see was an old boys' network. The schools preferred to bring in people whom they were familiar with, instead of taking a chance on newly qualified people.
278. **Mrs Montgomery:** The premature retirement regulations were primarily used as an incentive to avoid compulsory redundancy. Therefore, in that sense, they encouraged older teachers to volunteer for redundancy.
279. **Mr McLaughlin:** Were they primarily used in that way, or was it intended that they would be used in that way?
280. **Mrs Montgomery:** The regulations were used for that so that, whenever a school faced a redundancy situation, it was able to get volunteers, including older teachers aged over 50 at that point, instead of having to go down a compulsory route. That saved younger teachers from compulsory redundancy. Therefore, the system had a positive effect in that sense. The Department has always monitored the re-employment of prematurely retired teachers to the point that, if the salary that a pensioner was in receipt of in substitution exceeded what their salary was before they retired, their pension would have been abated. It was not that they could not go on earning; there was a level to which their earnings would be capped.
281. **Mr Lunn:** The Department's website has a re-employment calculator, which is a marvellous device to allow people who have just retired to calculate whether it is worth their while to start working again. I gather that it has probably been slightly overtaken by events now, given the changes to the pension scheme. In the past few days, I have looked at various websites to try to find something that is almost comparable, where people might retire and become re-employed, but I have yet to see another re-employment calculator. That was a lovely wee benefit for teachers. With the ready reckoner, it would not have taken two minutes to work out how much a teacher could earn before they started to lose money. That device is still on the website.
282. **Mrs Montgomery:** Again, those individuals were not necessarily choosing not to work. Teachers were volunteering for redundancy, but that did not mean that they could not work again. They decided to come away from permanent employment, but they have the right to seek alternative employment.
283. **Mr Lunn:** When the boards of governors, or, as Adrian said, the headmasters, were deciding to re-employ someone, you had to check whether they were still on the register. That did not necessarily happen after 29 days; it could have been after a couple of years. Were checks done to ensure

- that those teachers were up to date with the curriculum and with personal development?
284. **Mrs Montgomery:** It would be for the individual principal to check that. If the principal were employing a teacher from the register, they would have to ensure that they were up to date with developments in the curriculum.
285. **Mr Lunn:** You are getting off lightly, Paul, because La'Verne is answering all the questions.
286. **Mr McQuillan:** I am sorry for butting in, but surely it is not up to the principal to ensure that those have been checked. If the Department is keeping the teacher on a register, it is up to the Department, not the principal, to ensure that the teacher is at the top of his or her game.
287. **Mr Beggs:** Does the register not show whether the teacher is up to date with the curriculum?
288. **Mrs Montgomery:** The individual effectively chooses to register themselves.
289. **Mr Beggs:** You manage it, and, presumably, you could choose that it would show whether the teacher was up to date with the current curriculum.
290. **Mrs Montgomery:** That information is not included on the register.
291. **Mr Beggs:** I am asking why not.
292. **Mrs Montgomery:** The register is relatively new, and, therefore, the people who are on it are, effectively, relatively newly qualified.
293. **Mr Beggs:** We have been told that 50% of the people on it are over 50.
294. **Mrs Montgomery:** They may be, but does not mean that they are retired in that sense.
295. **Mr Beggs:** A significant number of retired teachers have been working as substitute teachers. How does a headmaster know whether teachers on that register are up to date with a curriculum?
296. **Mrs Montgomery:** The register contains information about their experience, so once they employ that person, it will be for the principal to ensure that that information is accurate.
297. **Mr Lunn:** I thank my two colleagues for taking over my next point. Since they have already done that, I will not labour it. The point seems to go back to the reasons why more experienced teachers are used. Paul, you referred to the nature of the specialisation and experience that are required, but it also indicates that schools lack trust in newly qualified teachers. They think that, although they are qualified, they are not fit to teach. That is a comment; you can respond or otherwise to it.
298. **Mr Sweeney:** I would just say that I think that the findings of this report will be material to the ongoing discussion on these matters. To counterbalance that, I have made it clear that I am unequivocal about what the Minister's priority is, and, as an extension of that and operating to her direction and control, I should say that teachers who have been prematurely retired should be re-employed only in exceptional circumstances. From the evidence that we have heard this afternoon and as a result of this report, we know that that is not the case. I tried to put across the counter argument on the role of principals. On that point, I will say that a whole range of teachers are doing an outstanding and terrific job. We must get the balance right between teachers who are in full-time employment and teachers who have been prematurely retired and who then took a conscious career decision to be re-employed.
299. The conundrum with which we started is that judgement call that has to be made. The principal and the board of governors have the autonomy to make that professional judgement call. The Department is not satisfied, so we have put in place a number of steps. It is very obvious that those steps now bear down heavily on the matter and are cutting it off at source. That has dramatically reduced the number of people who avail themselves of premature retirement;

- in fact, the figure is now down to nil. On a monthly basis, we ask schools to explain why they used prematurely retired teachers and why they decided to incur that additional expense.
300. **Mr Lunn:** That is fine, and I am glad to hear that. You already said that today, and you have repeated it now. Certainly, the message from the Committee is pretty clear: we strongly favour the use of newly qualified teachers. I find incredible the very thought that a 56-year-old who has taught for 30-odd years is, in most circumstances, a better bet than a newly qualified graduate who is rearing to go. I take your point that there are some situations in which they are better. For example, as you said, it may depend on the age of the class or on the subject. However, if it were me, most of the time, I would go for the younger, fresher approach because it is bang up to date.
301. I know that what you did with the teacher pension arrangements is obviously working. I also know that there was quite a bit of resistance to them, but they have been in place in England since 1997. We can be a bit behind the times here, but this is 12 or 13 years on, and, suddenly, we seem to have seen the light. Was there not evidence from across the water that those arrangements had the desired effect?
302. **Mr Sweeney:** Appendix 7 shows clearly that the level of prematurely retired teachers in England dropped very dramatically after 1997. I concur with the report's findings on that. In Northern Ireland, we have used premature retirement as a soft option in managing the demographic decline in the number of pupils, which led to rationalisation, which, in turn, led to a declining workforce. Perhaps the premature retirement option became the soft option, if you like. As a result of the steps that we have taken, and one may argue whether they were timely enough, I have assured myself that we are absolutely bearing down on the issue.
303. **Mr Lunn:** The report uses the lovely phrase "efficient discharge".
304. **Mr McLaughlin:** That sounds like a water company.
305. **Mr Lunn:** These people love to steal my lines. I was thinking that that would fit well into a Northern Ireland Water report. Perhaps it would even fit into a report from the Health Department, but we will not go there. I presume that the phrase means inefficient discharge; it means that the teacher has been told to leave because they have not carried out their duties efficiently enough to satisfy the requirements. In other words, putting it not quite so politely, they were bordering on incompetent. I suppose that that comment will go on the record. How can you justify re-employing somebody who was asked to leave because they were not up to the job? I know that it is only a small number, but how can that be justified? It is as well that it is a small number, because, in a way, that is the worst figure in the report.
306. **Mr Sweeney:** Obviously, I want to show great respect, but we did not concur that incompetency was the reason why people would leave on premature retirement. We do not concur with that at all.
307. Dealing with the term "efficiency discharge", I said earlier that there were demographic impulses in the decline in numbers of pupils. Rationalisation was required, and we had a 5% reduction in the workforce. Mrs Montgomery mentioned that, rather than make people compulsorily redundant, which could have penalised the new entrants, an opportunity would have been presented to the cohort in any given school, and people would have volunteered for premature retirement. Although there may be instances of incompetence, it would be wrong to make a blanket statement that people retired prematurely as a result of incompetence, and, as a corollary, got re-employed. That would be wholly unacceptable.
308. **Mr Lunn:** All right; I will withdraw the word "incompetent". That is, perhaps, going too far, and that is fair enough. It still means, however, that the teachers

were not regarded as being effective enough to do the job properly. Does it mean that?

309. **Mrs Montgomery:** The efficient discharge scheme would, predominantly, have been used for principals and vice-principals and would have related to their leadership and management. Effectively, they would then still have the opportunity to be re-employed in a teaching function as opposed to a leadership function. Therefore, the efficient discharge relates to the roles of principals and vice-principals. That in no way stops them being able to be very competent classroom teachers. The re-employment of people who have been through the efficient discharge process or have retired prematurely is being monitored on a monthly basis. We are challenging schools that choose to employ those individuals to find out whether the circumstances are exceptional.
310. **Mr Lunn:** If I said something that went beyond reasonable comment, I am happy to withdraw it. However, I cannot think of any good reason why people who have been discharged in that way should be re-employed, whether they are a headmaster being re-employed as a teacher or otherwise. If someone who is at the head of an organisation is regarded as not being sufficiently effective, it seems strange to slot them in further down the ladder. Is that coming to an end now? You say that you are monitoring it.
311. **Mrs Montgomery:** In the past two years, since the hard-charging of the enhancement was placed at the employing authority's door, there has been one efficient discharge. Effectively, both premature retirement and efficient discharge have gone to zero. That is our intention going forward.
312. **Mr Lunn:** Again, you are moving in the right direction. The previous figure, from April to September 2009, was 33, and now it is one. That is fair enough.
313. **Mr Beggs:** It was mentioned earlier that some 640 teacher training places are

available in Northern Ireland at present. We have been told that 2,500 qualified teachers are seeking employment. First, how do you determine the right number of training places, given that such a large number of qualified teachers are seeking employment? Secondly, how do you ensure that those places that are available are in areas where there are vacancies, whether those are in particular subject areas or something else? I am curious about which specialities you are encouraging people to train in, given the number of training places that are available.

314. **Mr Sweeney:** To answer the first part of your question, there is a formula known as the teacher demand statistical model, which takes account of projected pupil numbers, teacher-pupil ratios, teacher wastage rates and inward and outward migration. That is really important. I said earlier that we are down to an intake of about 640 students per annum, spread across five institutions: St Mary's; Stranmillis; Queen's University; the University of Ulster; and the Open University. There is real evidence that we have pared back so much that, perhaps, the viability of running teacher training in some of those institutions is coming to a level where the critical mass is so diminished. You touched on a critical point, and it is a conundrum. Do we stop initial teacher education? In doing so, the impact would be to erode the centre of excellence that we have built up in our local institutions. We have got the numbers down to about 640, which is teetering very close to questioning the viability of —
315. **Mr Beggs:** Are we training too many teachers and bringing students in who build up loans, with little prospect of a post being available at the end of the course?
316. **Mr Sweeney:** In response to that stark choice, we have reduced the intake by 27%. As a result, we will reach a critical mass threshold, below which we might erode the viability of local institutions. That would be a bold decision to take, and the structural consequences would

- take many years to work themselves out.
317. **Mr Beggs:** Is it the institutions and the cost of providing them that you want to protect, or are you thinking about what we can afford and the number of teachers that we actually need? Surely that is key.
318. **Mr McGrath:** It is important to ensure that we retain the capacity to train teachers. If that disappeared and the demographics changed, that capacity would not exist. However, it is a difficult judgement to make. On the other hand, anyone who applies for a teacher training place recognises the impact of supply and demand. It is not as though anyone going into training is not aware of the issues and of the small number of available posts. Consequently, people have to make mature decisions. As Mr Sweeney said, we are approaching critical mass, so difficult decisions, if only those based on cost, will have to be made for future years.
319. **Mr Sweeney:** Be assured that it is not a case of the tail wagging the dog. Pupils are at the heart of this; it is not about protecting institutions. As I said, there has been a demographic decline. That will reach its nadir in about 2015, when demand will begin to pick up again, although not dramatically. Over and above that, real evidence is emerging that more young people are deciding to stay on at sixth form. Therefore, those are the kind of balances that have to be struck.
320. **Mr Beggs:** How do you ensure that training takes place in areas of particular need?
321. **Mrs Montgomery:** That is factored in to the teacher demand model. For example, we have just created 20 new positions for initial teacher education in special education needs, and we have clear guidance on STEM-related disciplines, modern languages and early years. All that information and those policy decisions are factored in to the teacher demand model.
322. **The Chairperson:** I shall take two questions together; the first from Mitchell and the second from Dawn.
323. **Mr McLaughlin:** I have a brief supplementary question to ask arising from the line of questioning that I was developing earlier. Given the Department's inconsistent behaviour and, from time to time, the fact that it has not imposed its will — you spoke about the autonomy of boards and schools — relationships with it clearly invite dysfunctionality and a lack of coherence and transparency. Is that codified in law or, like the 500 codings for absences, has it evolved over time? I know that the proposed ESA would have dealt with some of that, but even it would not have addressed the core relationship issues. It seems to me that there is a question to be examined. Have you looked at that either in the context of reform through the ESA or by dealing with the problems that have emerged from the structural relations that have existed for some time between yourselves, the boards and schools?
324. **The Chairperson:** Let me take Dawn's question, and then you can answer all the questions.
325. **Ms Purvis:** To follow on from Roy's point about the need to look at how many teachers will be required in the future, what consideration has been given to, for example, the number of newly qualified teachers whose first year's placement in a school should be at a subsidised rate? Should they go in as teaching assistants? Qualified teachers' skills need to be retained in the education system, so that when we start to come out of the dip in 2015 that you talked about, they will be experienced in areas such as special educational needs and behavioural assistance and other similar matters. What consideration have you given to such matters?
326. **Mr Sweeney:** I will deal with the first question, and La'Verne will perhaps deal with the second. I concur with the thrust of the comments about relationships. We have a structure in place. Earlier,

I mentioned the ESA. I do not want to keep referring to it as though it were some lame excuse. However, it is absolutely material to say that, since 2005, the education sector has been in flux. The boards and bodies such as the CCMS were working towards their own demise. As a result of decisions that were taken by the Executive —

327. **Mr McGrath:** Or not taken.

328. **Mr Sweeney:** As a result of decisions that were taken or not taken, they were scheduled to be stood down at midnight on 31 December 2009. That has had an impact in the sense that, since 2005, organisations have been in flux. We have imposed a vacancy control mechanism, whereby organisations are not recruiting and have acting-up arrangements. Although I am highly respectful of the work that the boards and other bodies do in difficult circumstances, they will be the first to admit that their entire senior management team structure is now seriously depleted.

329. Therefore, we are in a high-risk environment. It is incumbent on me, as the principal accounting officer, to ensure that all statutory and fiduciary responsibilities are nevertheless discharged. I have to say that I am finding that difficult. However, I am working very hard. I am getting tremendous co-operation from all those organisations. I am very reluctant to say that the relationships are dysfunctional. I know that you did not use that term, but the relationships are strained. We have now put in place quarterly accountability meetings. Earlier, we talked about writing to schools monthly, bearing down on boards of governors and supporting them with training and so forth. I believe that, proportionately, good steps are being taken to manage a very difficult environment that has been brought about as a result of the impasse.

330. Frankly, members, I say to you, and this is self-serving, the sooner we could end the indecision and bring certitude to the architecture that is required to deliver what is a critical public service to our

community, the better. In the meantime, I assure you that my colleagues and I, and our officials, under the Minister's direction, will absolutely bring our best endeavours to bear in managing those relationships in a high-risk environment.

331. **Mr McGrath:** I want to add a comment that I believe is relevant to your question. It will always be difficult in a system in which there are 1,250 schools to get them marching in the right direction. In the past, the Department's approach tended to be to exhort people to do things. However, we have a number of statutory powers that we can deploy if necessary towards schools that do not follow policies. Although they have been used very rarely in the past, they may be looked at in the future. We are cranking up the rigour of the system. For example, the schools improvement policy is built around inspection and when schools are found to be underperforming, they go into formal intervention. A number of schools are in that situation. Therefore, we are trying to get more rigour into the system and to get a number of local institutions to understand that we expect them to follow ministerial policy, particularly when they are funded by the taxpayer.

332. **Mrs Montgomery:** The compulsory induction year that you referred to, Ms Purvis, has been in operation in Scotland for the past number of years. We have watched that keenly to see the impact that it has had. The initial evaluation of that programme is that, unfortunately, it simply shifts the situation whereby graduates get a year's placement, but become unemployed in the second year. Therefore, instead of resolving the situation, it shifts the problem to the following year.

333. We are looking at that. As I said, we have watched keenly what is happening in Scotland. As the Minister has said, we intend, as part of a major school workforce review, to look at what our schools will do in the future and the workforce that they will need to deliver that. It may be that we are looking at the need for more support staff, similar to what has been happening in

England and Wales. In that sense, we may actually be looking at a reduced teaching workforce while increasing the other support functions that you referred to, such as behavioural management and so forth. We are looking at that as part of the school workforce review. We have been reviewing the terms of reference that were issued around 18 months ago. Obviously, we have had feedback from the consultation on those terms of reference. We intend to go out with reviewed terms of reference before the end of 2010.

334. **The Chairperson:** Thank you. You will be glad to hear that there are no other questions. I take the opportunity to thank you for coming here today and answering our questions. We may pose some further questions to you to obtain additional information.
335. This is not an easy subject to deal with, because if someone takes off, the school in question will need cover for that, so the problem will have to be worked out.



Appendix 3
Correspondence

Correspondence

Chairperson's Letter of 22 September 2010 to Mr Paul Sweeney

Paul Sweeney
Accounting Officer
Department of Education
Rathgael House
43 Balloo Road
Bangor
BT19 7PR

Room 371
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
BELFAST
BT4 3XX
Tel: (028) 9052 1208
Fax: (028) 9052 0366
E: pac.committee@niassembly.gov.uk
Aoibhinn.Treanor@niassembly.gov.uk

Dear Paul,

Public Accounts Committee Evidence Session on 'The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-up Report'.

Thank you for your participation in the Committee's evidence session on this inquiry.

As agreed in the course of your evidence, I would be grateful if you could provide the following information to the Committee.

1. Paragraph 2.12 of the report describes the lack of consistency among employing authorities in defining and recording teacher absences, and this came up in the evidence session. What options are being developed to effectively control the costs of substitution by proper profiling of absence?
2. Please demonstrate what the current 500 codes for substitution grounds mean, and give a breakdown of the "other" category in figure 3 of the report in terms of the codes entered to explain substitution and the cost of each.
3. To follow up, please detail the models being researched, and by whom, to implement changes to the current 500-code coding system; and what the proposed changes are.
4. What guidance is given by the Department re exceptional circumstances for re-employing prematurely retired teachers for substitution?
5. How does the Department challenge individual schools that have been identified as having a high use of experienced substitute teachers? Does the Department have a role in ensuring that schools do not discriminate on grounds of age, be it against older or younger teachers?
6. Paragraph 3.11 of the NIAO report notes that the Department's target to reduce sickness absence amongst teachers was not visible from 2007-08 but re-emerged upon the commencement of the Northern Ireland Audit Office's study. Why was sickness absence allowed to slip as a priority in this way?
7. By way of update to paragraph 3.22 of the report, please supply the 2009-2010 figures for maternity leave and sickness and a commentary on how they relate to previous trends.
8. What is the mechanism for the Inspectorate to report to the Department on the quality of teaching by substitute teachers, and how often and in what format is this done?

The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-Up Report

The Committee Clerk will be of assistance should you wish to discuss any of these points.

I should appreciate your response by Friday, 1 October 2010.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Maskey
Chairperson
Public Accounts Committee

Correspondence

Chairperson's Letter of 30 September 2010 to Mr Paul Sweeney

Paul Sweeney
Accounting Officer
Department of Education
Rathgael House
43 Balloo Road
Bangor
BT19 7PR

Room 371
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
BELFAST
BT4 3XX
Tel: (028) 9052 1208
Fax: (028) 9052 0366
E: pac.committee@niassembly.gov.uk
Aoibhinn.Treanor@niassembly.gov.uk

Dear Paul,

Public Accounts Committee Evidence Session on 'The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-up Report'.

At its meeting on 23 September 2010 the Committee considered an issues paper on the above evidence session and agreed to request some additional information as detailed below.

The Department indicated that the efficient discharge scheme operates predominantly for school vice principals and principals in terms of their leadership and management functions and would, therefore, not preclude such individuals from re-employment in a teaching function.

The Committee would therefore be grateful if you could provide a breakdown of how many of the 33 efficient discharge cases were of vice principals and principals and were subsequently re-employed.

The Committee Clerk will be of assistance should you wish to discuss this.

I should appreciate your response by Friday, 8 October 2010.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Maskey
Chairperson
Public Accounts Committee

The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-Up Report

Correspondence of 7 October 2010 from Mr Paul Sweeney

PERMANENT SECRETARY
Paul Sweeney



Mr Paul Maskey
Chairperson
Public Accounts Committee
Room 371
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
BELFAST
BT4 3XX

Rathgael House
43 Balloo Road
Rathgill
Bangor
BT19 7PR
Tel: 028 9127 9309
Fax: 028 9127 9779
email: paul.sweeney@deni.gov.uk

7 October 2010

Dear Mr Maskey

Public Accounts Committee Evidence Session on 'The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-up Report'.

Your letters of 22 and 30 September refer.

Following the Department's participation in the Committee's evidence session you have asked for clarification on a number of points.

- 1. Paragraph 2.12 of the report describes the lack of consistency among employing authorities in defining and recording absences, and this came up in the evidence session. What options are being developed to effectively control the costs of substitution by proper profiling of absence?**

Substitution figures are generated by the employing authorities through analysis of the reasons why the respective permanent teacher is absent. This methodology is driven by the wide and disparate range of existing costing codes which make it difficult to analyse the 'raw' substitute data in a meaningful manner.

In moving forward, the Department will rationalise the number of codes which will allow for the analysis of the substitute data itself rather than having to rely on the less meaningful permanent teacher absence data. These new codes will be developed by 1 April 2011.



Correspondence

The Department will act as the gatekeeper for and decision maker on, any requests for allocation of future or additional codes. The Department is examining the potential of an interface between the Schools Information Management System (SIMS) and the Teachers' payroll, as an additional mechanism to provide more meaningful and sensitive analysis of absences/substitution.

- 2. Please demonstrate what the current 500 codes for substitution grounds mean, and give a breakdown of the "other" category in figure 3 of the report in terms of the codes entered to explain substitution and the cost of each?**

Please find enclosed for your attention a breakdown of the current costing codes used in 2008/2009.

These codes have emanated from the five Education and Library Boards (ELB's), the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) and the Grant Maintained Integrated Schools' sector, who have used them for costing purposes over a protracted period. As the reasons for teacher substitution have become more widespread, for example, the introduction of new policy initiatives/professional development opportunities, these organisations have created their own set of costing codes.

Regarding Figure 3, the Department extracted from the breakdown of current costing codes those which fell into the recognised categories stated within Figure 3. Those costing codes which did not fall into the recognised categories were subsequently allocated to the default category of "other".

It is envisaged that the rationalisation of codes, as outlined above, will eradicate the use of the "other" category.

- 3. To follow up, please detail the models being researched, and by whom, to implement changes to the current 500-code coding system; and what the proposed changes are?**

The Department is currently benchmarking best practice in recording and monitoring of sickness absence. The Department has held preliminary discussions with its counterparts in Scotland, in an attempt to benchmark best practice in the use of such coding. It is intended to widen this research to include the coding structures used in England, Wales and the Republic of Ireland.

The Department will also give consideration to the model of classification used by the Northern Ireland Civil Service and other public sector bodies.

4. What guidance is given by the Department re exceptional circumstances for re-employing prematurely retired teachers for substitution?

The Department has advised employers that retired teachers should only be re-employed, in exceptional circumstances, to provide short-term cover, where newly qualified teachers or experienced non-retired teachers are unavailable. The Department has also repeatedly exhorted employers to give preference, wherever possible, to newly qualified teachers (NQTs) or experienced non-retired teachers seeking to return to employment when filling vacancies, including those of a temporary nature.

Although the Department is not prescriptive in identifying what constitutes 'exceptional circumstances' it is accepted that schools, especially in the post primary and special school sectors, may have difficulty in securing the services of suitably qualified NQTs or non-retired substitute teachers for specific subjects. Schools have also reported that when contacted, such teachers are unavailable or unwilling to take on substitute cover, especially at relatively short notice, in the case of an unplanned absence or for very short substitute cover commitments. It is also the case that many teachers on NISTR are reluctant to undertake travel commitments for substitute work, especially if the work is only of a short term nature.

The decision on whom to appoint to a particular post remains the responsibility of Boards of Governors. As NISTR identifies teachers who are in receipt of pension, any school employing such teachers for substitute cover is doing so knowingly and willingly. However, schools have to depend on the availability of substitute teachers to meet urgent needs and, in some areas, a retired teacher may be the only one available at short notice.

The Department is now monitoring, on a monthly basis, the re-employment of retired teachers and where necessary, will challenge schools/employing authorities directly, regarding their employment practices. In addition, as part of my quarterly governance and accountability meetings with the Chief Executives, the re-employment of retired teachers is now a standing item on the agenda.

5. How does the Department challenge schools that are identified as having high use of experienced substitute teachers. Does the Department have a role in ensuring that school do not discriminate on ground of age, be it against older or younger teachers?

Given that over two thirds of teachers registered on NISTR are over the age of thirty it is not surprising that schools employ such teachers in greater numbers, even though they are more costly to employ. There is no legislation to limit the number of retired teachers on NISTR, thus provided a teacher is eligible to teach and registered with the GTCNI they are permitted to register their details on NISTR and seek temporary/substitute work. However, as highlighted above, NISTR identifies teachers who are in receipt of pension; any school employing such teachers for substitute cover is doing so knowingly and willingly.

Correspondence

As indicated above, the Department is now monitoring, on a monthly basis, the re-employment of retired teachers and where necessary, will challenge schools/employing authorities directly, regarding their employment practices. In addition, as part of my quarterly governance and accountability meetings with the Chief Executives, the re-employment of retired teachers is now a standing item on the agenda.

Regarding age discrimination, the Department, through the Teachers' (Eligibility) (Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006, removed all age requirements on the employment of teachers in grant aided schools, in line with the Employment Equality (Age) Regulation (NI) 2006. However, I should point out that the responsibility for appointing teachers rests with the Board of Governors, as the employer. Boards of Governors have the responsibility for advertising posts, deciding on the selection and short-listing criteria, interviewing candidates and informing the employing authority of their preferred candidate for ratification. Boards of Governors are also responsible for ensuring that they comply with all relevant employment and equality legislation throughout the process.

6. Paragraph 3.11 of the NIAO report notes that the Department's target to reduce sickness absence amongst teachers was not visible from 2007/08 but re-emerged upon the commencement of the NIAO's study. Why was sickness absence allowed to slip as a priority in this way?

The Westminster PAC in 2002 recommended that the Department should introduce targets to reduce teacher sickness absence to levels similar to those in England. At that time (2000/01) the average rate in Northern Ireland was 10.1 days per teacher compared to 6 days in England. This required a 40% reduction. When targets were being set for the period 2005/06 – 2007/08 the Northern Ireland rate had fallen to an average of 8 days per teacher. This required a 20% reduction. As such the Department set all employing authorities targets to reduce average teacher sickness absence by 6-7% per year for the period 2005/06 – 2007/08.

The Department decided in 2008/09 to publish a target as part of its Efficiency Delivery Plans to reduce the total cost of teacher substitution by 10% by 2010/11 rather than specifically target teacher sickness absence. This included an anticipated reduction in the amount of substitution for in-service training alongside, but not instead of, a reduction in substitution due to sickness absence (i.e. a reduction in sickness absence was anticipated as part of the overall 10% efficiency saving).

However, in order to re-focus attention on teacher sickness absence, the Department re-established targets for each individual employing authority for 2009/10 and 2010/11. Each employing authority was set a specific percentage reduction in their absence rates for 2009/10 and 2010/11 with the aim to have all employing authorities sickness absence reduced to an average of 6 days per teacher by March 2011. It is pleasing to note that two of the ELBs reached their target by March 2010 with a further ELB very close to achieving their target.

7. By way of update to paragraph 3.22 of the report, please supply the 2009/10 figures for maternity leave and sickness and a commentary on how they relate to previous trends?

The NIAO reported that in 2008/09, £13,087,730 was spent on substitute cover for teachers absent on maternity/adoption leave. This equated to 19.8% of the total cost of substitute cover. In 2009/10 the figure fell to £11,422,949, 17.8% of the total cost. It is to be expected that in a workforce which is 75% female, of which 65% are of child bearing age, that there is a significant level of maternity leave.

The Department's analysis shows that the number of teachers taking sick leave immediately after maternity leave has fallen considerably in recent years. While 31% of teachers taking maternity leave in 2005-06 took sick leave before returning to work, this figure had fallen to 19% by 2008-09. This may be due to improvements in the statutory conditions, e.g. the extension of maximum Additional Maternity leave to 26 weeks and the extension of the Maternity Pay Period (during which Statutory Maternity Pay is payable) to 39 weeks.

It is not possible to provide the exact number of teachers in 2009/10 who took sick leave immediately after their maternity leave, as a number of these teachers remain on maternity leave. Whilst 976 teachers took maternity leave during the 2009/10 financial year, 878 of these ended their maternity leave during the 2009/10 financial year and of these, 106 subsequently took sick leave. This figure may change, as there are 98 teachers who commenced their maternity leave in the 2009/10 financial year who remain on maternity leave.

8. What is the mechanism for the Inspectorate to report to the Department on the quality of teaching by substitute teachers, and how often and in what format is this done?

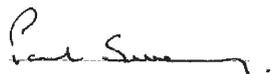
The Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) provides an annual report to the Department Board and, the Chief Inspector prepares a biennial report, both of which include an evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning observed over the reporting periods. The quality of teaching by substitute teachers is collated within this information, not separately. The work of substitute teachers is observed in the course of formal inspections and district visits and where an inspector has concerns about the work of a substitute teacher, normal procedures apply, in that these will be discussed with the teacher and reported to the principal and chair of the Board of Governors. The Department can commission a more detailed analysis of the work of substitute teachers through an 'Evaluation Report' where ETI would pursue particular lines of enquiry, including some agreed in advance with the Department. The last such Evaluation was completed in 2004.

Correspondence

9. The Department indicated that the efficient discharge scheme operates predominantly for school vice principals and principals in terms of their leadership and management functions and would, therefore, not preclude such individuals from re-employment in a teaching function. The Committee would therefore be grateful if you could provide a breakdown of how many of the 33 efficient discharge cases were of vice principals and principals and were subsequently re-employed.

Of the 33 teachers who were retired on the grounds of efficient discharge and were subsequently re-employed during the period April – September 2009, 22 were former Principals, 5 were former Vice-Principals and 6 were former classroom teachers, 4 of whom held management posts.

Yours sincerely



PAUL SWEENEY

The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-Up Report

Reasons 08-09 by Cost

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
School	8,189,030.25
S - Maternity Leave	4,060,746.28
S - MATERNITY COVER	2,658,792.48
S - Vacancy	2,601,855.26
2 - Vacant Post / Career break / Additional teaching / Temporary Contract	2,417,596.94
S - Miscellaneous School Charge	2,073,662.90
S - Vacant Post	1,994,942.30
6 - Maternity / Paternity Leave	1,843,684.75
S - VACANT POSTS	1,541,303.00
S - MISCELLANEOUS SCHOOL COST	1,500,933.12
S - Maternity Cover	1,461,693.13
S - Vacancy/Vacant Post	1,236,451.91
S - SICKNESS - 4+ TEACHERS 1-20 DAYS	1,230,090.48
S - Sickness: Short Term	1,103,114.92
J - Long Term Sick	1,087,313.53
J - L T Sickness	1,075,840.87
S - Assistance for Teaching Principals	1,002,823.71
1 - Sickness - Short Term	935,010.68
J - Long Term Sickness	894,288.06
J - Long Term Sickness Absences	890,711.40
AV - Teacher Sickness: Short Term	879,366.69
JZ - Sickness: Long Term (Permanent Teacher)	825,685.02
Centre	771,618.07
SUB REASON 1	661,101.45
8 - Principal / Teacher Release	647,116.35
S - School Business	574,148.69
S - Maternity leave/Adoption leave	572,975.83
S - PRINCIPAL RELEASE	513,442.80
QZ - Miscellaneous (Special Schools only)	501,313.82
FB - Revised Curriculum (School delegated)	496,308.47
AV - Casual Illness (NOT for use by 'Special' schools)	472,583.82
S - Secondment	444,261.75
FB - Revised Curriculum - Sub Teacher Cost	431,396.39
S - Admin Duties	418,890.59
S - REVISED CURRICULUM	402,170.26

Correspondence

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
S - SICKNESS - UNDER 4 TEACHERS 1 - 10 DAYS	364,823.71
S - IN SERVICE (OTHER THAN MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME)	344,600.18
SUB REASON 18	312,515.02
S - Special Needs Support - School Initiated	305,661.19
S - In-Service Training - School Charge	304,446.00
S - School Trip	297,879.50
AV - Casual Illness	294,700.85
05I - Assessment 4-11 Conduct	293,553.45
S - Career Break	283,651.42
S - Extended Schools	269,858.02
S - Short-term sickness absence (less than 20 days)	259,025.78
S - Revised Curriculum	250,536.10
AH - Expenses related to statemented children	245,406.93
Special Unit Teachers	231,757.88
H - Inservice Training	229,686.07
FB ù Revised Curriculum ù Sub Teacher Costs (NOT for use by æSpecial/E schools)	223,802.49
C - Long-term sickness (more than 20th Consecutive working day of absence)	222,953.06
S - Personal Business	212,905.07
C - Special schools only - Vacant Post / Additional teaching / Temporary contract	209,774.61
B - Special Needs - Units Costs	202,697.62
89E - Additional Development Days	202,489.21
3 - Secondment / Unpaid leave / Resignation / Jobshare	199,376.07
H - In-Service Training	196,190.95
NOF-SUMMER SCHEMES	193,121.77
C ù Special Schools only - Vacant Post/ Additional Teaching/Temporary Contract	184,918.13
Unclassified	174,211.99
C - Special schools only - Short-term sickness	172,084.65
7 - Educational Visits / School Trips	165,585.62
REVISED CURRICULUM-DELEGATED	159,844.45
S - PERSONAL BUSINESS	159,503.93
C - Home Tuition/Casual	159,092.52
B - Special Units	154,966.53
B - Special unit teachers	153,038.43
SUB REASON 22	152,137.10
09I - Assessment at 14 Conduct	151,030.53
S - Teacher/Year Group Support	146,165.86

The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-Up Report

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
10G - GCSE Conduct	144,158.02
StPetersHS/SEELB Statemented	142,972.13
C ú Special Schools only - Maternity/Paternity leave	141,467.28
01T - Development of KS 1&2 Electronic Reports	134,723.59
S - School based training	134,514.95
SP - Additional Provision for Statemented Pupils	129,062.82
Casual Sickness(Teaching)WELB	128,144.98
S - EDUCATIONAL VISITS	127,902.66
S - Unpaid Leave	127,803.37
BELB - Perm Long Term Sickness	123,175.31
AO - EOTAS only	120,471.60
S - Additional Cover	119,070.67
CL - Collaborative Schools (Delegated)	118,048.18
S - SCHOOL SUPPORT PROGRAMME (SSP)	117,507.46
BZ - Special Unit Subs	107,979.80
PJ - SPECIAL SCHOOLS ONLY - Long Term Sickness	105,044.26
9 - Inset - Partial Delegation	104,018.00
4 - Personal Business / Bereavement (Non-school related absence)	100,399.46
MZ - Board Initiative	100,065.53
S - Educational Visits	99,854.29
C - Special schools only - Miscellaneous school charge	98,258.04
S - SENCO Release	96,954.76
SUB REASON 8	96,461.42
PC - SPECIAL SCHOOLS ONLY - Other Cover	96,232.97
CCEA-Assessment 4-11 Dev'ment	94,823.66
8 - Teacher Tutor Training	94,286.38
NS - SIP - Numeracy Training	94,283.45
C - Special schools only - Maternity / Paternity leave	93,294.00
SUB REASON 24	92,999.91
BE - Professional Development - Beginning Teachers	91,011.23
PH - SPECIAL SCHOOLS ONLY - Short Term Sickness	90,518.89
LS - SIP - Literacy Training	83,722.83
AB - Literacy	83,572.97
P - Schools Community Relations Programme / EMU	83,397.54
S - Unpaid Leave of Absence	82,311.76
AC - Numeracy	81,867.62

Correspondence

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
P - Cross Community Contact Schemes	81,595.38
K - Probationary Induction	80,850.76
75E - KS3 Development: Stage2 Assessment Training	79,080.92
X - SIP - New Schools Entering SSP	77,879.32
C ú Special Schools only - Career break/Secondment/ Job share/Resignation	76,722.84
SICKNESS - SHORT TERM	74,990.40
BG - Interboard Numeracy	73,789.37
L - Transfer Procedure Duties	73,254.58
M - Transfer Procedure Duties	72,004.93
C ú Special Schools only - Short-term sickness	71,923.42
P - Transfer	70,269.10
S - CROSS COMMUNITY PROJECT	68,423.48
S - Funeral	68,409.63
FM - DE-Renewed Community 1.2 Management	67,033.52
P - Transfer Procedure	66,674.54
11G - GCE Conduct	66,669.43
Z - Special Units (Sickness & Maternity Leave)	65,363.88
CCEA Default Code	64,908.89
S - Internal Cover	64,908.15
K - Induction of Probation Teachers	61,716.02
BELB - Special Miscellaneous	61,476.99
S - Permanent teacher on maternity/adoption/paternity leave	61,242.87
TT - Professional Development of Beginning Teachers	61,011.70
S - READING RECOVERY	59,952.20
BH - Interboard Literacy/Strategy	59,447.37
S - CLASS	58,271.87
FC - Revised Curriculum (Special schools only)	57,612.88
CC - Suspension of Staff	56,547.98
HB ú DE STEM-Science Tech Eng & Maths	54,132.67
PB - SPECIAL SCHOOLS ONLY - Maternity Cover	53,919.33
K - Induction Of Probationer Teachers / EPD	53,561.12
L - Community Relations Programme	53,351.74
AQ - Professional Development of Beginning Teachers	50,626.20
C ú Special Schools only - Miscellaneous school charge	49,656.28
S - Curriculum Support	49,390.42
SUB REASON 6	48,735.10

The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-Up Report

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
S - Sports Event	47,826.32
C - Special schools only - Career break / Secondment / Job share / Resignation	46,968.14
S - CODE OF PRACTICE	46,654.37
S - Full-Time Temporary Teacher	44,422.41
GG - Atlantic Philanthropy - IFI	43,973.17
S - Nil Pay - Permanent Teachers	43,226.87
S - NUMERACY DEVELOPMENT	42,273.12
EG - DE Cass Support Revised Curriculum Special Schools only	42,044.17
PZ - Transfer Procedure Duties	40,170.56
CCEA-KS 1&2 Electronic Reports	39,443.91
AL - Literacy Strategy (Linguists Phonics Course)	39,096.73
L - Special Leave (Refer to Board Alpha Codes for guidance)	38,310.60
CCEA-Assessment at 14 Conduct	37,261.29
C - Permanent Teacher on Maternity/Adoption/Paternity Leave	34,417.33
CP - Child Protection	33,976.10
S - Reading Recovery	32,591.10
S - Field Trip	32,122.54
LD - Literacy Development	32,081.44
GT - Specific Learning Difficulties	31,820.77
GN - DE SLD Challenging Behaviour	31,799.89
AH - St Peter/Es High Special Programme	30,428.39
DE-Ren.Community-1.2 Mgmt	29,846.39
HE - Entitlement Framework	29,411.53
S - Educational Visits/School Trips/Field Trips	29,024.04
SUB REASON 2	28,789.92
EK - Yesip Tranche 3	28,105.36
S - Paternity Leave	27,659.51
S - Learning Support	27,491.43
S - Bereavement	26,580.83
S - Wedding	26,508.56
29E - KS3 Assessment Development	25,946.51
24E - Curriculum Implementation	25,489.98
N - Trade Union Rep	25,280.58
BELB - Board Initiative	25,216.09
AJ - Maths 2000 Inset Maths Inter Board Numeracy Strategy	25,205.60

Correspondence

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
H - In Service Training (Management Development Programme)	25,010.58
C - Board Courses - WELB SELB SEELB NEELB BELB	24,837.59
FC - Special Schools Revised Curriculum	24,398.63
R - RTU	23,770.97
SUB REASON 3	23,238.50
C - Special schools only - Principal / Teacher release	21,107.18
05F - Records of Achievement	20,724.47
C ù Special Schools only - Long-term sickness	20,700.71
GS - DE-Dyslexia	20,435.80
R - Other Absences eg public representative lay magistrate	20,399.87
CK - Collaborative Schools (Non Delegated)	20,362.39
CC - Suspension of Teacher	19,976.51
S - School Trips	19,569.90
S - Suspension of Teacher	19,458.48
DE-SLD Challenging Behaviour	19,267.58
TEACHER SUSPENSIONS	19,103.85
H - INSET / PQH (Full course titles must be given)	18,872.64
SUB REASON 4	18,872.17
HF - STEM-Delegated Function	18,684.18
CCEA-GCSE Conduct	18,289.84
SUB REASON 21	17,795.01
S - Teacher Relief	17,546.07
AH - SIP - Group One Schools	17,500.06
SUB REASON 23	17,449.01
S - C2K	17,370.32
S - Cultural Events	17,221.86
S - DISSEMINATION OF GOOD PRACTICE	17,122.75
SEELB-SPECIAL SCHOOLS ONLY	16,905.28
S - School Duties	16,359.62
N - Public Service/Trade Union Absences	16,280.19
HA - Schools Consultative Group	15,934.08
10E - Foundation Stage Support	15,815.33
S - Unpaid leave	15,545.99
C - Suspension of teacher by Employing Authority	15,394.31
N - Inservice - School Based	15,154.89
SS - School to School Collaboration	15,060.38

The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-Up Report

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
EX - CYP Child Protection Training	14,826.78
GZ - Medical Needs Training	14,540.04
S - PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION FOR HEADSHIP (PQH)	14,504.82
C - Beginners Teacher Course - (BT Course)	14,360.23
15T - InCAS Trials	14,230.07
17E - Assessment for Learning	14,076.63
BC - Children's Order	13,865.30
C - Special schools only - Personal business / Unpaid leave / Bereavement	13,753.20
Unknown	13,689.33
BELB - Pro Dev-Beginning Teach	13,427.35
BI - SEN Code of Practice	13,223.79
HD - Modernisation of SEN Provision	13,192.50
C ù Special Schools only - Personal business/unpaid leave/bereavement	13,010.61
R - Representational Duties as member of ELB CCMS NICIE CnaG or GTC	12,949.99
EH - SEN Code of Practice	12,738.60
K - Induction	12,578.93
S - Principal Release	12,353.18
WZ - International Sports Representative	12,293.88
FR - CYPFP - Development Designated Teachers	12,154.16
DF - Entitled To Succeed	12,098.95
SUB REASON 14	11,837.37
BV - Union Business	11,778.54
CD - Specialist Schools	11,570.64
SSP Sch Leaving Intensive Supp	11,523.68
DZ - Paternity Leave	11,454.92
SUB REASON 20	11,220.28
ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS	11,135.08
CP - Child Protection CYP - Training for designated teachers	11,054.18
S - PQH	11,053.88
BELB - Interboard Numeracy	10,771.50
14E - Languages In Primary Schools	10,680.48
Z - Implementation of Children's Order 1995	10,317.49
12I - Transfer Test Development	10,014.91
S - Literacy Development	9,991.29
S - Support Teachery	9,937.74
Inter-Bd Numeracy Steering Gp	9,831.44

Correspondence

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
S - Phonics Course	9,822.82
Teacher Tutor Training Prog.	9,726.74
Code of Practice	9,699.94
C - Inservice Training	9,570.20
C - E.PD Training	9,416.50
S - SENCO	9,192.74
S - Graduation	9,161.03
NZ - Trade Union Representative	9,154.03
RZ - Regional Training Unit Inset	9,136.30
30E - Special Education Needs	9,064.49
CH - Teacher Attendance at Case Conferences	8,995.95
ET - DE Mersey St Staff	8,964.91
Other Cover (Special Only SELB	8,877.41
DF - Entitlement Framework (Special Schools Only)	8,717.77
S - Special Needs	8,355.78
S - Young Enterprise	8,291.34
LITERACY INTENSIVE SUPPORT B/F	8,191.42
07I - KS2 ICT Accreditation Conduct	8,145.05
09G - Applied GCE Conduct	8,110.99
Executive Prog'- sch age mums	8,102.08
SUB REASON 5	8,091.00
80E - Learning For Life & Work	8,090.28
FY - IDF Incredible Years Project	8,087.77
S - Professional Qualification for Headship (PQH)	8,063.82
S - EAL Support	7,940.80
AT - Speech & Language	7,900.93
BY - Specialist Schools	7,802.62
CCEA-GCE Conduct	7,697.67
GL - Speech and Language Programme (Special)	7,651.75
C - Special schools only - Inset - Partial delegation	7,636.74
C ù Special Schools only - Principal/teacher release	7,511.85
13T - Development of e-GOML	7,470.70
SSP Lit & Num Dev Officer	7,464.20
KS3 Development-Stage 2 Ass.Tr	7,399.09
S - Paternity leave	7,303.52
EP - EPF - School age mothers	7,273.97

The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-Up Report

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
78E - KS3 Development: SEN Assessment Trainingá	7,244.16
C - Special schools only - Education visits / School trips	7,001.56
Big Lottery St Roses-NOF	6,926.27
SUB REASON 13	6,885.93
BP - COMET (EPF Speech & Language Project)	6,831.55
CCEA-KS3 Assessment Develop'nt	6,799.07
CE - Child Protection	6,733.14
Reorganisation Allow.	6,725.86
83E - Primary Assessment: Face-2-Face INSET	6,713.31
GY - UNOCINI Training Strategy	6,462.45
N.Ireland Literacy Strategy	6,330.61
GE - Cross Border Initiative Peace11 Phase 2	6,322.30
7 - Special Needs - Pupils Cost	6,312.71
WELB-CLASSROOM 2000/COMPUTERS	6,307.62
54E - Learning for Life & Work MLD	6,231.01
62E - Teaching Assessment - World Around Us	6,151.28
AF - Good Shepherd PS Ethnic Minority Funding	6,076.82
01A - Council and Main Committees	6,016.37
S - Leading Learning	5,991.55
BQ - BRO - Teachers into Industry	5,969.80
S - DE-Renewed Community 1.7 Healthy Schools	5,969.07
Undefined	5,876.48
DE-Entitlement Framework	5,828.27
S - CCEA Agreement Trials	5,778.64
C - BT Day	5,775.19
CR - Curriculum Roll out	5,462.27
C - Numeracy Strategy (code NS)	5,449.93
S - Performance Review Staff Development	5,412.09
52E - SEN Assessment: Quest Plus	5,240.02
AG - SSP	5,223.31
06I - KS2 ICT Accreditation Development	5,199.69
63E - Irish Medium Support	5,149.74
IP - SIP - School Support Programme	5,039.56
17I - Occupational Studies Pilot	5,003.74
SUB REASON 25	4,998.18
S - Voluntary Events	4,988.03

Correspondence

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
S - PRSD	4,983.57
C - CCEA Course	4,959.52
SUB REASON 16	4,923.58
IDF-Incredible Years Project	4,894.67
S - Comenius Visit	4,891.26
64E - Financial Capability - Primary	4,783.16
S - Learning for Life and Work	4,676.18
ICT Training (SEELB)	4,676.10
ASS - Associate Assessor (substitute cover)	4,672.40
S - Principal Relief	4,661.64
C - Curriculum Development/Education Reform Work	4,543.91
08F - Key Skills Assessment	4,510.06
C ù Special Schools only - Education visits/School Trips	4,489.88
65E - Financial Capability - Post Primary	4,438.23
REVISED CURRICLUM-NON DELEGATE	4,377.70
07F - Key Skills Advice and Review	4,357.62
C - Early Professional Development	4,245.17
S - NICIE Courses	4,225.75
C - Literacy Training NEELB	4,212.79
S - School Play	4,173.44
GRá-á BECTA NI Tep Project Strand 4	4,140.91
DF - Entitlement Framework (Special Schools Only)	4,139.74
08G - Applied GCSE Conduct	4,115.81
10T - Development of KS3 Annual Report	4,083.49
FN - SIP-Behaviour Support Teams	4,060.13
BY - General Teaching Council	3,998.16
23E - Key Stage 3 Guidance	3,995.58
BELB - Special Unit Subs	3,983.95
S - School Improvement Programme (SIP)	3,978.59
Short Term Sick-Special Sch'	3,967.48
AP - Enriched curriculum	3,907.48
Associate Assessors	3,858.18
CHILD PROTECTION TR TRAINING	3,753.76
20I - GOML Development	3,713.91
04G - GCSE Development	3,668.34
S - Records of Achievement	3,666.28

The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-Up Report

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
HZ - In-Service Training (INSET) - Centre Allocation	3,663.33
26E - Employability Project	3,643.13
01E - Early Years Evaluation	3,573.86
C - Child Protection	3,522.57
88E ù Primary Assessment: Assessment & Exemplification CCS	3,463.58
S - N.I.C.I.E	3,347.77
CCEA-Foundation Stage Support	3,301.30
02G - Entry Level Qualifications Conduct	3,300.83
03G - Events for GCSE/GCE Development	3,272.30
33E - PMB	3,140.93
DE CASS SUPPORT- CURRICLUM	3,111.55
C - Transfer Procedure Interviews	3,111.32
S - Exam Supervision (including AQA)	3,094.54
S - First Aid	3,088.13
S - Primary Movement	3,055.45
SUB REASON 19	2,987.18
DC - NI Drugs Campaign / NI Strategy	2,957.01
YS - Youth Sport South SCNI	2,945.08
Parents in Numeracy	2,899.99
MJ - NOF - School Sports Programme	2,872.79
AP ù Enriched Curriculum	2,809.95
DF - DE Entitled to Succeed Programme	2,772.85
S - Teacher Exchange	2,741.66
BELB - Interboard Literacy	2,724.17
Medical Needs Training	2,685.72
S - Jury Service	2,681.99
TD - Training for Dyslexia	2,661.74
BS - CEG and RSE	2,653.89
Irish Medium Support	2,617.71
C - Maths Co-ordinators Course (code AJ 8326)	2,469.21
S - Link Course - NWIFHE	2,452.15
CCEA-KS3 ICT Accred.Conduct	2,436.15
FF - SENDO	2,428.62
Literacy Development	2,424.44
C - EPD 1 Course	2,418.96
74E - KS3 Development: Associate production and support	2,418.86

Correspondence

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
67E - Development of inclusive Science	2,407.30
C - Principal Meeting -if teaching Principal	2,386.21
A - Youth tutors	2,376.98
S - PQH (Professional Qualification for Head Teachers	2,359.06
CCEA-Languages in Primary S'Is	2,333.41
C - EMU- Cross Community Contact Scheme	2,328.65
02J - Entry Level Qualifications Processing	2,326.44
PS - Pre-school provision/intervention - Special schools only	2,300.78
Parents/Professionals-Autism	2,295.15
SDS - SDS - Additional Support for Selected Schools	2,226.85
S - AQA	2,185.53
Youth Tutors	2,156.73
C - Enriched Curriculum	2,156.49
AK - Associate Assessors	2,118.78
02F - Regulation of Qualifications	2,051.61
C - Child Protection Course	2,022.28
01Q - E-Learning Operations	2,014.50
ND - Numeracy Development	1,994.05
GA - Challenging Behaviour	1,984.28
C - EPD 2nd Year Probation	1,971.49
R - Nursery Introduction - Interviews	1,969.65
C ù Special Schools only - Induction of Probation Teachers (Board Initiative)	1,957.55
55E - Cross Curricular Assessment MLD	1,954.69
STEM-Science,Tech,Eng,& Maths	1,929.33
DE INTERFACE FUND-BELB	1,907.99
SUB REASON 12	1,892.80
Teaching Ass'ment-World Around	1,884.86
DE-Entitlement Framework(spec)	1,868.54
PC ù Special Schools Only ù Other Cover	1,822.95
SUB-REASON 09	1,817.99
Trained Reading Recovery(Ex.Pr	1,798.81
C ù Special Schools only - Inset ù Partial delegation	1,784.21
66E - Early Years Support TS&PC	1,778.30
Speech & Language Project	1,774.95
51E - Learning for Life & Work SLD	1,774.74
02I - Skills Development	1,774.49

The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-Up Report

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
BELB - Reg Training Unit Inset	1,747.35
PRE-SCHOOL AUTISM (BELB)	1,732.77
C - Transfer Procedure Duties	1,725.39
C - RTU Mgt	1,712.34
CCEA-Records of Achievements	1,711.18
CCEA-Computer Adaptive Tasks	1,708.46
07G - ICAA Conduct	1,694.92
CH - DE Comenius Contact Seminar	1,686.18
Attendance at Case Conferences	1,685.17
S - Entitlement Framework	1,668.08
C - CCEA Course (not paid by CCEA)	1,664.31
11I - KS3 ICT Accreditation Conduct	1,664.24
C - Leading Learning (RTU)	1,663.15
FG - Training-Special Education	1,662.92
CCEA-Assessment for Learning	1,662.43
19T - SEN Pupil Profile Multimedia	1,604.71
C - Transfer Report Writing	1,602.91
S - School Supervision	1,594.08
S - Assoc Assessor	1,583.47
CCEA-KS2 ICT Accreditation Con.	1,557.02
61E - Online Image Resource KS3 English	1,533.99
06F - Essential Skills Advice and Review	1,529.92
16E - Foundation Stage Assessment	1,516.06
73E - KS3 Development: CCEA Associate Induction/Training	1,511.40
T - Public Service Absence (Maximum 5 days)	1,500.94
13E - Personal Development Pilot Project	1,469.73
BELB - Trade Union Rep	1,465.65
CCEA-Special Education Needs	1,463.57
20E - Computer Adaptive Tasks	1,458.59
C - AC/PC Training	1,445.21
C - Autism Course SELB	1,426.94
38E - Employability Coleraine	1,382.05
SEN Assessment: Quest Plus	1,369.90
04J - Modernisation	1,358.15
C - RTU	1,354.27
S - Primary School Visits	1,353.04

Correspondence

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
BELB -Connective Teachers Prog	1,351.06
C - Public Duties - Security Forces	1,328.10
03J - GCSE/GCE/ICAA Processing	1,297.43
SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES	1,282.75
82E - Primary Assessment: Online INSET	1,274.62
C - EMU Planning	1,273.46
81E - Primary Assessment: Cross Curricular Skills	1,256.55
CCEA-Curriculum Implementation	1,246.96
S - Edexcel Course	1,206.87
S - Cross Community Contact Planning Day	1,197.13
BELB - Transfer Procedures	1,182.33
36G - Revision of Specifications (Exams)	1,180.92
GF - Schs for Parenting Prog	1,176.51
BELB - Code of Practice(N'ery)	1,163.40
04T - Pupil Profile Parent Awareness Strategy	1,145.97
BRO-Teachers into Industry	1,144.06
C - RTU PQH Training	1,141.52
06G - Entry Level Qualifications Development	1,134.92
BELB In-service Train/Teach(S)	1,124.13
GC - Global Citizenship	1,123.63
DS - AmMA Centre NIFTC Funding	1,115.12
C - Fundamental Movement Skills Course (SEELB)	1,113.57
Speech & Language Prog(Special	1,108.56
S - SMT Planning	1,085.99
PB û Special Schools Only û Maternity Cover	1,082.25
BELB - Children's Order	1,055.63
S - Interviews	1,046.71
S - Moving House	1,030.19
SUB REASON 7	1,030.16
15E - PE	1,028.15
C - RSE - Relationship Sexual Education (CCEA)	1,013.53
HP - Health Promoting Schools Initiative	1,012.61
05T - SEN Pupil Profile	1,010.00
01G - Training of Examining Teams	1,008.73
56E - SEN Assessment: KS2 SLD Units	1,007.81
C - NICCEA Moderators	1,004.94

The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-Up Report

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
Connecting Teachers ICT	995.41
C - Cross Community Project	992.36
11E - Primary Support Materials	986.05
05G - GCE Development	978.90
C - CCMS Courses	974.12
22E - Skills and Capabilities	951.62
S - RTU-PQH	949.61
KS3 Development-SEN Ass'Tr	936.15
C - GTC Union - (Trade Union Business)	935.71
EC - BRO - Linguistic Phonics Project	934.75
S - Public Duties	929.67
C - Teacher Tutor Course NELB	919.21
10I - KS3 ICT Accreditation Development	916.70
VZ - Education And Library Board Representative	900.55
02A - Chairmans Initiatives	888.03
39E - Employability Dungannon & Cookstown	887.40
Pay in Lieu of Notice	886.92
Health Promotions	884.58
70E - Computer Comparative Tools	875.31
CCEA-InCAS Trials	854.33
CCEA-Employability Coleraine	851.36
57E - SEN: Communication Tasks MLD	837.99
EM - Save The Children - Anti Bullying	832.03
BETTER IRELAND PROGRAMME	827.58
EM - Save the Children	824.83
CCEA-Personal Dev.Pilot P'ject	824.04
01K - European Excellence Award	804.49
35E - QA for Assessment Guidance	801.06
08I - Assessment at 14 Development	797.80
S - Teacher on Residential	795.68
Training-Special Education	786.41
SCHOOL TO SCHOOL COLLABORATION	776.62
C - Induction Course	774.75
9 - Amalgamations	753.93
C - Employability Yr8 Course (WELB)	740.63
06E - Thinking Skills Research	739.61

Correspondence

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
C - E.T.I. Course (AFF)	737.73
04F - Progress File	735.86
CEG & RSE	734.52
C - Teacher Tutor Support Service WELB	730.01
S - Dissolving Boundaries	725.47
CR - Sento training and awareness	717.92
2 - Children Order (NI) 1995	703.46
CROSS BORDER INIT. PEACE2 PH2	701.55
PR - SDS - Additional PRU Places	700.25
S - Cross Country Championships	698.17
S - Teacher Exchanges	696.38
BELB - ELB Representative	694.32
Mat/Pat/Adopt Leave	689.39
MBW-Transfer Readiness Program	682.58
09E - Irish Medium Primary Curriculum	682.32
S - Gymnastics Course	669.72
S - Course ran by QUB	663.01
90E - STEM	656.60
S - EMU or European Studies Project	655.17
Enriched Curriculum	652.32
AS - Citizenship	648.34
S - Award Ceremonies	647.68
C - Other representational duties	646.03
C - RTU Course - Investors in People	645.87
NOF-School Sports Coordinators	643.11
S - PRSD - Performance Review Staff Development	641.68
BELB - Adoption/Patern Leave	634.68
S - IEPÆs (Individual Education Plans) - Special Needs run by SENCO	634.68
Schools Consultative Group	630.28
32E - Citizenship	628.01
04E - Irish Medium Education Research	620.82
BZ - Comenius Project	619.48
CCEA-PMB	619.35
CCEA-Applied GCE Conduct	618.97
M - Teacher Exchange	616.61
CYPFP-Designated Teachers	616.38

The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-Up Report

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
CCEA-Entry Level Quals Process.	606.00
S - Reading Recovery Course	605.46
EPS-Speech & Language Therapy	604.34
BRO-TIME TO READ	599.50
S - Key Stage Relief	594.23
S - Stranmillis Student/Tutor Partnership Development Day	591.67
37G - Revision of Specifications (Support Material)	591.11
SELB-EU PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE	571.78
BECTA-NI Tep Project-Strand 4	565.91
TZ - Public Representative	564.00
MBW-Communities in Schools	558.84
S - Court/Industrial Tribunal	557.89
CCEA-Occupational Studies Pilo	557.09
C - NASUWT	551.69
50E - Facing History: Holocaust Resource	547.87
CCEA-Early Years Evaluation	529.63
C - NQT Training	529.17
BA - Youth Sport	527.70
BW - North & West Belfast Health Promoting Schools	527.49
S - Court/Industrial Tribunal (school charge if not Board or School related)	523.62
BELB - Inservice Train(Inset)	514.88
KS3 Development-Ass prod.s't	514.19
C - Key Stage Moderation	510.51
BJ - Greater Shankill P1 Initiative/Enriched Curriculum	507.47
40E - Employability Key Stage 3&4	503.07
DE-CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR/ASD	495.01
BS - School Discipline Strategy - Behaviour support teams	493.24
SENDO AWARENESS TRAINING	489.33
CCEA-Regulation of Quals	486.09
C - Literacy Cohort (BELB)	484.46
CY - Children and Young People Project	477.62
Reading/Recovery Sch Improve	468.71
IDF-Counselling Project	463.61
35G - Revision of Specifications	456.88
FL - DE Renew Comm1.7 Healthy Schools	456.60
Financial Capability-Post Prim	454.91

Correspondence

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
UNOCINI Training Strategy	453.38
BK - Discipline - Promoting/Sustaining Good Behaviour	449.34
37E - Employability Belfast	447.23
C - Specific Educational Initiatives - AWL	439.86
S - Living With Diversity - NICIE	439.31
C - Reading Partnership Course (SELB)	436.25
CCEA-Key Skills Advice/Review	434.27
BELB - Public Representative	429.83
C - Learning For Life and Work WELB (Belfast)	423.70
BELB-International Sports Rep	415.53
S - Union Conference	414.14
Educ.Supp. Looked After Child'	411.30
SSP Pupil Referral Units	406.95
CCEA-KS3 Annual Report	406.26
CCEA-Council & main Committees	404.10
S - Behaviour Support	393.62
BY - CCEA - Primary Language Pilot	383.71
C - EMU (Evaluation Day code P)	383.71
FZ - Court Representation/Jury Service	381.21
S - Student Placement Visits	379.84
GA - DE - EBD/ Challenging Behaviour/ASD	378.81
C - Specific Educational Initiatives - ESP	372.01
S - Moderation Edexcel	369.97
C - Court/Industrial Tribunal (When representing Board or School)	362.61
84E - Primary Assessment: Irish Medium	360.22
CCEA-GCSE Development	360.22
CCEA-Revision of Specification	360.22
EH - Education for Diversity (St Josephs Lisburn St Aloysius Harmony Hill)	360.22
BG - Interboard Numeracy Strategy	354.84
S - OCR	354.84
60E - Online Support in Statutory Assessment of IT	352.16
BELB-YESIP TRANCHE 3	351.60
CCEA-Employability Project	351.60
CCEA-Essential Skills Advice	351.60
CCEA-Modernisation	351.60
20T - Revision of GOML Specifications	347.60

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Code/Description	Amount 08/09
C - Sendo Course WELB	347.60
02Q - E-Learning Project	346.35
S - Permanent teacher is off on a career break the sub teacher covering	342.45
Learning for Life & Work MLD	341.72
C - International Sports Representative	338.45
Development-Inclusive Science	338.45
CCEA-Employability MLD	337.06
36E - Employability Belfast	337.05
LN - SIP- Summer Literacy & Numeracy Scheme	334.98
BX - EH SSB - Investing for Health	334.97
CCEA-Revision of Spec's	334.97
Redundancy Payment	324.60
CCEA-KS2 ICT Accrediation	320.45
19T - Primary Pupil Profile Research	317.34
SELB-Numeracy Development	314.39
Reading Attainments-SENCO	309.75
CCEA-Learning for Life/Work	309.22
BRITISH HEART FOUNDATION	309.21
DC - NI Drug & Alcohol Campaign	309.21
C - ICT inset BELB	305.43
01F - Review Of Applied Qualifications	303.43
SPECIALIST SCHOOLS-NEELB	300.48
C - Seven Schools Project (NEELB)	300.30
CCEA-SEN Pupil Profile	296.17
HC ú Bright Futures	291.45
EZ - Transitions - SEN	281.64
CCEA-Local Moderation De. etc	279.70
04I - 14-19 Development	279.05
STEM-Science,Tech,Eng Schools	277.93
06T - Development Foundation Stage Profile	276.94
ATLANTIC PHILANTHROPY-IFI	275.32
72E - KS3 Development: Stage1 Assessment Training	273.38
C - Timetable Training SELB	273.27
KS3 Development-Induction/Tr	268.76
BELB - Youth Tutor Subs	262.76
S - C2K sims.net update	262.44

Correspondence

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
41E - Employability Taste & See	260.39
CCEA-Transfer Test Development	260.39
Health Promoting Sch.Project	257.86
C - GOML - Grade Objectives in Modern Languages	256.13
CS - Citizenship Training	254.16
Cross Curricular Ass'ment MLD	247.92
C - EMU (All day absence of teachers involved in department-approved schemes)	246.65
C - Personal Development Course (SELB)	246.53
SEND0 (WELB)	245.53
CCEA-GCSE/GCE/ICAA Processing	245.22
31E - Web Development	243.69
CF ù Co-operation Through Sport	231.17
GM - IDF Counselling Service	230.76
SSP Summer Lit/Num Projects	229.10
S - NIPPA	228.30
18I - ACETS Qualifications Conduct	226.15
CCEA-Assessment Evaluation	222.83
16T - Development of CCEA Schematic with C2K	217.20
CCEA-Primary Support Materials	217.15
01J - Key Skills Qualification Processing	211.56
BELB-BRO COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOL	211.56
BH - Interboard Literacy Strategy	211.56
C - Early Years Pilot Scheme	211.56
S - SENDO Training	211.56
SEELB-SIP SUMMER SCHEMES	211.56
Y - School Support Programme	211.56
Associate Assessors Conference	206.50
Long Term Sick-Special Sch's	199.48
CP - CCEA - Citizenship (Not CCEA Form)	195.17
SSP Reading Recovery Teachers	185.37
03I - Workforce Development	180.11
08T - Assessment Support for Schools using ALTA	180.11
CCEA-Events for GCSE/GCE Dev	180.11
CCEA-Revision of GOML Specs	180.11
CJ ù Inter-Board Irish Medium	180.11

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Code/Description	Amount 08/09
GD - Big Lottery - Fleming Fulton YPF	177.30
68E - Good Practice in RE	175.80
CCEA-Workforce Development	175.80
DE-Ren.Community/Speech/Lang	175.80
DH - NOF - Out of School Hours Care Programme	175.80
EU Awareness Campaign Training	175.80
HZ - In-Service Training (INSE) - Centre Allocation	175.80
AI - SIP - Dissemination of Good Practice	173.69
SEN Provision-Modernisation	173.69
UZ - CCMS Representative	173.69
CCEA-Primary Pupil Profile Res	173.08
BELB - SUCCESS IN NUMERACY	169.54
BF - ICAN - Gibson Primary School	169.54
C - Citizenship Day in School	169.54
EY - Early years	169.54
CCEA-ACETS Qualifications Cond	167.49
CR - SENDO Awareness Training	167.49
CT - Connecting Teachers Programme	167.49
S - Department-approved Schemes Co-operation North	167.49
S - Principal meeting - if non-teaching Principal	167.49
S - Teachers Union Conference	167.49
S - Technology & Design	167.49
53E - SEN Assessment: KS1 SLD Units	164.42
CCEA-Irish Medium Educ.R'earch	163.48
CCEA-Key Skills Quals. Proc'ss	163.48
Early Years Support TS&PC	163.48
SCOI-HEALTHY LIVING PROGRAMME	163.48
4 - Summer Literacy/Numeracy	154.61
C - New Teacher Training	154.61
LS - SIP Literacy Training	154.61
TRAINING FOR DYSLEXIA	154.61
CCEA - LEVELS OF PROGRESSION	150.91
CCEA-KS4 Pupil Profile	150.91
JM - DE - Interface Monies	150.91
READING RECOVERY SUPPORT	150.91
S - Attending Court	143.28

Correspondence

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
S - Dissemination of Good Practice	143.28
44E - Employability MLD	139.85
CCEA-Employability Newry	139.85
C - KS4 NEELB	132.81
C - PRSD-Performance Review & Staff Development Course SEELB	132.81
S - Principals Day	132.81
34E - PMB Evaluation NFER	129.63
CCEA-Events and Promotions	129.63
Falls Dev.Agency-V.Foster	129.63
BELB - GNVQ Additional Support	126.14
25E - PSHE Pilot Project	123.32
87E - Primary Assessment: Programme Evaluation	123.32
BK û Skills Enhancement Programme	123.32
EF - E2S Post Primary Implementation	123.32
AD - Schools Positive Behaviour - Special schools only	120.99
PEACE 2 SCHOOLS PROJECTS	120.37
77E - KS3 Development: Assessment Guidance	114.15
C - Antrim Board Centre Numeracy Co-Ordinators	114.15
CCEA-Key Skills Qual.Conduct	114.15
CF - BRO - Communication in School (BELB Contribution)	114.15
BC - Health Promoting Schools Initiative	111.42
CCEA-Revision of Spec's(Exams)	111.42
76E - KS3 Development: PMB Stakeholders' Information Seminars	105.78
8 - TEACHER TUTOR TRAINING	105.78
85E - Primary Assessment: Training Associates	105.78
C - CCCS - Cross Community Contact Scheme - EMU Planning Day	105.78
C - Class Course	105.78
C - Youth Sport (YS) NEELB (SELB)	105.78
Connecting Teachers Prog.	105.78
S - MISCELLANEOUS SCHOOL COSTS	105.78
S - SDPR - Staff Development Performance Review	105.78
07T - Development of Electronic Moderation	103.25
83424	103.25
42E - Employability FEST	103.25
BELB- YESIP11	103.25
CCEA-E-Learning Project	103.25

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Code/Description	Amount 08/09
CZ - General Teaching Council	103.25
Financial Capability-Primary	103.25
S - Baker Day - If a teacher comes in	103.25
X - Performance Review Staff Development	103.25
S - In-school Examinations Duties	90.05
RA - SENCO - Reading Attainments	83.74
CCEA-GOML Development	65.69
SSP Sch Continuing Intens Supp	65.69
Raising Boys Achievement	33.65
Total	66,075,489.20

Reasons 08-09 by Reason

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
83424	103.25
01A - Council and Main Committees	6,016.37
01E - Early Years Evaluation	3,573.86
01F - Review Of Applied Qualifications	303.43
01G - Training of Examining Teams	1,008.73
01J - Key Skills Qualification Processing	211.56
01K - European Excellence Award	804.49
01Q - E-Learning Operations	2,014.50
01T - Development of KS 1&2 Electronic Reports	134,723.59
02A - Chairmans Initiatives	888.03
02F - Regulation of Qualifications	2,051.61
02G - Entry Level Qualifications Conduct	3,300.83
02I - Skills Development	1,774.49
02J - Entry Level Qualifications Processing	2,326.44
02Q - E-Learning Project	346.35
03G - Events for GCSE/GCE Development	3,272.30
03I - Workforce Development	180.11
03J - GCSE/GCE/ICAA Processing	1,297.43
04E - Irish Medium Education Research	620.82
04F - Progress File	735.86
04G - GCSE Development	3,668.34
04I - 14-19 Development	279.05
04J - Modernisation	1,358.15

Correspondence

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
04T - Pupil Profile Parent Awareness Strategy	1,145.97
05F - Records of Achievement	20,724.47
05G - GCE Development	978.90
05I - Assessment 4-11 Conduct	293,553.45
05T - SEN Pupil Profile	1,010.00
06E - Thinking Skills Research	739.61
06F - Essential Skills Advice and Review	1,529.92
06G - Entry Level Qualifications Development	1,134.92
06I - KS2 ICT Accreditation Development	5,199.69
06T - Development Foundation Stage Profile	276.94
07F - Key Skills Advice and Review	4,357.62
07G - ICAA Conduct	1,694.92
07I - KS2 ICT Accreditation Conduct	8,145.05
07T - Development of Electronic Moderation	103.25
08F - Key Skills Assessment	4,510.06
08G - Applied GCSE Conduct	4,115.81
08I - Assessment at 14 Development	797.80
08T - Assessment Support for Schools using ALTA	180.11
09E - Irish Medium Primary Curriculum	682.32
09G - Applied GCE Conduct	8,110.99
09I - Assessment at 14 Conduct	151,030.53
1 - Sickness - Short Term	935,010.68
10E - Foundation Stage Support	15,815.33
10G - GCSE Conduct	144,158.02
10I - KS3 ICT Accreditation Development	916.70
10T - Development of KS3 Annual Report	4,083.49
11E - Primary Support Materials	986.05
11G - GCE Conduct	66,669.43
11I - KS3 ICT Accreditation Conduct	1,664.24
12I - Transfer Test Development	10,014.91
13E - Personal Development Pilot Project	1,469.73
13T - Development of e-GOML	7,470.70
14E - Languages In Primary Schools	10,680.48
15E - PE	1,028.15
15T - InCAS Trials	14,230.07
16E - Foundation Stage Assessment	1,516.06

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Code/Description	Amount 08/09
16T - Development of CCEA Schematic with C2K	217.20
17E - Assessment for Learning	14,076.63
17I - Occupational Studies Pilot	5,003.74
18I - ACETS Qualifications Conduct	226.15
19T - Primary Pupil Profile Research	317.34
19T - SEN Pupil Profile Multimedia	1,604.71
2 - Children Order (NI) 1995	703.46
2 - Vacant Post / Career break / Additional teaching / Temporary Contract	2,417,596.94
20E - Computer Adaptive Tasks	1,458.59
20I - GOML Development	3,713.91
20T - Revision of GOML Specifications	347.60
22E - Skills and Capabilities	951.62
23E - Key Stage 3 Guidance	3,995.58
24E - Curriculum Implementation	25,489.98
25E - PSHE Pilot Project	123.32
26E - Employability Project	3,643.13
29E - KS3 Assessment Development	25,946.51
3 - Secondment / Unpaid leave / Resignation / Jobshare	199,376.07
30E - Special Education Needs	9,064.49
31E - Web Development	243.69
32E - Citizenship	628.01
33E - PMB	3,140.93
34E - PMB Evaluation NFER	129.63
35E - QA for Assessment Guidance	801.06
35G - Revision of Specifications	456.88
36E - Employability Belfast	337.05
36G - Revision of Specifications (Exams)	1,180.92
37E - Employability Belfast	447.23
37G - Revision of Specifications (Support Material)	591.11
38E - Employability Coleraine	1,382.05
39E - Employability Dungannon & Cookstown	887.40
4 - Personal Business / Bereavement (Non-school related absence)	100,399.46
4 - Summer Literacy/Numeracy	154.61
40E - Employability Key Stage 3&4	503.07
41E - Employability Taste & See	260.39
42E - Employability FEST	103.25

Correspondence

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
44E - Employability MLD	139.85
50E - Facing History: Holocaust Resource	547.87
51E - Learning for Life & Work SLD	1,774.74
52E - SEN Assessment: Quest Plus	5,240.02
53E - SEN Assessment: KS1 SLD Units	164.42
54E - Learning for Life & Work MLD	6,231.01
55E - Cross Curricular Assessment MLD	1,954.69
56E - SEN Assessment: KS2 SLD Units	1,007.81
57E - SEN: Communication Tasks MLD	837.99
6 - Maternity / Paternity Leave	1,843,684.75
60E - Online Support in Statutory Assessment of IT	352.16
61E - Online Image Resource KS3 English	1,533.99
62E - Teaching Assessment - World Around Us	6,151.28
63E - Irish Medium Support	5,149.74
64E - Financial Capability - Primary	4,783.16
65E - Financial Capability - Post Primary	4,438.23
66E - Early Years Support TS&PC	1,778.30
67E - Development of inclusive Science	2,407.30
68E - Good Practice in RE	175.80
7 - Educational Visits / School Trips	165,585.62
7 - Special Needs - Pupils Cost	6,312.71
70E - Computer Comparative Tools	875.31
72E - KS3 Development: Stage1 Assessment Training	273.38
73E - KS3 Development: CCEA Associate Induction/Training	1,511.40
74E - KS3 Development: Associate production and support	2,418.86
75E - KS3 Development: Stage2 Assessment Training	79,080.92
76E - KS3 Development: PMB Stakeholders' Information Seminars	105.78
77E - KS3 Development: Assessment Guidance	114.15
78E - KS3 Development: SEN Assessment Trainingá	7,244.16
8 - Principal / Teacher Release	647,116.35
8 - Teacher Tutor Training	94,286.38
8 - TEACHER TUTOR TRAINING	105.78
80E - Learning For Life & Work	8,090.28
81E - Primary Assessment: Cross Curricular Skills	1,256.55
82E - Primary Assessment: Online INSET	1,274.62
83E - Primary Assessment: Face-2-Face INSET	6,713.31

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Code/Description	Amount 08/09
84E - Primary Assessment: Irish Medium	360.22
85E - Primary Assessment: Training Associates	105.78
87E - Primary Assessment: Programme Evaluation	123.32
88E - Primary Assessment: Assessment & Exemplification CCS	3,463.58
89E - Additional Development Days	202,489.21
9 - Amalgamations	753.93
9 - Inset - Partial Delegation	104,018.00
90E - STEM	656.60
A - Youth tutors	2,376.98
AB - Literacy	83,572.97
AC - Numeracy	81,867.62
AD - Schools Positive Behaviour - Special schools only	120.99
ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS	11,135.08
AF - Good Shepherd PS Ethnic Minority Funding	6,076.82
AG - SSP	5,223.31
AH - Expenses related to statemented children	245,406.93
AH - SIP - Group One Schools	17,500.06
AH - St Peter's High Special Programme	30,428.39
AI - SIP - Dissemination of Good Practice	173.69
AJ - Maths 2000 Inset Maths Inter Board Numeracy Strategy	25,205.60
AK - Associate Assessors	2,118.78
AL - Literacy Strategy (Linguists Phonics Course)	39,096.73
AO - EOTAS only	120,471.60
AP - Enriched curriculum	3,907.48
AP - Enriched Curriculum	2,809.95
AQ - Professional Development of Beginning Teachers	50,626.20
AS - Citizenship	648.34
ASS - Associate Assessor (substitute cover)	4,672.40
Associate Assessors	3,858.18
Associate Assessors Conference	206.50
AT - Speech & Language	7,900.93
ATLANTIC PHILANTHROPY-IFI	275.32
Attendance at Case Conferences	1,685.17
AV - Casual Illness	294,700.85
AV - Casual Illness (NOT for use by 'Special' schools)	472,583.82
AV - Teacher Sickness: Short Term	879,366.69

Correspondence

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
B - Special Needs - Units Costs	202,697.62
B - Special unit teachers	153,038.43
B - Special Units	154,966.53
BA - Youth Sport	527.70
BC - Children/Es Order	13,865.30
BC - Health Promoting Schools Initiative	111.42
BE - Professional Development - Beginning Teachers	91,011.23
BECTA-NI Tep Project-Strand 4	565.91
BELB - Adoption/Patern Leave	634.68
BELB - Board Initiative	25,216.09
BELB - Children's Order	1,055.63
BELB - Code of Practice(N'ery)	1,163.40
BELB - ELB Representative	694.32
BELB - GNVQ Additional Support	126.14
BELB - Inservice Train(Inset)	514.88
BELB - Interboard Literacy	2,724.17
BELB - Interboard Numeracy	10,771.50
BELB - Perm Long Term Sickness	123,175.31
BELB - Pro Dev-Beginning Teach	13,427.35
BELB - Public Representative	429.83
BELB - Reg Training Unit Inset	1,747.35
BELB - Special Miscellaneous	61,476.99
BELB - Special Unit Subs	3,983.95
BELB - SUCCESS IN NUMERACY	169.54
BELB - Trade Union Rep	1,465.65
BELB - Transfer Procedures	1,182.33
BELB - Youth Tutor Subs	262.76
BELB -Connective Teachers Prog	1,351.06
BELB In-service Train/Teach(S)	1,124.13
BELB- YESIP.11	103.25
BELB-BRO COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOL	211.56
BELB-International Sports Rep	415.53
BELB-YESIP TRANCHE 3	351.60
BETTER IRELAND PROGRAMME	827.58
BF - ICAN - Gibson Primary School	169.54
BG - Interboard Numeracy	73,789.37

The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-Up Report

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
BG - Interboard Numeracy Strategy	354.84
BH - Interboard Literacy Strategy	211.56
BH - Interboard Literacy/Strategy	59,447.37
BI - SEN Code of Practice	13,223.79
Big Lottery St Roses-NOF	6,926.27
BJ - Greater Shankill P1 Initiative/Enriched Curriculum	507.47
BK - Discipline - Promoting/Sustaining Good Behaviour	449.34
BK ù Skills Enhancement Programme	123.32
BP - COMET (EPF Speech & Language Project)	6,831.55
BQ - BRO - Teachers into Industry	5,969.80
BRITISH HEART FOUNDATION	309.21
BRO-Teachers into Industry	1,144.06
BRO-TIME TO READ	599.50
BS - CEG and RSE	2,653.89
BS - School Discipline Strategy - Behaviour support teams	493.24
BV - Union Business	11,778.54
BW - North & West Belfast Health Promoting Schools	527.49
BX - EH SSB - Investing for Health	334.97
BY - Specialist Schools	7,802.62
BY - CCEA - Primary Language Pilot	383.71
BY - General Teaching Council	3,998.16
BZ - Comenius Project	619.48
BZ - Special Unit Subs	107,979.80
C - AC/PC Training	1,445.21
C - Antrim Board Centre Numeracy Co-Ordinators	114.15
C - Autism Course SELB	1,426.94
C - Beginners Teacher Course - (BT Course)	14,360.23
C - Board Courses - WELB SELB SEELB NEELB BELB	24,837.59
C - BT Day	5,775.19
C - CCCS - Cross Community Contact Scheme - EMU Planning Day	105.78
C - CCEA Course	4,959.52
C - CCEA Course (not paid by CCEA)	1,664.31
C - CCMS Courses	974.12
C - Child Protection	3,522.57
C - Child Protection Course	2,022.28
C - Citizenship Day in School	169.54

Correspondence

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
C - Class Course	105.78
C - Court/Industrial Tribunal (When representing Board or School)	362.61
C - Cross Community Project	992.36
C - Curriculum Development/Education Reform Work	4,543.91
C - E.PD Training	9,416.50
C - E.T.I. Course (AFF)	737.73
C - Early Professional Development	4,245.17
C - Early Years Pilot Scheme	211.56
C - Employability Yr8 Course (WELB)	740.63
C - EMU (All day absence of teachers involved in department-approved schemes)	246.65
C - EMU (Evaluation Day code P)	383.71
C - EMU- Cross Community Contact Scheme	2,328.65
C - EMU Planning	1,273.46
C - Enriched Curriculum	2,156.49
C - EPD 1 Course	2,418.96
C - EPD 2nd Year Probation	1,971.49
C - Fundamental Movement Skills Course (SEELB)	1,113.57
C - GOML - Grade Objectives in Modern Languages	256.13
C - GTC Union - (Trade Union Business)	935.71
C - Home Tuition/Casual	159,092.52
C - ICT inset BELB	305.43
C - Induction Course	774.75
C - Inservice Training	9,570.20
C - International Sports Representative	338.45
C - Key Stage Moderation	510.51
C - KS4 NEELB	132.81
C - Leading Learning (RTU)	1,663.15
C - Learning For Life and Work WELB (Belfast)	423.70
C - Literacy Cohort (BELB)	484.46
C - Literacy Training NEELB	4,212.79
C - Long-term sickness (more than 20th Consecutive working day of absence)	222,953.06
C - Maths Co-ordinators Course (code AJ 8326)	2,469.21
C - NASUWT	551.69
C - New Teacher Training	154.61
C - NICCEA Moderators	1,004.94

The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-Up Report

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
C - NQT Training	529.17
C - Numeracy Strategy (code NS)	5,449.93
C - Other representational duties	646.03
C - Permanent Teacher on Maternity/Adoption/Paternity Leave	34,417.33
C - Personal Development Course (SELB)	246.53
C - Principal Meeting -if teaching Principal	2,386.21
C - PRSD-Performance Review & Staff Development Course SEELB	132.81
C - Public Duties - Security Forces	1,328.10
C - Reading Partnership Course (SELB)	436.25
C - RSE - Relationship Sexual Education (CCEA)	1,013.53
C - RTU	1,354.27
C - RTU Course - Investors in People	645.87
C - RTU Mgt	1,712.34
C - RTU PQH Training	1,141.52
C - Sento Course WELB	347.60
C - Seven Schools Project (NEELB)	300.30
C - Special schools only - Career break / Secondment / Job share / Resignation	46,968.14
C - Special schools only - Education visits / School trips	7,001.56
C - Special schools only - Inset - Partial delegation	7,636.74
C - Special schools only - Maternity / Paternity leave	93,294.00
C - Special schools only - Miscellaneous school charge	98,258.04
C - Special schools only - Personal business / Unpaid leave / Bereavement	13,753.20
C - Special schools only - Principal / Teacher release	21,107.18
C - Special schools only - Short-term sickness	172,084.65
C - Special schools only - Vacant Post / Additional teaching / Temporary contract	209,774.61
C - Specific Educational Initiatives - AWL	439.86
C - Specific Educational Initiatives - ESP	372.01
C - Suspension of teacher by Employing Authority	15,394.31
C - Teacher Tutor Course NELB	919.21
C - Teacher Tutor Support Service WELB	730.01
C - Timetable Training SELB	273.27
C - Transfer Procedure Duties	1,725.39
C - Transfer Procedure Interviews	3,111.32
C - Transfer Report Writing	1,602.91

Correspondence

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
C - Youth Sport (YS) NEELB (SELB)	105.78
C û Special Schools only - Career break/Secondment/ Job share/Resignation	76,722.84
C û Special Schools only - Education visits/School Trips	4,489.88
C û Special Schools only - Induction of Probation Teachers (Board Initiative)	1,957.55
C û Special Schools only - Inset û Partial delegation	1,784.21
C û Special Schools only - Long-term sickness	20,700.71
C û Special Schools only - Maternity/Paternity leave	141,467.28
C û Special Schools only - Miscellaneous school charge	49,656.28
C û Special Schools only - Personal business/unpaid leave/bereavement	13,010.61
C û Special Schools only - Principal/teacher release	7,511.85
C û Special Schools only - Short-term sickness	71,923.42
C û Special Schools only - Vacant Post/ Additional Teaching/ Temporary Contract	184,918.13
Casual Sickness(Teaching)WELB	128,144.98
CC - Suspension of Staff	56,547.98
CC - Suspension of Teacher	19,976.51
CCEA - LEVELS OF PROGRESSION	150.91
CCEA Default Code	64,908.89
CCEA-ACETS Qualifications Cond	167.49
CCEA-Applied GCE Conduct	618.97
CCEA-Assessment 4-11 Dev'ment	94,823.66
CCEA-Assessment at 14 Conduct	37,261.29
CCEA-Assessment Evaluation	222.83
CCEA-Assessment for Learning	1,662.43
CCEA-Computer Adaptive Tasks	1,708.46
CCEA-Council & main Committees	404.10
CCEA-Curriculum Implementation	1,246.96
CCEA-Early Years Evaluation	529.63
CCEA-E-Learning Project	103.25
CCEA-Employability Coleraine	851.36
CCEA-Employability MLD	337.06
CCEA-Employability Newry	139.85
CCEA-Employability Project	351.60
CCEA-Entry Level Quals Process.	606.00
CCEA-Essential Skills Advice	351.60
CCEA-Events and Promotions	129.63
CCEA-Events for GCSE/GCE Dev	180.11

The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-Up Report

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
CCEA-Foundation Stage Support	3,301.30
CCEA-GCE Conduct	7,697.67
CCEA-GCSE Conduct	18,289.84
CCEA-GCSE Development	360.22
CCEA-GCSE/GCE/ICAA Processing	245.22
CCEA-GOML Development	65.69
CCEA-InCAS Trials	854.33
CCEA-Irish Medium Educ.R'earch	163.48
CCEA-Key Skills Advice/Review	434.27
CCEA-Key Skills Qual.Conduct	114.15
CCEA-Key Skills Quals. Proc'ss	163.48
CCEA-KS 1&2 Electronic Reports	39,443.91
CCEA-KS2 ICT Accrediation	320.45
CCEA-KS2 ICT Accrediation Con.	1,557.02
CCEA-KS3 Annual Report	406.26
CCEA-KS3 Assessment Develop'nt	6,799.07
CCEA-KS3 ICT Accred.Conduct	2,436.15
CCEA-KS4 Pupil Profile	150.91
CCEA-Languages in Primary S'ls	2,333.41
CCEA-Learning for Life/Work	309.22
CCEA-Local Moderation De. etc	279.70
CCEA-Modernisation	351.60
CCEA-Occupational Studies Pilo	557.09
CCEA-Personal Dev.Pilot P'ject	824.04
CCEA-PMB	619.35
CCEA-Primary Pupil Profile Res	173.08
CCEA-Primary Support Materials	217.15
CCEA-Records of Achievements	1,711.18
CCEA-Regulation of Quals	486.09
CCEA-Revision of GOML Specs	180.11
CCEA-Revision of Specification	360.22
CCEA-Revision of Spec's	334.97
CCEA-Revision of Spec's(Exams)	111.42
CCEA-SEN Pupil Profile	296.17
CCEA-Special Education Needs	1,463.57
CCEA-Transfer Test Development	260.39

Correspondence

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
CCEA-Workforce Development	175.80
CD - Specialist Schools	11,570.64
CE - Child Protection	6,733.14
CEG & RSE	734.52
Centre	771,618.07
CF - BRO - Communication in School (BELB Contribution)	114.15
CF ù Co-operation Through Sport	231.17
CH - DE Comenius Contact Seminar	1,686.18
CH - Teacher Attendance at Case Conferences	8,995.95
CHILD PROTECTION TR TRAINING	3,753.76
CJ ù Inter-Board Irish Medium	180.11
CK - Collaborative Schools (Non Delegated)	20,362.39
CL - Collaborative Schools (Delegated)	118,048.18
Code of Practice	9,699.94
Connecting Teachers ICT	995.41
Connecting Teachers Prog.	105.78
CP - CCEA - Citizenship (Not CCEA Form)	195.17
CP - Child Protection	33,976.10
CP - Child Protection CYP - Training for designated teachers	11,054.18
CR - Curriculum Roll out	5,462.27
CR - SENDO Awareness Training	167.49
CR - Sendo training and awareness	717.92
CROSS BORDER INIT. PEACE2 PH2	701.55
Cross Curricular Ass'ment MLD	247.92
CS - Citizenship Training	254.16
CT - Connecting Teachers Programme	167.49
CY - Children and Young People Project	477.62
CYPFP-Designated Teachers	616.38
CZ - General Teaching Council	103.25
DC - NI Drugs Campaign / NI Strategy	2,957.01
DC - NI Drug & Alcohol Campaign	309.21
DE CASS SUPPORT- CURRICLUM	3,111.55
DE INTERFACE FUND-BELB	1,907.99
DE-CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR/ASD	495.01
DE-Entitlement Framework	5,828.27
DE-Entitlement Framework(spec)	1,868.54

The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-Up Report

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
DE-Ren.Community/Speech/Lang	175.80
DE-Ren.Community-1.2 Mgmt	29,846.39
DE-SLD Challenging Behaviour	19,267.58
Development-Inclusive Science	338.45
DF - DE Entitled to Succeed Programme	2,772.85
DF - Entitled To Succeed	12,098.95
DF - Entitlement Framework (Special Schools Only)	8,717.77
DF - Entitlement Framework (Special Schools Only)	4,139.74
DH - NOF - Out of School Hours Care Programme	175.80
DS - AmmA Centre NIFTC Funding	1,115.12
DZ - Paternity Leave	11,454.92
Early Years Support TS&PC	163.48
EC - BRO - Linguistic Phonics Project	934.75
Educ.Supp. Looked After Child'	411.30
EF - E2S Post Primary Implementation	123.32
EG - DE Cass Support Revised Curriculum Special Schools only	42,044.17
EH - Education for Diversity (St Josephs Lisburn St Aloysius Harmony Hill)	360.22
EH - SEN Code of Practice	12,738.60
EK - Yesip Tranche 3	28,105.36
EM - Save the Children	824.83
EM - Save The Children - Anti Bullying	832.03
Enriched Curriculum	652.32
EP - EPF - School age mothers	7,273.97
EPS-Speech & Language Therapy	604.34
ET - DE Mersey St Staff	8,964.91
EU Awareness Campaign Training	175.80
EX - CYP Child Protection Training	14,826.78
Executive Prog'- sch age mums	8,102.08
EY - Early years	169.54
EZ - Transitions - SEN	281.64
Falls Dev.Agency-V.Foster	129.63
FB - Revised Curriculum - Sub Teacher Cost	431,396.39
FB - Revised Curriculum (School delegated)	496,308.47
FB ù Revised Curriculum ù Sub Teacher Costs (NOT for use by æSpecial/Æ schools)	223,802.49
FC - Revised Curriculum (Special schools only)	57,612.88

Correspondence

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
FC - Special Schools Revised Curriculum	24,398.63
FF - SENDO	2,428.62
FG - Training-Special Education	1,662.92
Financial Capability-Post Prim	454.91
Financial Capability-Primary	103.25
FL - DE Renew Comm1.7 Healthy Schools	456.60
FM - DE-Renewed Community 1.2 Management	67,033.52
FN - SIP-Behaviour Support Teams	4,060.13
FR - CYPFP - Development Designated Teachers	12,154.16
FY - IDF Incredible Years Project	8,087.77
FZ - Court Representation/Jury Service	381.21
GA - Challenging Behaviour	1,984.28
GA - DE - EBD/ Challenging Behaviour/ASD	378.81
GC - Global Citizenship	1,123.63
GD - Big Lottery - Fleming Fulton YPF	177.30
GE - Cross Border Initiative Peace11 Phase 2	6,322.30
GF - Schs for Parenting Prog	1,176.51
GG - Atlantic Philanthropy - IFI	43,973.17
GL - Speech and Language Programme (Special)	7,651.75
GM - IDF Counselling Service	230.76
GN - DE SLD Challenging Behaviour	31,799.89
GRá-á BECTA NI Tep Project Strand 4	4,140.91
GS - DE-Dyslexia	20,435.80
GT - Specific Learning Difficulties	31,820.77
GY - UNOCINI Training Strategy	6,462.45
GZ - Medical Needs Training	14,540.04
H - In Service Training (Management Development Programme)	25,010.58
H - Inservice Training	229,686.07
H - In-Service Training	196,190.95
H - INSET / PQH (Full course titles must be given)	18,872.64
HA - Schools Consultative Group	15,934.08
HB ú DE STEM-Science Tech Eng & Maths	54,132.67
HC ú Bright Futures	291.45
HD - Modernisation of SEN Provision	13,192.50
HE - Entitlement Framework	29,411.53
Health Promoting Sch.Project	257.86

The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-Up Report

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
Health Promotions	884.58
HF - STEM-Delegated Function	18,684.18
HP - Health Promoting Schools Initiative	1,012.61
HZ - In-Service Training (INSE) - Centre Allocation	175.80
HZ - In-Service Training (INSET) - Centre Allocation	3,663.33
ICT Training (SEELB)	4,676.10
IDF-Counselling Project	463.61
IDF-Incredible Years Project	4,894.67
Inter-Bd Numeracy Steering Gp	9,831.44
IP - SIP - School Support Programme	5,039.56
Irish Medium Support	2,617.71
J - L T Sickness	1,075,840.87
J - Long Term Sick	1,087,313.53
J - Long Term Sickness	894,288.06
J - Long Term Sickness Absences	890,711.40
JM - DE - Interface Monies	150.91
JZ - Sickness: Long Term (Permanent Teacher)	825,685.02
K - Induction	12,578.93
K - Induction of Probation Teachers	61,716.02
K - Induction Of Probationer Teachers / EPD	53,561.12
K - Probationary Induction	80,850.76
KS3 Development-Ass prod.s't	514.19
KS3 Development-Induction/Tr	268.76
KS3 Development-SEN Ass'Tr	936.15
KS3 Development-Stage 2 Ass.Tr	7,399.09
L - Community Relations Programme	53,351.74
L - Special Leave (Refer to Board Alpha Codes for guidance)	38,310.60
L - Transfer Procedure Duties	73,254.58
LD - Literacy Development	32,081.44
Learning for Life & Work MLD	341.72
Literacy Developement	2,424.44
LITERACY INTENSIVE SUPPORT B/F	8,191.42
LN - SIP- Summer Literacy & Numeracy Scheme	334.98
Long Term Sick-Special Sch's	199.48
LS - SIP - Literacy Training	83,722.83
LS - SIP Literacy Training	154.61

Correspondence

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
M - Teacher Exchange	616.61
M - Transfer Procedure Duties	72,004.93
Mat/Pat/Adopt Leave	689.39
MBW-Communities in Schools	558.84
MBW-Transfer Readiness Program	682.58
Medical Needs Training	2,685.72
MJ - NOF - School Sports Programme	2,872.79
MZ - Board Initiative	100,065.53
N - Inservice - School Based	15,154.89
N - Public Service/Trade Union Absences	16,280.19
N - Trade Union Rep	25,280.58
N.Ireland Literacy Strategy	6,330.61
ND - Numeracy Development	1,994.05
NOF-School Sports Coordinators	643.11
NOF-SUMMER SCHEMES	193,121.77
NS - SIP - Numeracy Training	94,283.45
NZ - Trade Union Representative	9,154.03
Other Cover (Special Only SELB	8,877.41
P - Cross Community Contact Schemes	81,595.38
P - Schools Community Relations Programme / EMU	83,397.54
P - Transfer	70,269.10
P - Transfer Procedure	66,674.54
Parents in Numeracy	2,899.99
Parents/Professionals-Autism	2,295.15
Pay in Lieu of Notice	886.92
PB - SPECIAL SCHOOLS ONLY - Maternity Cover	53,919.33
PB ù Special Schools Only ù Maternity Cover	1,082.25
PC - SPECIAL SCHOOLS ONLY - Other Cover	96,232.97
PC ù Special Schools Only ù Other Cover	1,822.95
PEACE 2 SCHOOLS PROJECTS	120.37
PH - SPECIAL SCHOOLS ONLY - Short Term Sickness	90,518.89
PJ - SPECIAL SCHOOLS ONLY - Long Term Sickness	105,044.26
PR - SDS - Additional PRU Places	700.25
PRE-SCHOOL AUTISM (BELB)	1,732.77
PS - Pre-school provision/intervention - Special schools only	2,300.78
PZ - Transfer Procedure Duties	40,170.56

The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-Up Report

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
QZ - Miscellaneous (Special Schools only)	501,313.82
R - Nursery Introduction - Interviews	1,969.65
R - Other Absences eg public representative lay magistrate	20,399.87
R - Representational Duties as member of ELB CCMS NICIE CnaG or GTC	12,949.99
R - RTU	23,770.97
RA - SENCO - Reading Attainments	83.74
Raising Boys Achievement	33.65
Reading Attainments-SENCO	309.75
READING RECOVERY SUPPORT	150.91
Reading/Recovery Sch Improve	468.71
Redundancy Payment	324.60
Reorganisation Allow.	6,725.86
REVISED CURRICULUM-NON DELEGATE	4,377.70
REVISED CURRICULUM-DELEGATED	159,844.45
RZ - Regional Training Unit Inset	9,136.30
S - Additional Cover	119,070.67
S - Admin Duties	418,890.59
S - AQA	2,185.53
S - Assistance for Teaching Principals	1,002,823.71
S - Assoc Assessor	1,583.47
S - Attending Court	143.28
S - Award Ceremonies	647.68
S - Baker Day - If a teacher comes in	103.25
S - Behaviour Support	393.62
S - Bereavement	26,580.83
S - C2K	17,370.32
S - C2K sims.net update	262.44
S - Career Break	283,651.42
S - CCEA Agreement Trials	5,778.64
S - CLASS	58,271.87
S - CODE OF PRACTICE	46,654.37
S - Comenius Visit	4,891.26
S - Course ran by QUB	663.01
S - Court/Industrial Tribunal	557.89
S - Court/Industrial Tribunal (school charge if not Board or School related)	523.62
S - Cross Community Contact Planning Day	1,197.13

Correspondence

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
S - CROSS COMMUNITY PROJECT	68,423.48
S - Cross Country Championships	698.17
S - Cultural Events	17,221.86
S - Curriculum Support	49,390.42
S - Department-approved Schemes Co-operation North	167.49
S - DE-Renewed Community 1.7 Healthy Schools	5,969.07
S - DISSEMINATION OF GOOD PRACTICE	17,122.75
S - Dissemination of Good Practice	143.28
S - Dissolving Boundaries	725.47
S - EAL Support	7,940.80
S - Edexcel Course	1,206.87
S - EDUCATIONAL VISITS	127,902.66
S - Educational Visits	99,854.29
S - Educational Visits/School Trips/Field Trips	29,024.04
S - EMU or European Studies Project	655.17
S - Entitlement Framework	1,668.08
S - Exam Supervision (including AQA)	3,094.54
S - Extended Schools	269,858.02
S - Field Trip	32,122.54
S - First Aid	3,088.13
S - Full-Time Temporary Teacher	44,422.41
S - Funeral	68,409.63
S - Graduation	9,161.03
S - Gymnastics Course	669.72
S - IEP/Es (Individual Education Plans) - Special Needs run by SENCO	634.68
S - IN SERVICE (OTHER THAN MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME)	344,600.18
S - In-school Examinations Duties	90.05
S - In-Service Training - School Charge	304,446.00
S - Internal Cover	64,908.15
S - Interviews	1,046.71
S - Jury Service	2,681.99
S - Key Stage Relief	594.23
S - Leading Learning	5,991.55
S - Learning for Life and Work	4,676.18
S - Learning Support	27,491.43
S - Link Course - NWIFHE	2,452.15

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Code/Description	Amount 08/09
S - Literacy Development	9,991.29
S - Living With Diversity - NICIE	439.31
S - MATERNITY COVER	2,658,792.48
S - Maternity Cover	1,461,693.13
S - Maternity Leave	4,060,746.28
S - Maternity leave/Adoption leave	572,975.83
S - Miscellaneous School Charge	2,073,662.90
S - MISCELLANEOUS SCHOOL COST	1,500,933.12
S - MISCELLANEOUS SCHOOL COSTS	105.78
S - Moderation Edexcel	369.97
S - Moving House	1,030.19
S - N.I.C.I.E	3,347.77
S - NICIE Courses	4,225.75
S - Nil Pay - Permanent Teachers	43,226.87
S - NIPPA	228.30
S - NUMERACY DEVELOPMENT	42,273.12
S - OCR	354.84
S - Paternity Leave	27,659.51
S - Paternity leave	7,303.52
S - Performance Review Staff Development	5,412.09
S - Permanent teacher is off on a career break the sub teacher covering	342.45
S - Permanent teacher on maternity/adoption/paternity leave	61,242.87
S - Personal Business	212,905.07
S - PERSONAL BUSINESS	159,503.93
S - Phonics Course	9,822.82
S - PQH	11,053.88
S - PQH (Professional Qualification for Head Teachers	2,359.06
S - Primary Movement	3,055.45
S - Primary School Visits	1,353.04
S - Principal meeting - if non-teaching Principal	167.49
S - PRINCIPAL RELEASE	513,442.80
S - Principal Release	12,353.18
S - Principal Relief	4,661.64
S - Principals Day	132.81
S - PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION FOR HEADSHIP (PQH)	14,504.82
S - Professional Qualification for Headship (PQH)	8,063.82

Correspondence

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
S - PRSD	4,983.57
S - PRSD - Performance Review Staff Development	641.68
S - Public Duties	929.67
S - READING RECOVERY	59,952.20
S - Reading Recovery	32,591.10
S - Reading Recovery Course	605.46
S - Records of Achievement	3,666.28
S - REVISED CURRICULUM	402,170.26
S - Revised Curriculum	250,536.10
S - RTU-PQH	949.61
S - School based training	134,514.95
S - School Business	574,148.69
S - School Duties	16,359.62
S - School Improvement Programme (SIP)	3,978.59
S - School Play	4,173.44
S - School Supervision	1,594.08
S - SCHOOL SUPPORT PROGRAMME (SSP)	117,507.46
S - School Trip	297,879.50
S - School Trips	19,569.90
S - SDPR - Staff Development Performance Review	105.78
S - Secondment	444,261.75
S - SENCO	9,192.74
S - SENCO Release	96,954.76
S - SENDO Training	211.56
S - Short-term sickness absence (less than 20 days)	259,025.78
S - SICKNESS - 4+ TEACHERS 1-20 DAYS	1,230,090.48
S - SICKNESS - UNDER 4 TEACHERS 1 - 10 DAYS	364,823.71
S - Sickness: Short Term	1,103,114.92
S - SMT Planning	1,085.99
S - Special Needs	8,355.78
S - Special Needs Support - School Initiated	305,661.19
S - Sports Event	47,826.32
S - Stranmillis Student/Tutor Partnership Development Day	591.67
S - Student Placement Visits	379.84
S - Support Teachery	9,937.74
S - Suspension of Teacher	19,458.48

The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-Up Report

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
S - Teacher Exchange	2,741.66
S - Teacher Exchanges	696.38
S - Teacher on Residential	795.68
S - Teacher Relief	17,546.07
S - Teacher/Year Group Support	146,165.86
S - Teachers Union Conference	167.49
S - Technology & Design	167.49
S - Union Conference	414.14
S - Unpaid Leave	127,803.37
S - Unpaid leave	15,545.99
S - Unpaid Leave of Absence	82,311.76
S - Vacancy	2,601,855.26
S - Vacancy/Vacant Post	1,236,451.91
S - Vacant Post	1,994,942.30
S - VACANT POSTS	1,541,303.00
S - Voluntary Events	4,988.03
S - Wedding	26,508.56
S - Young Enterprise	8,291.34
School	8,189,030.25
SCHOOL TO SCHOOL COLLABORATION	776.62
Schools Consultative Group	630.28
SCOI-HEALTHY LIVING PROGRAMME	163.48
SDS - SDS - Additional Support for Selected Schools	2,226.85
SEELB-SIP SUMMER SCHEMES	211.56
SEELB-SPECIAL SCHOOLS ONLY	16,905.28
SELB-EU PARTNERSHIP FOR PEACE	571.78
SELB-Numeracy Development	314.39
SEN Assessment: Quest Plus	1,369.90
SEN Provision-Modernisation	173.69
SEND0 (WELB)	245.53
SEND0 AWARENESS TRAINING	489.33
Short Term Sick-Special Sch'	3,967.48
SICKNESS - SHORT TERM	74,990.40
SP - Additional Provision for Statemented Pupils	129,062.82
Special Unit Teachers	231,757.88
SPECIALIST SCHOOLS-NEELB	300.48

Correspondence

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES	1,282.75
Speech & Language Prog(Special	1,108.56
Speech & Language Project	1,774.95
SS - School to School Collaboration	15,060.38
SSP Lit & Num Dev Officer	7,464.20
SSP Pupil Referral Units	406.95
SSP Reading Recovery Teachers	185.37
SSP Sch Continuing Intens Supp	65.69
SSP Sch Leaving Intensive Supp	11,523.68
SSP Summer Lit/Num Projects	229.10
STEM-Science,Tech,Eng Schools	277.93
STEM-Science,Tech,Eng,& Maths	1,929.33
StPetersHS/SEELB Statemented	142,972.13
SUB REASON 1	661,101.45
SUB REASON 12	1,892.80
SUB REASON 13	6,885.93
SUB REASON 14	11,837.37
SUB REASON 16	4,923.58
SUB REASON 18	312,515.02
SUB REASON 19	2,987.18
SUB REASON 2	28,789.92
SUB REASON 20	11,220.28
SUB REASON 21	17,795.01
SUB REASON 22	152,137.10
SUB REASON 23	17,449.01
SUB REASON 24	92,999.91
SUB REASON 25	4,998.18
SUB REASON 3	23,238.50
SUB REASON 4	18,872.17
SUB REASON 5	8,091.00
SUB REASON 6	48,735.10
SUB REASON 7	1,030.16
SUB REASON 8	96,461.42
SUB-REASON 09	1,817.99
T - Public Service Absence (Maximum 5 days)	1,500.94
TD - Training for Dyslexia	2,661.74

The Management of Substitution Cover for Teachers: Follow-Up Report

Code/Description	Amount 08/09
TEACHER SUSPENSIONS	19,103.85
Teacher Tutor Training Prog.	9,726.74
Teaching Ass'ment-World Around	1,884.86
Trained Reading Recovery(Ex.Pr	1,798.81
TRAINING FOR DYSLEXIA	154.61
Training-Special Education	786.41
TT - Professional Development of Beginning Teachers	61,011.70
TZ - Public Representative	564.00
Unclassified	174,211.99
Undefined	5,876.48
Unknown	13,689.33
UNOCINI Training Strategy	453.38
UZ - CCMS Representative	173.69
VZ - Education And Library Board Representative	900.55
WELB-CLASSROOM 2000/COMPUTERS	6,307.62
WZ - International Sports Representative	12,293.88
X - Performance Review Staff Development	103.25
X - SIP - New Schools Entering SSP	77,879.32
Y - School Support Programme	211.56
Youth Tutors	2,156.73
YS - Youth Sport South SCNI	2,945.08
Z - Implementation of Children's Order 1995	10,317.49
Z - Special Units (Sickness & Maternity Leave)	65,363.88
Total	66,075,489.20



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Appendix 4

List of Witnesses Who Gave Oral Evidence to the Committee

List of Witnesses Who Gave Oral Evidence to the Committee

List of Witnesses Who Gave Oral Evidence to the Committee

1. Mr Paul Sweeney, Accounting Officer, Department of Education (DE);
2. Mr John McGrath, Deputy Secretary, Department of Education (DE);
3. Mrs La'Verne Montgomery, Director of Education Workforce Development, Department of Education (DE);
4. Mr Kieran Donnelly, Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG); and
5. Ms Fiona Hamill, Treasury Officer of Accounts (TOA).



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ISBN 978-0-339-60355-4



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COFMDFM - Programme for Government 2011-15 Progress Reports



**COMMITTEE FOR THE OFFICE OF THE FIRST MINISTER
AND DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER**

Room 285
Parliament Buildings
Tel: 028 90521903
Email: committee.ofmdfm@niassembly.gov.uk

FROM: Kathy O'Hanlon Clerk to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister

DATE: 18 September 2014

TO: All Statutory Committees

SUBJECT: Programme for Government Progress Reports

At the Committee meeting of 17 September 2014, this Committee noted correspondence from OFMDFM providing a report on progress against Programme for Government Commitments for all Departments. The Committee agreed to forward this to all Statutory Committees.

I would be grateful if you would bring this information to the attention of your Committee.

Regards

**Kathy O'Hanlon
Clerk to the Committee**



**Kathy O'Hanlon
Assembly Clerk
Committee for OFMDFM
Room 285
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont
BELFAST
BT4 3XX**

09 September 2014

Dear Kathy,

Programme for Government 2011-15: Progress Reports

Please find attached, in advance of internet publication, a strategic online report on progress against Programme for Government Commitments.

This will be publicly available from Monday 15 September 2014 at:

<http://www.northernireland.gov.uk/index/work-of-the-executive/pfg.htm>

Strategic delivery plans for Programme for Government Commitments were recently published on the Executive's website and are available at the same location.

Yours sincerely

Yours sincerely

Signed Colette Kerr

**Colette Kerr
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer**

Programme for Government 2011-15
 QOS Report
 Quarter Four - 2013/14



Priority 1

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
01. DETI	Contribute to rising levels of employment by supporting the promotion of over 25,000 new jobs	Promote 13,300 jobs	Promote 19,500 jobs (cumulative)	Promote 25,000 jobs (cumulative)

Invest NI delivered its most successful year in 2013/14 in terms of job promotion. This has allowed Invest NI to exceed its three year PfG milestone with 23,783 jobs delivered against the 19,500 job milestone. Although challenges remain, Invest NI will continue to work with businesses and stakeholders to maintain the progress being made with job promotion and the agency remains confident that the four year PfG target will be exceeded.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
02. DFP	Press for the devolution of Corporation Tax and reduce its level	Press for a UK government decision, through participation in Joint Ministerial Working Group	Work to ensure that required Westminster and Assembly legislation is in place to give effect to any Executive decisions	Executive announcement of rate of corporation tax for Northern Ireland

As set out in the Building a Prosperous and United Community (Economic Pact) document, published on 14 June 2013, the Government will make a final decision on the devolution of corporation tax powers to the NI Assembly no later than the Autumn Statement 2014.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
03. DETI	Achieve £1 billion of investment in Northern Ireland economy (This includes £375 million as a result of Foreign Direct Investment; £400 million from indigenous businesses supported by Invest NI and £225 million as a result of the Jobs Fund)	Secure total investment of £550.0m* *2012/13 milestone includes 2011/12 figures	Secure total investment of £320.5m	To have secured total investment of at least £1 billion

PfG Target Achieved.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
04. DETI	Increase the value of manufacturing exports by 20%	Increase the value of manufacturing exports by 6 percentage points	Increase the value of manufacturing exports by 7 percentage points	Increase the value of manufacturing exports by 7 percentage points

Due to the time-lagged nature of HMRC data, manufacturing exports data for the financial year ending 31st March 2014 will not be available until the 5th June 2014. The latest manufacturing export data from HMRC relates to the 12 month rolling period ending 31st December 2013.

For this period, NI Manufacturing Exports totalled £6.0bn which equates to 6.1% growth on the baseline year, (2010/11 financial year) when manufacturing exports totalled £5.6bn. This is encouraging after an extremely disappointing 2012/13 when exports declined by 5% when compared to 2011/12 and by -0.5% against the baseline. However, manufacturing exports progress is circa 12 months behind the anticipated PfG profile as a result of 2012/13 performance.

Therefore, although Invest NI continues to offer extensive support to drive forward export growth, it is recognised that the overall objective of a 20% increase in manufacturing exports is only possible over an extended time period.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
05. DETI	Support £300 million investment by businesses in R&D, with at least 20% coming from Small and Medium sized Enterprises	Support £150m investment in R&D* *2012/13 milestone includes 2011/12 figures	Support £75m investment in R&D	Support £75m investment in R&D

PfG Target Achieved.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
06. DETI	Increase visitor numbers to 4.2 million and tourist revenue to £676 million by December 2014	Increase tourism revenue to £591m and tourism visitor numbers to 3.47m	Increase tourism revenue to £625m and tourism visitor numbers to 3.6m	Increase tourism revenue to £676m and tourism visitor numbers to 4.2m

On track to meet visitor number and tourism revenue milestones for 2013.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
07. DETI	Aid Liquidity of Small and Medium Size Enterprises (SMEs) through a £50 million loan fund (£28 million in the three years covered by the Programme for Government)	Support 50 SMEs by providing loans valued at £8m	Support 50 SMEs by providing loans valued at £10m	Support 50 SMEs by providing loans valued at £10m

A delay in the Fund launch meant it was not possible to meet the 2012-13 milestone target. However, good progress has been made during 2013/14 which has retrieved the 2012/13 shortfall with £20.1m of loans offered at 31st March 2014 against the PfG Milestone of £18m. Although the volume of loans is likely to be behind the level initially anticipated, Invest NI remains confident that the £28m PfG target will be delivered.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
08. DOE	Ensure 90% of large scale investment planning decisions are made within 6 months and applications with job creation potential are given additional weight (This commitment is made subject to external factors such as Judicial Review which could impact on performance)	60% of large scale investment planning decisions are made within 6 months	75% of large scale planning decisions are made within 6 months	90% of large scale investment planning decisions are made within 6 months

The Department will continue to focus its efforts to ensure that this increased revised target of 90% large scale investment decisions are processed within 6 months. This represents a significant increase in the overall percentage of applications meeting the 6 month target. The uplift from 75% to 90% for this business year will be challenging. As such, the Department will continue to prioritise and carefully manage these applications throughout the business year.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
09. DFP	Introduce extension of Small Business Rate Relief Scheme to 2015	Ensure legislative and operational changes will be effective		Review operation of scheme

The Commitment is complete.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
10. DFP	Hold the Regional Rate increases to the rate of inflation	Secure approval to Rates Order	Secure approval to Rates Order	Secure approval to Rates Order

The regional rate for 2013/14 was set at 2.7%.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
11. DFP	Eliminate Air Passenger Duty on direct long haul flights	Agree policy, administrative and financial arrangements with UK Government and EU (as appropriate) Work to ensure that required Westminster and Assembly legislation is in place to devolve power to Assembly to set Air Passenger Duty on direct long haul flights	Work to ensure progress of Assembly Bill in order to reduce the Northern Ireland rate of APD on direct long haul flights to zero	

The Commitment is complete.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
12. DSD	Invest in social enterprise growth to increase sustainability in the broad community sector	Develop and implement policy framework on Community Asset Transfer with support from DFP Provide opportunities to support social enterprise growth	Baseline existing social enterprise activity with the voluntary and community sector in Northern Ireland, identifying opportunities for growth and communicating these across Government and the sector through such channels as the Joint Voluntary and Community Sector Forum	Commence implementation of Community Asset Transfer policy and opportunities identified

A draft policy framework for Community Asset Transfer has been completed and submitted to the Executive for approval.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
13. DETI	Encourage achievement of 20% of electricity consumption from renewable sources and 4% renewable heat by 2015	12% electricity consumption from renewable sources- subject to adequate grid reinforcement being approved by NIAUR 2% renewable heat	15% electricity consumption from renewable sources- subject to adequate grid reinforcement being approved by NIAUR 3% renewable heat	20% electricity consumption from renewable sources- subject to adequate grid reinforcement being approved by NIAUR 4% renewable heat

The seasonally adjusted average figure for renewable generation to end February 2014 is 19%. The main means of achieving the renewable heat target is through the introduction of the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) and the Renewable Heat Premium Payemnt Scheme (RHPPS). The RHPPS was introduced in May 2012 and the RHI in November 2012. To date, 134 applications have been received under the RHI representing a heat capacity of 16.2MW. Under the RHPP, DETI has received 1645 applications and has offered support of over £2.24 million. The heat capacity of these installations is 13.5MW.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
14. DCAL	Support 200 projects through the Creative Industries Innovation Fund	100 projects overall	150 projects overall	200 projects overall

The Creative Industries Innovation Fund (CIIF) has met its target of supporting 150 projects by March 2014. A further round for CIIF applications opened in January 2014 for projects being delivered by March 2015. 90 applications have been received and therefore it is expected that the overall PfG target of 200 projects by March 2015 will be met. Social Clauses were introduced into project awards during 2013/14 which required recipients of CIIF awards to participate as STEM/STEAM Ambassadors (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Maths) in a schools engagement programme run by W5 – the science discovery centre in Belfast. This social clause has continued into 2014/15 and has been extended to offer the alternative of companies participating in a youth work experience and training scheme run by Creative & Cultural Skills.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
15. OFMDFM	Develop Maze/Long Kesh as a regeneration site of regional significance	(1)Launch of Development Plan for Maze/Long Kesh	(2) "Balmoral Show" at Maze/Long Kesh (3)Commencement of site infrastructure works at Maze/Long Kesh	(4)Private sector development partner appointed by Maze/Long Kesh Development Corporation. (5)Peace building and Conflict Resolution Centre complete

There is no current agreement on Maze/Long Kesh issues. Ministers continue to discuss a way forward. The Royal Ulster Agricultural Society will be holding their Balmoral Agricultural Show at the site in May 2014.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
16. OFMDFM	Develop the 'One Plan' for regeneration of Derry/Londonderry, incorporating the key sites at Fort George and Ebrington	1175 jobs promoted through the public, community and private sectors. Development framework completed, and outline planning approval for Ebrington and Fort George secured. Opportunities for development at Ebrington opened to the market.	1670 jobs promote through the public, community and private sectors. Decontamination programme at Fort George complete. Regeneration of key buildings and places at Ebrington completed.	1200 jobs promoted through the public, community and private sectors. £23m infrastructure investment programme at Ebrington complete

Jobs promotion continues to be a priority. Capital project developments at Fort George and Ebrington are continuing. The One Plan inter-departmental co-ordinating group continues to monitor and facilitate responses across NI Departments and programme delivery in a number of areas and catalyst programmes have progressed. Work continues on mitigating actions to address risks and include pro active promotion of Ebrington, financial support to attract economic conferences and promotion of the digital/creative economy

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
17. OFMDFM	Provide financial and other support across government to ensure the success of the Derry/Londonderry City of Culture 2013	Creative industries hub in place at Ebrington	Visitor numbers to the City and visitor spend doubled	City of Culture programme supported and delivered

The City of Culture Programme was successfully delivered with very positive media coverage surrounding delivery of 2013 programme and initial Legacy events. The monitoring/evaluation work is on-going with Ilex undertaking the Monitoring Study to provide data for the evaluation of the year. The initial report on the City of Culture impact is due to be completed by 30 June 2014. DCC and DCAL are working on Legacy projects. DCC legacy plans launched on 16th December with celebration event and Music City 2014 launch held on 17th January. Derry City Council has announced a Big Lottery Legacy Fund of £400k for specific cultural activities. Ebrington buildings used in 2013 have been returned to Ilex to go to market.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
18. DETI	Provide financial and other support across government to ensure the success of the Our Time Our Place Initiative in 2012 including marking the centenary of Titanic's maiden voyage	Support the 2012 events including: Titanic Festival to mark the opening of the new visitor attraction and the centenary of Titanic's maiden voyage; Clipper Maritime Festival; Opening of the new Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre; The 2012 Irish Open and; The 50th Belfast Festival at Queen's	Acheive legacy benefits from Our Time Our Place including change in perception/ image both internally and externally and contribute to PfG targets of increasing the visitor number to 3.6m and tourist revenue to £625 million. Deliver at least one significant tourism event.	Acheive legacy benefits from Our Time Our Place including change in perception/ image both internally and externally and contribute to PfG targets of increasing the visitor number to 4.2m and tourist revenue to £676 million. Deliver at least one significant tourism event.

The ni 2012 Our Time Our Place initiative was a great success and tourism momentum has been maintained with major events held in 2013 such as the UK City of Culture 2013 in Derry~Londonderry, the hosting of the G8 Summit of world leaders in Fermanagh, and the World Police and Fire Games 2013 held in Belfast.

The Big Start of the Giro d'Italia will take place in Northern Ireland in May 2014.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
19. DRD	Progress the upgrade of key road projects and improve the overall road network to ensure that by March 2015 journey times on key transport corridors reduce by 2.5%- against the 2003 baseline	Improve the strategic road network by achieving 85% of our major works milestones	Improve the strategic road network by achieving 85% of our major milestones	2.5% reduction in journey times

This PFG period will see the fruition of a commitment to reduce journey times on the Strategic Road Network which reflects the implementation of the Strategic Road Improvement Programme (SRIP) over a 12 year period. While journey times initially increased, investment in recent years has contributed to a reduction in comparison to 2003. Further improvements are anticipated as more schemes from the SRIP are implemented. Good progress is being made on the construction of the A8 Belfast – Larne dual carriageway and the A2 Shore Road, Greenisland schemes.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
20. DEL	Increase uptake in economically relevant Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) places	233 additional places	467 additional places	700 additional places

The funding for the additional places has been put in place and the Higher Education providers notified of this in advance of the 2013/14 academic year. It is anticipated that the 467 additional places will be delivered and the outcome for the 2012/13 year would indicate that this is achievable

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
21. DE	Increase the overall proportion of young people who achieve at least 5 GCSEs at A*-C or equivalent including GCSEs in Maths and English by the time they leave school. Including: Increase the proportion of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds who achieve at least 5 GCSEs at A*-C or equivalent including GCSEs in Maths and English	61% 42%	63% 45%	66% 49%

The latest data (published in May 2013) show that the proportion of school leavers with at least 5 GCSEs A*-C (inc. equivalents) including GCSE English and GCSE maths has increased from 59.5% in 2010/11 to 62.0% in 2011/12. The proportion of school leavers entitled to free school meal achieving this measure has increased from 31.7% in 2010/11 to 34.1% in 2011/12.

School Leaver results for 2012/13 will be available in May 2014.

The Delivery Plan has been updated to reflect the additional actions and activity that are being undertaken to support improvement. The Minister for Education announced an additional £3m to be targeted at raising educational standards in 2013/14 and 2014/15:- an additional £1million in each year to deliver a CPD project for KS2 and KS3 literacy and numeracy teachers focused on the delivery of high quality teaching and learning, and a further £2m in each year to develop community education initiatives that are intended to support the delivery of improved educational outcomes in areas of deprivation, including specifically areas of educational deprivation. The Delivering Social Change project is progressing well. Recruitment has progressed well since the first tranche of teaching posts were advertised in June 2013. As at 31 March 2014, 255.3 of the 270.2 FTE appointments being made under the OFMdfM and DE expansion programmes have been completed (an additional 2.4 FTE posts self-funded by schools have also been filled). Recruitment to the remaining unfilled posts will commence in June for a September appointment. Schools have been advised to use sub cover in the interim.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
22. DHSSPS	Allocate an increasing percentage of the overall health budget to public health (This should contribute to society and the economy by tackling disadvantage)	Strengthen the cross-sectoral/cross-departmental drive on improving health and mental wellbeing and reducing health inequalities by setting new policy direction and associated outcomes based on the most recent bodies of evidence available	The HSC will have in place, all the arrangements necessary to extend bowel cancer screening to everyone aged 60/74 from 1st April 2014	Invest an additional £10m in public health (increase based on 2011/12 spend)

Work on the extension of bowel cancer screening to everyone aged 60-74 from 1st April 2014 is in place. Development work on the new Strategic Framework for Public Health has been finalised and is due to be published shortly, subject to Executive approval. Progress on investment in key areas continued in 2013/14. These included:- promoting social inclusion activities for older people; developing specialist support services to meet the needs of vulnerable groups; additional support for screening services including AAA screening and Breast screening for High Risk women; working with local councils on accident prevention initiatives and; expansion of hospital based smoking cessation services. In addition, a number of new vaccination and immunisation programmes are well underway.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
23. DARD	Eradicate brucellosis in cattle by March 2014	0.03% (confirmed annual herd incidence expressed as a percentage)	0.00%	0.00%

Excellent progress is being made towards the eradication of Brucellosis as a result of DARD and Industry efforts. The annual confirmed herd incidence reached zero (0.00%) on 28 February 2013, this important milestone being met more than one year ahead of target. The last case of confirmed infection was in February 2012. Continued vigilance by those keeping cattle is essential and in particular the immediate reporting to DARD of any bovine abortion so that Brucellosis can be ruled out.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
24. DARD, DETI	Develop a strategic plan for the Agri-food sector	New Food Strategy Board in place and operational; strategic vision completed and agreed; funding options explored and identified	Strategic vision implemented via the Food Strategy Board and performance against targets reviewed	Strategic vision implemented via the Food Strategy Board and performance against targets reviewed

The AFSB published its strategic plan for the agri-food sector, "Going for Growth" in May 2013. The plan has been

assessed by relevant Departments and a proposed Response has been circulated to Ministers for comment. Executive consideration of the proposed Response to "Going for Growth" and an associated action plan is expected in the near future. Progress continues to be made by Government and industry in implementing some agreed actions.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
25. DEL	Upskill the working age population by delivering over 200,000 qualifications	105,000* qualifications	53,000 qualifications	53,000 qualifications

In year 1 (2012/13) of this commitment, there were almost 140,000 Level 2 and above full qualifications gained across mainstream Further Education (FE), Essential Skills, funded Departmental Training Programmes, and Higher Education (HE), including HE in FE. The 2012/13 milestone covers two years of provision relating to academic years 2010/11 and 2011/12 added together. The latest data indicate that, in year 2 (2013/14), there were 78,556 Level 2 and above full qualifications gained, equating to 217,000 qualifications gained to date. The overall PfG target has been achieved and based on current performance and an assessment of enrolments and retention rates across these areas of provision, it is expected that the Year 3 (2014/15) milestone will be achieved.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
26. OFMDFM	Facilitate delivery of the Executive's 20% target for increased drawdown of competitive EU funds	Establish baseline figure for annual drawdown of funds	Effective drawdown of competitive EU funds	To have achieved 20% over the period

Competitive EU funds drawdown data are published annually in arrears. Drawdown was £23.0m in Year 1 (2011/12) and £18.3m for Year 2 (2012/13).

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
27. DEL, DETI	Develop and implement a Strategy to reduce economic inactivity through skills, training, incentives and job creation	Develop a Strategy	Implement key actions from the Strategy	Further implementation of key actions from the Strategy

A public consultation was launched on 23 January and will end on 17 April. Following the conclusion of the consultation period, a final draft strategy will be developed for Executive approval, prior to commencing the implementation phase in the latter half of 2014.

Priority 2

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
28. DSD	Deliver 8,000 social and affordable homes	1,325 social and 500 affordable homes delivered	1,275 social and 500 affordable homes delivered	2,000 social and 500 affordable homes delivered
Progress against the PFG target is on track for achievement and at the mid point been exceeded.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
29. DSD	Introduce and support a range of initiatives aimed at reducing fuel poverty across Northern Ireland including preventative interventions	9,000 homes improved	9,000 homes improved	9,000 homes improved
The target to assist 9000 homes with energy efficiency measures has been met.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
30. DSD	Improve thermal efficiency of Housing Executive stock and ensure full double glazing in its properties (To have the Housing Executive bring forward a strategy by March 2012 to improve the thermal efficiency of their housing stock including a programme aimed at providing full double glazing by 2014/15)	Implement Programme from 1 April 2012	50% completed by March 2014	Full completion by March 2015
The Northern Ireland Housing Executive's Low Rise Double Glazing Framework was awarded in December 2013, following resolution of a number of contractual issues. Given that the three contractors have now started work on a reduced Double Glazing Programme it is anticipated that the 9,800 target should be achievable by 2015.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
31. OFMDFM	Provide £40 million to address dereliction and promote investment in the physical regeneration of deprived areas through the Social Investment Fund	Produce Strategic Action Plans identifying and prioritising needs in 8 regions of disadvantage and poverty. Establish a monitoring framework and baseline targets to promote physical regeneration of the identified areas.	To have met all key milestones for physical regeneration.	To have achieved agreed milestones and completed an evaluation of expenditure. To have achieved £40 million of programme expenditure. To have evaluated the impact of expenditure.
Good progress continues with securing approvals to Business Cases. Lead Partners have been identified, have received draft Letters of Offer and are in the process of working up plans. Steering Groups have continued to meet to oversee the delivery of the Programme. Work is ongoing on the delivery of projects as well as ensuring Economic Appraisals continue through the approval process.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
32. OFMDFM	Invest £40 million to improve pathways to employment, tackle systemic issues linked to deprivation and increase community services through the Social Investment Fund	Produce Strategic Action Plans identifying and prioritising needs in 8 regions of disadvantage and poverty. Establish a monitoring framework and baseline targets which support identification of demonstrable improvements in levels of education, health and employment in areas experiencing high levels of deprivation.	To have demonstrated improvements on all short term or lead measures	To have demonstrated positive trends on lead measures relating to levels of education, health and employment in areas experiencing high levels of deprivation. To have achieved £40 million of programme expenditure. To have evaluated the impact of expenditure.

Good progress continues with securing approvals to Business Cases. Lead Partners have been identified, have received draft Letters of Offer and are in the process of working up plans. Steering Groups have continued to meet to oversee the delivery of the Programme. Work is ongoing on the delivery of projects as well as ensuring Economic Appraisals continue through the approval process.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
33. OFMDFM	Publish and implement a Childcare Strategy with key actions to provide integrated and affordable childcare	Develop and begin to implement strategy. Design programme to achieve £12 million of additional expenditure on improving childcare provision over the Comprehensive Spending Review period	Achieve at least £3 million of expenditure and the key milestones in the Strategy	Achieve remaining expenditure and the key milestones in the Strategy. Evaluate the Strategy

The first phase of the Bright Start Childcare Strategy was launched in September 2013 and included 15 Key First Actions to address the main needs and priorities identified during consultation and research (December 2012 to March 2013). All of the Key First Actions were underway by the end of March 2014 including the Bright Start School Age Childcare Grant Scheme which was launched on 27 March 2014. The Grant Scheme will take forward Key First Actions 1, 2 and 5 which aim to create or sustain up to 7,000 school age childcare places by making available up to £15 million in grants over the period 2014 to 2017. The deadlines for applications are: 9 May 2014 for applications from existing childcare providers and 30 September 2014 for new providers. It is expected that the first letters of offer will issue in autumn 2014.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
34. OFMDFM	Deliver a range of measures to tackle poverty and social exclusion through the Delivering Social Change delivery framework. (By co-ordinating actions between Departments, this framework aims to achieve a sustained long term reduction in child poverty and an improvement in children and young people's health, wellbeing and life opportunities. The framework will include key actions to develop an integrated policy framework to tackle multi-generational poverty, a new Victims and Survivors Service, a review of Historical Institutional Abuse and actions to ensure compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; measures to promote the rights of people from an ethnic minority background.)	Establish and begin to implement the Delivering Social Change framework which will include projects to deliver: an integrated policy framework and supporting research to tackle multi-generational poverty and social exclusion; the £80 million Social Investment Fund; the £20 million per annum Social Protection Fund; a new Victims and Survivors Service; compliance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; a review of Historical Institutional Abuse; a range of measures in support of Cohesion, Sharing and Integration to improve community relations; and a Childcare Strategy with key actions to provide integrated and affordable childcare.	Implement key milestones across all of the projects and monitor performance through lead indicators. Ensure that these results feed into OFMDFM budget plans, including the Area Plans being developed for the £80 million Social Investment Fund, the £12 million Childcare Fund and the £20 million per annum Social Protection Fund	Evaluate performance of the Delivering Social Change projects in terms of early indicators and assess the likely impact on longer term trends

The Programme Board had met on twelve occasions and the Executive Ministerial Sub-Committee on eight. Literacy and Numeracy - 223.4 full time equivalent teachers have been appointed to provide additional teaching support to those children and young people who are most at risk of underachieving in English and Maths at critical stages of their education. Nurture Units - 20 new Nurture Units are now fully operational and 480 children and families will benefit from this Programme. Family Support Hubs - Three new Family Support Hubs are operational

and five additional Hubs will be established by April 2014 and the remaining two to follow by summer 2014. 6,000 families will benefit from these Hubs which provide assistance in a friendly local environment and helps families overcome challenges which could otherwise be overwhelming and unmanageable. Parenting Support Programmes - Good progress continues to be made on the delivery of four of the five parenting support programmes. 1,200 families will benefit from the provision of additional, high quality intervention support to both new and existing parents. Community Family Support - An up-scaled pilot intervention, supporting parents and helping young people who are not in education, employment or training, was launched on 4 November 2013 and is being rolled out to 720 families. Social Enterprise Incubation Hubs - The tendering process for delivery agents has now been completed and eleven Hubs will be operational by the end of April 2014. The Hubs will tackle the lack of employment opportunities within local communities and encourage business set-up.

To ensure compliance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD) the Disability Strategy "A strategy to improve the lives of people with disabilities 2012 – 2015" has been completed. To monitor compliance across the Executive we intend to commission work on mapping indicators associated with the UNCPRD.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
35. OFMDFM	Use the Social Protection Fund to help individuals and families facing hardship due to the current economic downturn	Develop proposals which can meet immediate needs for individuals and families. Ensure that some longer term programmes are developed which can have a lasting impact as well as meeting immediate needs	Implement longer term programmes with the Fund as well as addressing immediate problems	Implement longer term programmes with the Fund as well as addressing immediate problems

In line with the ethos of Delivering Social Change the Social Protection Fund has now been subsumed into one consolidated and integrated 'Delivering Social Change Central Fund' which will take forward Childcare, the Social Investment Fund and both current and future Signature Programmes under the Delivering Social Change framework. The Delivering Social Change Fund affords Ministers the opportunity to quickly respond in a flexible manner to urgent social needs as they arise. Updates on the implementation of Delivering Social Change and the signature programmes are provided under Commitment 34, on childcare under Commitment 33, and on the Social Investment Fund under Commitments 31 and 32

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
36. DEL	Support people (with an emphasis on young people) in to employment by providing skills and training *includes 2011/12 figures	65,000*	89,000 cumulative	114,000 cumulative

In the period April to January 2014 we helped 32,713 people find work – 66% above target for the period (19,729). Of these, 10,513 (32%) were aged 18 – 24.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
37. OFMDFM	Fulfil our commitments under the Child Poverty Act to reduce child poverty	Develop an action plan to address child poverty in the context of an integrated policy framework to tackle multi-generational poverty and social exclusion. Design actions on the basis of a Poverty Outcomes Model to show which interventions will have the most significant effect in tackling child poverty. Ensure that the action plan is consistent with commitments under the Child Poverty Act	Implement key milestones and monitor performance through lead indicators. Ensure that this feeds into the Area Plans being developed for the £80 million Social Investment Fund and the £20 million per annum Social Protection Fund as well as the £3 million per annum Childcare Fund	Evaluate performance in terms of early indicators and likely impact on longer term trends

A review of the Child Poverty Strategy 2011-14 was completed and informed the development of a new draft Strategy. A consultation document, Delivering Social Change for Children and Young People, providing an integrated policy framework encompassing policy on children and young people, including child poverty and children's rights, was published in January for public consultation. During the public consultation period (20 January – 31 March) six public consultation events and numerous other events were held to engage with parents, children and young people and other stakeholders to seek views on the proposals. Following 31 March, the comments and responses from stakeholders will be used to inform the development of a new strategy.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
38. OFMDFM	Extend age discrimination legislation to the provision of goods, facilities and services	Develop and consult on proposals to extend age discrimination legislation on the provision of goods, facilities and services	Progress legislation through the Assembly	Complete legislation

No decision has been taken on the scope of the proposed legislation.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
39. DRD	For households, ensure no additional water charges during this Programme for Government	Pay annual customer subsidy to NIW	Pay annual customer subsidy to NIW	Pay annual customer subsidy to NIW
Annual customer subsidy paid to Northern Ireland Water.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
40. DEL	Ensure there are no increases in student fees beyond the rate of inflation for Northern Ireland students studying here	Apply policy	Apply policy	Apply policy
Commitment met				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
41. OFMDFM	Establish an advisory group to assist Ministers in alleviating hardship including any implications of the UK Government's Welfare Reform Programme	Establish advisory group and provide report		
The Commitment is complete.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
42. DE	Improve literacy and numeracy levels among all school leavers, with additional support targeted at underachieving pupils	Develop proposals to significantly improve literacy levels and thereby contribute to addressing multi-generational disadvantage	Implement and monitor programme	Implement and monitor programme
<p>The Minister has in place a coherent set of policies designed to improve educational outcomes for young people and to address the root causes when pupils are not achieving to their full potential. The department's literacy and numeracy strategy –Count read: succeed - supports teachers and school leaders in their work to raise overall levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. The strategy is supported by a range of additional measures to improve literacy and numeracy.</p> <p>The most recently published data shows that the proportion of school leavers achieving GCSE A*-C in English has increased from 68.5% in 2009/10 to 70.5% in 2011/12. The proportion achieving GCSE A*- C in maths has increased from 64.9% to 68.5% during this period.</p>				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
43. DE	Ensure that at least one year of pre-school education is available to every family that wants it	Identify reasons why parents do not avail of places. Commence implementation of the Review of Pre-school Admissions	Based on findings, implement changes to encourage parents to take up places. Continue to implement Review of Pre-school Admissions.	Review progress and take further actions as necessary
Progress on the commitment in 2013/14 shows that 99.8% of children obtained a funded pre-school place (whose parents engaged with the process to the end).				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
44. DHSSPS	Enrol people who have a long-term (chronic) condition, and who want to be enrolled, in a dedicated chronic condition management programme	Identify and evaluate the current baseline of patient education and self management support programmes that are currently in place in each Trust area	Health and Social Care Board / Public Health Agency should work with key stakeholders to develop and secure a range of quality assured education, information and support programmes to help people manage their long term conditions effectively, alongside full application of the Remote Telemonitoring contract	People with a long term condition will be offered access to appropriate education, information and support programmes relevant to their needs, including innovative application of connected health
Milestone 2 has been achieved with regular arrangements for monitoring patient education/self management programmes now in place. In 2011/12 a total of 625 programmes were delivered across Northern Ireland with 10,189 attendees. Information on programmes provided and attendees during 2012/13 is currently being finalised. Work has also progressed to identify and cost potential demand for patient education/self management programmes as part of an Action Plan to support implementation of the Long Term Conditions Policy Framework. This will inform future prioritisation and commissioning of programmes.				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
45. DHSSPS	Invest £7.2 million in programmes to tackle obesity	Invest £2 million in tackling obesity through support of Obesity Prevention Framework	Invest £2.4 million in tackling obesity through support of Obesity Prevention Framework	Invest £2.8 million in tackling obesity through support of Obesity Prevention Framework

On track for delivery. A cross-Departmental Obesity Prevention Steering Group oversees and monitors Departmental actions committed to within the obesity prevention strategy. The Public Health Agency (PHA) leads a multi-agency implementation group to take forward non-Departmental actions. The PHA ensured that £2.4m was spent on tackling obesity in 2013/14.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
46. DARD	Bring forward a £13 million package to tackle rural poverty and social and economic isolation in the next three years	Finalisation of programme to tackle poverty and isolation. Completion of necessary financial work and agreement with other Departments as necessary. Implementation of various programmes Spend of £4 million	Implementation of programmes. Spend of £4 million	Implementation of programmes. Spend of £5 million

100% of the expenditure milestone for 2013/14 has been achieved representing a real benefit to rural communities through funding a broad range of tackling poverty and social isolation initiatives.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
47. DARD	Advance the relocation of the Headquarters of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to a rural area by 2015	Carry out the necessary appraisal processes to decide on the most suitable accommodation for the DARD HQ in the future	Implement a programme for securing the appropriate accommodation for the future DARD HQ	Continue to implement a programme for securing required accommodation for the future DARD HQ

Work completed on accommodation options, surveys and EQIAs. Business case completion and TUS / staff consultation is ongoing. Next steps include implementation of HR Strategy and building design briefs.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
48. DETI	Develop and implement a Financial Capability Strategy for consumers	Develop Strategy	Implement key actions from Strategy	Further implement key actions. Assess and report on impacts of Strategy implementation
Draft Strategy and Action Plans noted and cleared by the ETI Committee on 20 February 2014, and submitted to the Executive.				

Priority 3

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
49. DOE	Implement a levy on single use carrier bags by 2013 and extend this to reusable bags from April 1 2014	Operational arrangements in place by 31 January 2013. Subordinate legislation made under the Climate Change Act 2008 (as amended for Northern Ireland) in place by 31 January 2013 to allow the levy on single use carrier bags to be introduced by April 2013	Primary legislation and amended subordinate legislation made in time to enable full charging for single use and reusable carrier bags to commence by April 2014	Implement levy
<p>The Carrier Bag Levy launched on 8 April 2013 and has been broadly welcomed by both the public and retailers. Data from retailers suggest a large reduction in single use bag numbers. Figures from several major supermarkets point towards a possible annual reduction of well in excess of 80% in those stores. The position will become clearer in August 2014 when a full year of validated data is available.</p> <p>To date the levy has generated over £3m. The proceeds will be returned to the community; the Minister has already allocated £2.3 million to 251 projects through the Environmental Challenge Fund for 2014. This Fund provides vital money for communities and organisations to develop local environmental projects across Northern Ireland</p> <p>The Carrier Bags Bill was passed by the Assembly on 10 March 2014 and will extend the levy to reusable carrier bags priced at under 20 pence – the change will take effect from 19 January 2015. This should encourage shoppers to reuse these bags to their maximum potential – rather than discard them prematurely.</p>				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
50. DOE	Continue to work towards a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by at least 35% on 1990 levels by 2025	To continue to project at least a 35% reduction in greenhouse	To continue to project at least a 35% reduction in greenhouse	To continue to project at least a 35% reduction in greenhouse

	gas emissions by 2025 based on 1990 baseline	gas emissions by 2025 based on 1990 baseline	gas emissions by 2025 based on 1990 baseline
<p>The latest estimate is for a 27.6% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in 2025 against the target of 35%. The Department of the Environment continues to work on improvements to calculate historic and project future emissions and to coordinate and take account of actions across government that will reduce (or have the potential to reduce) emissions.</p> <p>There are areas that will enhance prosperity and realise the full potential for reducing emissions. These include further deployment of and support for renewables, energy efficiency, sustainable urban drainage/water provision, supporting the sustainable intensification of the agri-food sector and transport initiatives to support more sustainable travel.</p>			

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
51. DOE	Work towards halting the loss of biodiversity by 2020	<p>Declare 15 additional Areas of Special Scientific Interest. Complete and publish a statutory management scheme for Rathlin Island marine N2K site. Publish an Invasive Species Strategy. Make an interim set of amending Conservation Regulations by 30 April 2012, and a further set of revised Regulations by 31 March 2013 that meet the EU requirements of Birds and Habitats Directives .</p>	<p>Designate a further 15 Areas of Special Scientific Interest. Publish a revised Biodiversity Strategy. Consolidate Conservation Regulations.</p>	<p>Designate an additional 15 Areas of Special Scientific Interest</p>
<p>15 Areas of Special Scientific Interest were designated by the 31st March 2014.</p> <p>Following publication of the consultation on the Biodiversity Strategy in 2013/14, an Action Plan for the Biodiversity Strategy will be developed during 2014/15 in partnership with stakeholders.</p> <p>Consolidation of Conservation Regulations to be undertaken in 2014/15 as further infraction action unlikely. A list of potential areas for consideration is being drawn up and it is intended to canvass widely to ensure all amendments and additional requirements are included in the consolidated regulations.</p>				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
52. DOE	Achieve a household waste recycling or composting rate of 45% by end of March 2015	Recycling rates of 41% for household waste	Recycling rates of 43% for household waste	Recycling rates of 45% for household waste

Quarter 2 figures for 2013/14 (http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/municipal_data_reporting.htm) show a continuing increase in household waste recycling rates from Quarter 1; an increase of 1.7 percentage points compared with the same period in 2012/13. However larger increases are required in Quarters 3 and 4 to meet the 43% milestone.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
53. DOJ	Substantially complete the construction of the new Police, Prison and Fire Training College	Award construction contract	At least 25% of the Programme Capital Budget will be utilised	At least 70% of the Programme Capital Budget will be utilised

Despite extensive engagement, the Preferred Bidder was unfortunately unable to demonstrate that they could offer an affordable and compliant bid. The Programme Board, therefore, discontinued the preferred bidder process to build the new college.

While this development is very disappointing, it is not the end of the process. Over the next 8 weeks, a detailed review will be undertaken to review the design, quantify funding requirements, identify opportunities to de-risk the project and refine the business case with a view to going back out to short-listed companies by September 2014.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
54. DOJ	Reduce the level of serious crime	Publish final cross-departmental Strategic Framework on Reducing Offending. Deliver against Protection and Justice elements of 12/13 domestic and sexual violence action plan and contribute to development of new domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy and action plan.	Implement 90% of agreed Youth Justice Review recommendations. Finalise, and deliver against Protection and Justice elements of new Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy	Deliver joined up oversight, evaluation and publication of reducing offending interventions. Deliver against Protection and Justice elements of new Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy. Develop and action a desistance strategy for offenders to cover custodial and non-custodial settings.

The joint DHSSPS and DoJ Strategy for Domestic and Sexual Violence launched for a 12 week public consultation on 11 January 2014. During the consultation process representatives from both Departments have met with individuals and interested groups to discuss the content of the Strategy.

DOJ has established an evaluation and monitoring group to develop a system that will evaluate the impact of the Strategic Framework for Reducing Offending across the Justice System, and provide ongoing measurement. Baseline figures on reoffending rates for 2010/11 and 2011/12 will be published in May 2014, and baseline figures on the number of people entering the justice system for the first time will be available in June 2014.

In December 2013, DOJ agreed how it will deliver its strategic approach to desistance across the justice system. Short research studies have been undertaken in March 2014 and the outcomes will be used to inform the development of an action plan to further advance the desistance strategy.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
55. DOJ	Tackle crime against older and vulnerable people by more effective and appropriate sentences and other measures	Consult Lord Chief Justice on inclusion of older and vulnerable people in sentencing guidelines initiative	Any necessary legislative changes taken forward as part of DOJ legislative programme. Develop programme of measures to reduce fear and increase confidence in older and vulnerable people.	Implement programme of measures

The age and vulnerability of the victim are included as aggravating factors in the principles underlying sentencing. Measures for transparency, consistency and understanding of sentencing practice were announced by the Minister of Justice in June 2012. As part of these measures, two lay members, one of whom is representative of the views of victims, are being recruited to the Sentencing Group, established by the Lord Chief Justice to enhance the guidance available to the judiciary. It is anticipated that an announcement will be made shortly. The action plan tackling crime against older and vulnerable people is being implemented. Performance indicators have also been agreed and performance is being monitored. A progress report was submitted to the Justice Committee in February 2014.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
56. DOJ	Improve community safety by tackling anti-social behaviour *Statistically significant change	Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) fully operational. Establish baseline for percentage of people affected by Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)	Monitor quarterly and publish annually NI Crime Survey findings in respect of: Percentage who agree that police and other agencies are dealing with ASB and crime issues that matter in their local area; Percentage who perceive the level of	Increase the percentage* of people who agree that police and other agencies are dealing with ASB and crime issues that matter in their area; A reduction in the percentage* of people who perceive the level of ASB in their area to be high and; An improvement in

			ASB in their area to be high;Percentage whose quality of life is affected by ASB	the percentage* of people whose quality of life is affected by their experience of ASB
<p>Progress continues to be made against the actions in the Anti – social Behaviour Action Plan. An annual progress report on this Action Plan, and the Action Plans for the other key strands of the Community Safety Strategy, were considered by the Justice Committee on 20 February 2014. A copy of this report is available in the publication section of the Department of Justice website.</p> <p>The report highlights work that has been taken forward to tackle ASB including the providing information to the public, on NI Direct and through local PCSPs, to clarify who can help you, or your local community, if you are experiencing ASB.</p> <p>The latest PSNI figures for recorded ASB incidents, published on the 27 March 2014, show that the number of ASB incidents recorded during the latest twelve months to February 2014 (60,927) is 4,430 incidents lower than the level recorded during 2012/13 (65,357) a decrease of 8.2%.</p>				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
57. DOJ	Improve access to Justice	Publish Departmental response to Access to Justice Review and associated Departmental Action Plan	Introduce legislation to give effect to reforms requiring primary legislation	Implementation of reforms

The Milestone for Year 2013/14 "introduce legislation to give effect to reforms requiring primary legislation" has been achieved. The Legal Aid and Coroners' Courts Bill was introduced on 31 March 2014.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
58. DRD	Upgrade the Coleraine to Derry/Londonderry railway line		Complete Phase 1 - relay end sections at Coleraine and Derry and complete essential bridge works (subject to no legal challenge to procurement exercise)	Phase 2 – new signalling and passing loop – substantially complete (subject to no legal challenge to procurement exercise)

Phase 1 of the upgrade was completed in March 2013.

Owing to the delay in the procurement process, the planned completion date of Phase 2 of late 2015 will not be achieved. Work is progressing to identify all opportunities to regain any of the lost time on this important project to ensure it will be completed by mid to late 2016. Work on the Phase 2 project is expected to be progressing by the end of 2014-15.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
59. DRD	Invest over £500m to promote sustainable modes of travel	£298 million invested	£389.5 million invested	Over £500 million invested

£390.75 million has been invested by the end of the 2013/14 year. DRD plans to continue its investment during 2014/15 which will see the Department invest over £500 million over the full four year PfG period.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
60. DRD	By 2015 create the conditions to facilitate at least 36% of primary school pupils and 22% of secondary school pupils to walk or cycle to school as their main mode of transport	33% (Primary School) 21% (Secondary School)	34% (Primary School) 21% (Secondary School)	36% (Primary School) 22% (Secondary School)

180 Schools are participating in a three year Active Schools Travel programme. Year one of the programme is nearing completion with 60 schools involved. A further 60 schools are undergoing selection for year two and the final 60 schools will be selected during 2015 to complete the three year programme.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
61. DHSSPS	Introduce a package of measures aimed at improving Safeguarding Outcomes for Children and Vulnerable Adults	Develop a Strategic Plan for Adult Safeguarding in Northern Ireland and produce a joint Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Strategy	Open new Sexual Assault Referral Centre at Antrim Area Hospital	Develop an updated inter-departmental Child Safeguarding Policy Framework

We remain on track to achieve PfG Commitment 61 in full. Nine key actions are now completed and progress continues to be made against each remaining key action. Key achievements in the last quarter are set out below.

The Strategic Plan (2013 - 2018) for Adult Safeguarding was published by the HSC Board on 14 October 2013. The joint Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy was issued for consultation on 15 January 2014; the final strategy will be published and launched later in 2014.

Regulations to introduce and enforce compulsory registration with the NISCC for specified groups of social care workers came into operation in October 2013.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
62. DRD	Maintain a high quality of drinking water and improve compliance with waste water standards by investing £668m in water and sewerage infrastructure.	Compliance with regulatory targets: 99.7% water 96.5% Wastewater	Compliance with regulatory targets for water and Wastewater	Compliance with regulatory targets for water and Wastewater

By the end of 2013-14, £515.2 million has been invested on water and sewerage infrastructure, and the targets for drinking water quality and waste water treatment have been surpassed.

Priority 4

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
63. DCAL	Develop sports stadiums as agreed with the IFA, GAA and Ulster Rugby	Develop and agree programme of developments and specific project plans	Implement key milestones and initiate development programme	Implement key milestones
<p>UBIRFU - Ravenhill is progressing very well with construction of the Aquinas Stand, Memorial Stand and main Grandstand now complete. Completion of the remaining phases of construction work is planned for September 2014. IFA - The successful Tenderer was identified, other Tenderers informed and no procurement challenges arose. The Funding Agreement was completed and the contractor was appointed by 20th December 2013. Completion of the construction works is planned for autumn 2015. UCGAA - The successful Tenderer was identified, other Tenderers informed and no procurement challenges arose. The Funding Agreement was completed and the contractor appointed by 20th December 2013. Completion of the construction works is planned for early 2016.</p>				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
64. DCAL	Host the World Police and Fire Games in 2013	Develop plans and project arrangements	Host the Games	
<p>The Commitment is complete.</p>				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
65. DETI	Support the successful hosting of the 2012 Irish Open and build on that success to secure a further international golf event	Successfully host the 2012 Irish Open Golf Championship at Royal Portrush	Secure the Irish Open for Northern Ireland in 2015	Develop plans and project arrangements to host the Irish Open in 2015
<p>Following the hosting of a very successful Irish Open in 2012 at Royal Portrush, the European Tour announced on 3 April 2014 that the Irish Open will return to Northern Ireland in 2015 and 2017.</p>				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
66. DSD	Deliver at least 30 Schemes to improve landscapes in public areas to promote private sector investment in towns and cities across Northern Ireland	10 Public Realm Schemes delivered	10 Public Realm Schemes delivered	10 Public Realm Schemes delivered
<p>DSD continues to deliver public realm schemes across Northern Ireland. Urban Regeneration strives to make cities attractive places to live, work and invest in order to grow our economy, create opportunities and tackle disadvantage. DSD makes use of a number of regeneration measures to achieve this purpose. One of the most important of these measures is public realm improvement schemes, which deliver a range of economic, social and environmental benefits. URCDG continues to build on the achievements last year, with 26 new schemes completed in the 2013/14 financial year.</p>				

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
67. OFMDFM	Publish the Cohesion, Sharing and Integration Strategy to build a united community and improve community relations	Finalise strategy and agree early actions. Develop a change management plan for organisations with a specific interest in this area of work	Achieve early milestones in the plan and monitor performance on early or lead indicators	Achieve milestones and review performance against the Strategy

Progress has been made on all of the seven headline actions identified in the Together: Building a United Community Strategy. The Senior Responsible Owners have developed detailed project plans – including key milestones and budget profiles.

The following key actions have been progressed:

- announcement on two of the four Urban Villages: Lower Newtownards Road and Colin
- a pilot to test elements of the United Youth Programme was launched and funded under the Central Good Relations Fund
- a comprehensive review of the structure, delivery and impact of existing funding delivery mechanisms has been commissioned, Phase one of the review was completed on 31 March, Phase 2 is planned for completion by end of June 2014.
- work is underway to establish the new Equality and Good Relations Commission including the drafting of primary legislation which will augment the powers of the current Equality Commission.
- the consultation exercise on new Good Relations Indicators has been completed and responses are now being evaluated.
- proposal to deliver summer school/camp pilots in 2014 has been agreed by Ministers.
- proposals for a programme of early progress in 2014/15 on interface removal is under consideration by Ministers
- work is also progressing on establishing the range of thematic subgroups that will support delivery of the strategy's objectives.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
68. DOJ	Actively seek local agreement to reduce the number of 'peace walls'	Establish inter-agency collaborative approach to addressing interface structures. Review existing arrangements for engagement with communities. Identify funding gaps and seek partnership funding opportunities. Develop action plans for individual areas involving stakeholders	Implementation of action plans. Reduction in the number of interface structures	Implementation of action plans. Reduction in the number of interface structures. Ongoing monitoring of community tension and residents' concerns. Review of progress to identify further opportunities for change and lessons learned.

On interfaces good progress has been achieved in ensuring that there is an appropriate level of support and engagement within relevant government departments, within key statutory agencies, and in the police and other agencies responsible for safety and security. In addition engagement through partnership programmes, such as IFI and Belfast City Council, has ensured that local approaches are being developed involving community representatives and local residents. Through the year, however, local tensions in some areas have impacted on some projects. The overall number of DoJ structures has been reduced from 59 to 53. Engagement has been initiated on 40 of the DoJ's 53 structures. IFI approved funding for 8 specific community engagement projects, covering a number of the structures. Specific action plans have been developed covering 24 structures. While committed to the PFG work the Department is working with OFMdfM on the wider proposals in TBUC, including seeking assurances on commitment and on resources.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
69. DOJ	Reform and modernise the Prison Service	To have a new Operating Model in place and ready to launch. To have a new Training and Development Package for all operational staff in place and ready to launch. To have completed the selection of new Custody Officers to replace Prison Officers	To have new certificates and licenses for professionalising the Service	Implement 90% of the recommendations contained in the Prison Review Action Plan within the agreed timescales

As part of the ongoing process of prison reform, NIPS has recruited a number of Custody Prison Officers. As part of our programme of support for these newly appointed Officers, they are required to work towards an accredited Certificate of Competence. Academic accreditation for the Certificate of Competence has been secured via the University of Ulster and portfolios will progress through internal and external validation before successful candidates are issued with certificates in June 2014.

To further NIPS commitment to the training and development of existing operational staff, rollout of accredited development programmes began in December 2013, beginning with Main Grade Officers. The application to the Institute of Leadership and Management for accreditation of the Senior Officer programme has been approved and delivery of training will dovetail with placement of staff following the Senior Officer promotion competition.

A series of master-classes have been arranged aimed at increasing the skills-set of NIPS Governor and senior management grades. The master-class series has covered the following themes: incident management; managing attendance; investigations; political context; performance management; and financial accountability.

Across the reform programme, to date, 19 of the 40 PRT recommendations have been signed off by the Prison Review Oversight Group (recommendations 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 18, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28, 32, 34, 38 & 39).

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
70. DE	Significantly progress work on the plan for the Lisanelly Shared Education campus as a key regeneration project.	Develop a business case and plan for the new campus.	Secure funding and initiate the development programme.	Complete procurement process and initiate first phase of construction.

Approval of the business case for Phase 1 of this major investment has been received. The Minister has committed more than £14million of funding over the next three years to deliver the first stage of a project. This will involve site clearance work which commenced in October 2013 with the construction of the new Arvalee School and Resource Centre due to commence by the end of 2014.

In tandem the Outline Business Case 2 incorporating Phase 2 of the project has now been approved and the procurement process for appointment of an Integrated Design Team will commence in the near future.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
71. DE	Establish a Ministerial advisory group to explore and bring forward recommendations to the Minister of Education to advance shared education.	Establish group and produce report with recommendations.		

Complete

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
72. DE	Ensure all children have the opportunity to participate in shared education programmes by 2015.	Define the objectives in terms of children participating in shared education programmes.	Put in place measures to achieve objectives.	Achieve overall commitment objective.

Progress remains on target to meet the milestone targets.

High level objectives in terms of children participating in shared education programmes and children sharing school facilities have been defined and will be further refined as work progresses.

Baseline statistics have been established from the 2013 school omnibus survey and published in January 2014. The Minister made a statement to the Assembly on 22 October accepting their recommendation in principle, but reserving judgement on some pending further work. Actions are in progress to implement the recommendations.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
73. DE	Substantially increase the number of schools sharing facilities by 2015.	Define the objectives in terms of children sharing school facilities.	Put in place measures to achieve objectives.	Achieve overall commitment objective.

Progress remains on target to meet the milestone targets.

High level objectives in terms of children participating in shared education programmes and children sharing school facilities have been defined and will be further refined as work progresses.

Baseline statistics have been established from the 2013 school omnibus survey and published in January 2014. The Minister made a statement to the Assembly on 22 October accepting their recommendation in principle, but reserving judgement on some pending further work. Actions are in progress to implement the recommendations.

Priority 5

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
74. DFP	Include Social Clauses in public procurement contracts for supplies, services and construction.	Develop a Procurement Guidance Note on social clauses. Modify the Procurement Board Strategic Plan to incorporate targets for the implementation of social clauses by Departments.	Monitor implementation	Monitor implementation

Nine departments responded to the request to set targets for 2013/14. Progress against the first 6 months of the period has been reported by ten departments. Requests have been issued to Permanent Secretaries to set departmental targets for delivery in 2014 – 2015. The position on both will be reported to the Procurement Board at its next meeting on 11 June 2014.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
75. DOE	Establish the new 11 Council model for Local Government by 2015	Progress legislation (to include Local Government Reorganisation Act) and a programme structure necessary to manage change.	Arrangements in place for the shadow councils. Deliver Year 2 of implementation programme.	Arrangements in place for the transfer of powers to councils.

The Local Government Bill was introduced into the Assembly on 23 September 2013 and completed its Assembly stages on 8 April 2014.

The Department has continued to issue guidance to support the Statutory Transition Committees to undertake their

functions in regard to council costs during the shadow period planning decision-making structures, winding up arrangements of the existing 26 councils and STCs and election costs. The Minister has monitored the progress of the Committees through the Regional Transition Committee and also by undertaking a series of local visits to all the Statutory Transition Committees.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
76. DE	We will make the Education and Skills Authority operational in 2013	Bring forward for scrutiny and approval by the Assembly, the legislation necessary to establish a single education authority. Take forward the organisational, financial and other actions necessary to prepare for the establishment of the ESA, and for winding up the eight existing bodies it will replace	Take forward structural, financial and other actions required for establishing a new non-departmental public body and for winding up existing Non-Departmental Public Bodies	Single Education Authority established and fully functional

The legislation to establish ESA completed its "Committee stage" on 8 April. Progress was made on the implementation aspects of the programme. This target has however not been met due to failure of Executive to agree the required legislation.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
77. OFMDFM	Agree any changes to post-2015 structures of Government in 2012	Consider relevant reports from the Efficiency Review Panel and Assembly and Executive Review Committee. Engage with UK Government on any necessary amendments to Westminster legislation	Introduce any necessary Assembly legislation to implement agreed changes	Complete administrative and legal preparations for post-2015 structural changes

The Northern Ireland (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act completed all legislative stages at Westminster and received Royal Assent on 13 March. This legislation has now extended the term of the current Assembly to May 2016. It will also enable the Assembly, with Secretary of State consent, to reduce its size to 90 seats under current constituency arrangements.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
78. DFP	Improve online access to government services	Develop plans and specific targets to significantly increase the use of online services. Identify services which will transfer during the course of the Programme for Government.	Monitor early progress to ensure key milestones in the plans are being met. Monitor the planned tranche of services to be delivered online and consider if others can be added.	Review level of access of online services. Monitor the planned tranche of services to be delivered online and consider if others can be added.

The PSG agreed exemplar projects proof of concept (POC) pilots delivered by the 31st March 2014 with some minor adjustments to follow in April. Work is ongoing to transfer the POC modules into live services. Transactional services to go live over the last quarter include GRO Genealogy NI and DSD Landlord Registration. Cameo2 has been slightly delayed to April 2014.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
79. DHSSPS	Improve patient and client outcomes and access to new treatments and services	Enhance access to life-enhancing drugs for conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis, cancer, inflammatory bowel disease and psoriasis and increase to 10% the proportion of patients with confirmed ischaemic stroke who receive thrombolysis	Improve long-term outcomes relating to health, wellbeing, education and employment for the children of teenage mothers from disadvantaged backgrounds by rolling out the Family Nurse Partnership Programme beyond the first test phase to one further test site	Expand cardiac catheterisation capacity to improve access to diagnostic intervention and treatment and further develop a new primary percutaneous coronary intervention (PPCI) service model to reduce mortality and morbidity arising from myocardial infarction (heart attack)

This milestone continues to remain well ahead of schedule for achievement. Since the establishment of the first site in Northern Ireland within the Western Health and Social Care Trust, the Public Health Agency have now identified and established two further sites for the Family Nurse Partnership Programme within Northern Ireland. These are within the Belfast and Southern Health and Social Care Trusts.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
80. DHSSPS	Reconfigure, reform and modernise the delivery of Health and Social Care services to improve the quality of patient care	Development of a clear implementation and Population plan to ensure delivery of the new model of care as set out in the Transforming Your Care report	As part of a shift in the delivery of services to primary and community settings reduce by 2013/14 the number of days patients stay in acute hospitals unnecessarily (excess bed days) by 10% compared with 2011/12	Secure a shift from hospital based services to community based services together with an appropriate shift in the share of funding in line with the recommendations of Transforming Your Care

The Minister made a Statement to the NI Assembly on the 19th March 2013 on the outcome of the Transforming Your Care consultation exercise and the way forward. He made a further statement on 25th June 2013 entitled "Taking Forward Transformation", reporting on the overall transformation process including the implementation of TYC.

The Department has reported on the oversight of the implementation of TYC to both the NI Assembly and the Health Committee, most recently in an Oral Statement to the NI Assembly on 11 March 2014.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
81. DSD	By the end of 2014/15, to have implemented new structures to support the improved delivery of housing services to the citizens of Northern Ireland	To develop and consult on service delivery structures and develop implementation programme	Deliver Year 1 of implementation programme	Implement new structures

Tranche 1 of the Programme to explore the Minister's proposals is now complete. Emerging proposals have been shared with SDC and the NI Executive and Tranche 2 commences from April 2014, to develop and appraise options to progress Social Housing Reform making recommendations on the preferred options by March 2015.

No.	Commitment	Milestone 2012/13	Milestone 2013/14	Milestone 2014/15
82. DFP	Further reduce the levels of sickness absence across the NICS	Reduce the average annual days sick absence per employee to 9.5 days	Reduce the average annual days sick absence per employee to 9.0 days	Reduce the average annual days sick absence per employee to 8.5 days

NISRA reported that the NICS sickness absence levels for 2012/13 was 10.6 days (average days lost per staff year), up from 10.1 days in the previous year and short of the annual target of 9.5 days. Based on the targets and estimates figures produced by NISRA (February 2014) it is anticipated that the 2013/14 target of 9.0 days lost per staff year will also not be met, 10.0 days is anticipated. As part of the 2013/14 work programme the NICS is currently considering a number of further areas for action to address the progress towards targets.

NISRA Report - Sickness Absence in the NICS 13-14



Sickness Absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service

2013/2014



Published 16th October 2014

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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to:

Trevor Campbell

(028) 9057 2359

trevor.campbell@dfpni.gov.uk

Human Resource Consultancy Services

NISRA

Royston House

Upper Queen Street

Belfast BT1 6FD

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SICKNESS ABSENCE IN THE NICS 2013/2014

Key Facts

	2009/ 2010	2010/ 2011	2011/ 2012	2012/ 2013	2013/ 2014
Proportion of Staff with No Recorded Spells of Absence	50.1%	51.8%	53.7%	52.3%	55.3%
Working Days Lost per Staff Year	11.0	10.7	10.1	10.6	10.1
Percentage of Available Working Days Lost	4.9%	4.9%	4.6%	4.9%	4.6%
Total Number of Working Days Lost	245,590	287,131 ³	263,545	275,170	262,230
Estimated Lost Production² (£ Million)	22.9	30.0 ³	28.6	30.8	30.2
Average Number of Spells per Staff Year	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7
Proportion of Working Days Lost by Certification					
Certified	76.7%	77.1%	79.1%	79.2%	82.2%
Self-Certified	14.4%	13.2%	13.5%	13.6%	12.6%
Uncertified/Missing	9.0%	9.7%	7.5%	7.2%	5.2%
Long-term Absence					
Proportion of Working Days Lost due to Long-term Absence	70.0%	72.0%	71.3%	70.7%	73.0%
Frequency Rate ⁴	10.9%	11.3%	11.0%	11.1%	10.9%
Average Duration (Working Days)	62.8	61.2	58.6	60.0	59.8
Short-term Absence					
Average Number of Spells per Staff Year	0.75	0.67	0.65	0.67	0.61

¹ Data from 2010/2011 onwards includes Department of Justice, Public Prosecution Service and industrial staff.

² Any information provided in this report that relates to lost production is calculated, where possible, on the basis of each individual's actual salary and the associated employer's National Insurance and Superannuation contributions.

³ The increase in total working days lost and the estimated lost production in 2010/2011 is due, in large part, to the inclusion of industrial staff and staff in the Department of Justice and the Public Prosecution Service.

⁴ Frequency Rate is the average number of long-term spells per employee, expressed as a percentage.
(No of spells of long-term absence in the period/No. of employees) x 100

Chapter 1
Working Days Lost through Sickness Absence

1. Working Days Lost through Sickness Absence

1.1 Introduction

In 2013/2014, staff in the NICS lost an average of 10.1 days as a result of sickness absence. This was a decrease on the level of 10.6 days recorded in the previous year. The overall level of absence represented 4.6% of the available working days and equated to approximately £30.2 million in terms of lost production¹.

Staff who are retired early on medical grounds, or dismissed on the grounds of inefficiency due to sickness absence, are entitled to receive up to 13 weeks' notice. In keeping with Cabinet Office guidelines, sick absences which occurred during this notice period are included in the NICS sickness absence statistics. In 2013/2014 it is estimated that absences in this category contributed up to 0.3 of a day to the overall level of absence in the NICS. Were it possible to exclude these absences it would reduce the headline figure from 10.1 to 9.8 days.

The following pages in this chapter look at the variation in the levels of absence over time by Department, grade level, gender, age group and length of service. Further analyses are presented in Appendix 3.

¹ Any information provided in this report that relates to lost production is calculated, where possible, on the basis of each individual's actual salary and the associated employer's National Insurance and Superannuation contributions.

1.2 Department

Within the 10.1 days lost on average by NICS staff in 2013/2014 the level of absence varied by Department from 8.0 days in DETI to 11.6 days in DOJ.

Compared with the previous year OFMDFM and DHSSPS experienced an increase in their absence level, while the remaining 11 Departments had similar or reduced levels. The largest reductions were made by PPS and DFP, decreasing by 19.1% and 10.5% respectively.

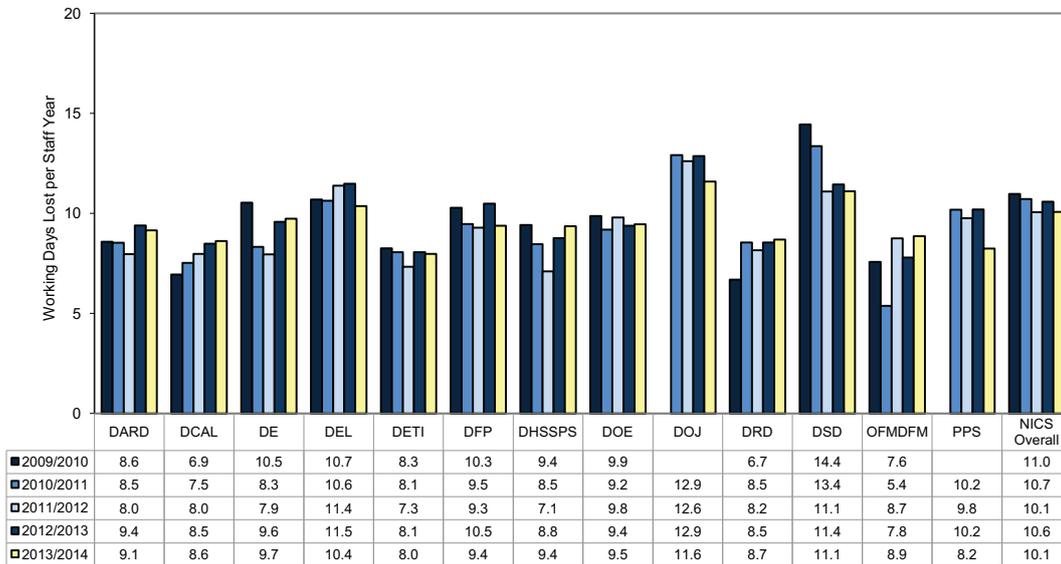
DSD accounts for approximately one quarter of NICS staff and since 2009/2010 had reduced its absence level by approximately one fifth, from 14.4 days to 11.1 days. This drop has resulted in a substantial reduction in the overall NICS absence level. The contribution of each Department to the overall NICS absence level, and how this has changed over time, is shown in Table 9.1, Appendix 9. In 2013/2014, DOJ had the biggest impact in the reduction of the NICS absence level.

When making comparisons between Departments it is important to consider that absence levels differ by grade level, gender and age. Consequently, the staffing profile of a Department can have a major bearing on its overall level of sickness absence.

An illustration of the extent to which a Department's staffing profile can influence its overall absence rate is presented in Appendix 5. This analysis adjusts each Department to have the same staffing profile as the NICS overall, thus enabling more of a like for like comparison between Departments. For example, if the staffing profile in DOJ had been the same as that for the NICS overall, it would have lost 9.1 days per staff year instead of 11.6 days. Similarly, the days lost in DSD would have decreased from 11.1 to 8.7 days. In contrast, the days lost in DE would have increased from 9.7 to 10.2 days.

Figure 1¹

Average Number of Working Days Lost per Staff Year by Department (2009/2010 to 2013/2014)



¹ Staff in AOCC, HSENI, NIAUR and OAGNI are included in the NICS Overall figure.

SICKNESS ABSENCE IN THE NICS 2013/2014

1.3 Grade Level

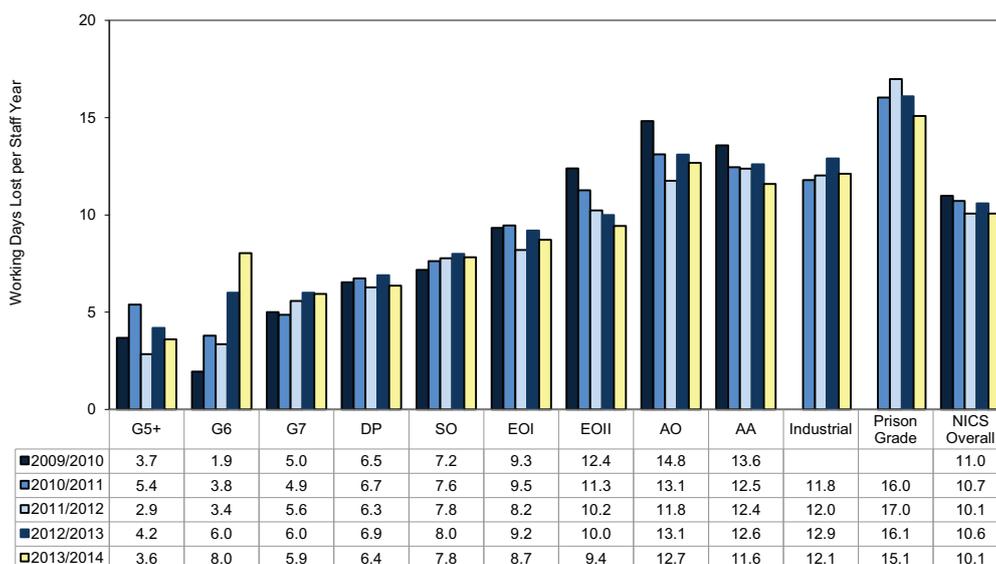
The level of sickness absence varied markedly by grade level across the NICS, ranging from 3.6 days for staff at G5+ to 15.1 days for Prison Grade staff. All grade levels, with the exception of G6 staff, showed a reduction when compared with the previous year. The level of absence of G6 staff increased from 6.0 days to 8.0 days.

As was the case in previous years, the level of absence generally increased as grade level decreased, with AO (12.7 days) and AA (11.6 days) the highest of the administrative grades. Staff at EOII level have shown the greatest improvement over the five years presented. The average number of days lost for this group has reduced by approximately 24%. Staff at AA and AO have also shown a large reduction over this period and Prison Grade staff, with a reduction of 1 day in 2013/2014, are now at their lowest level of the last four years.

The contribution of each grade level to the overall NICS absence level, and how this has changed over time, is shown in Table 9.2, Appendix 9. Staff at the AO grade level accounted for the largest proportion (3.43 days, or 34.0%) of the 10.1 days lost per staff year in the NICS overall. They also had the most beneficial impact on the overall level of absence this year, contributing a 0.16 of a day reduction per staff year. Staff at the EOII grade level contributed a 0.11 of a day reduction compared with 2012/2013.

Figure 2¹

Average Number of Working Days Lost per Staff Year by Analogous Grade Level (2009/2010 to 2013/2014)



¹ For the purpose of this analysis all former Northern Ireland Office staff at the Band C grade level have been classified as analogous to the EOII grade level.



1.4 Gender

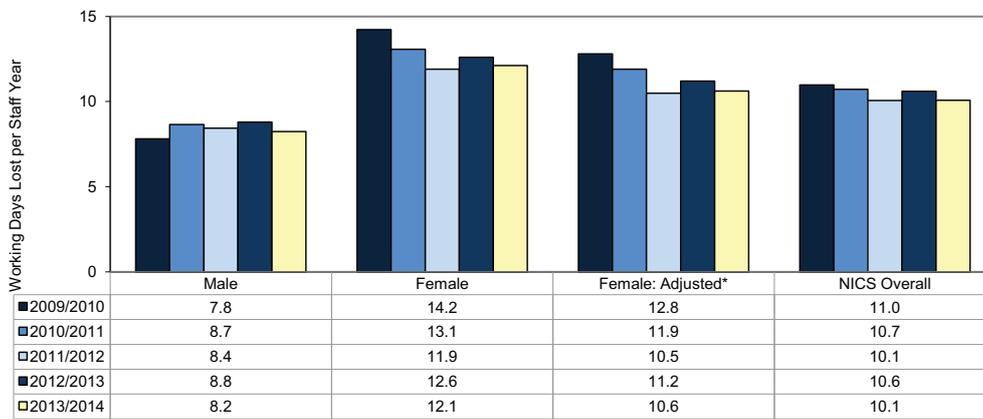
The level of absence for females was 12.1 days, down from 12.6 days in 2012/2013 and a reduction of 14.8% since the level recorded in 2009/2010.

When absences due to *Pregnancy Related Disorders* were removed from the calculations the level of absence for females reduced to 10.6 days. This was still substantially higher than the male absence level of 8.2 days.

The contribution of each gender to the overall NICS absence level and how this has changed over time, is shown in Table 9.3, Appendix 9.

Figure 3

Average Number of Working Days Lost per Staff Year by Gender (2009/2010 to 2013/2014)



* Excludes absences due to *Pregnancy Related Disorders*.

SICKNESS ABSENCE IN THE NICS 2013/2014

1.5 Length of Service

Analysis by length of service shows that for the first two years after joining the NICS, the level of absence of staff (4.9 days in 2013/2014) was less than half that of staff who have been in post for 2 years or more (10.4 days). When considering this finding, it should be noted that new entrants to the NICS are placed on a one year period of probation. During this time, staff are subject to more stringent conditions with regards to sickness absence management, whereby each spell of sickness absence leads to a review and the consideration of potential inefficiency action.

Table 1

Average Number of Working Days Lost per Staff Year by Length of Service (2010/2011 to 2013/2014)

Length of Service	Working Days Lost per Staff Year			
	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
Less than 1 year	5.8	4.3	3.9	3.6
1 to less than 2 years	8.8	5.9	6.3	6.1
Less than 2 years	7.7	4.9	4.6	4.9
2 to less than 3 years	11.3	10.7	7.7	7.4
3 to less than 4 years	10.4	10.2	10.4	5.5
4 to less than 5 years	11.1	11.5	10.3	10.1
5 years or more	10.9	10.1	10.9	10.5
2 years or more	10.9	10.2	10.8	10.4
NICS Overall	10.7	10.1	10.6	10.1

1.6 Age Group

All age groups showed a decrease this year with the level of absence ranging from 6.1 days for staff aged 16-24 to 10.5 days for staff aged 25-34.

The relationship between age and sickness absence is complex. At the risk of oversimplification, one could say that older people tended to have fewer absences, but when they were sick, the illnesses tended to be of longer duration (Table 6.4, Appendix 6). This is illustrated by the fact that the average duration for those aged 55+ was 18.2 days compared with 6.7 days for those aged 16-24.

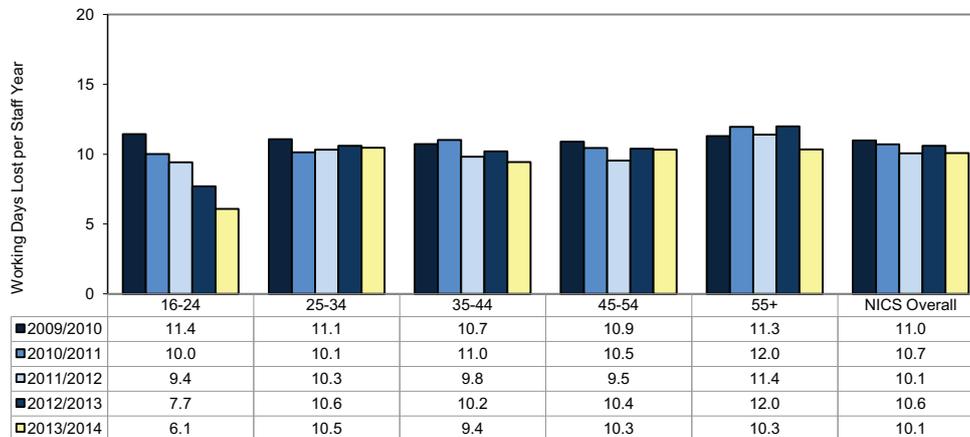
It should also be noted that the level of absence for staff aged 16-24 was affected by the fact that the majority of these staff would have been within their probation period. For staff in the other age groups the proportion of staff who were within their probation period was small. The percentage of staff in the 16-24 age group who were on probation increased from 24.9% in 2010/2011 to 58.6% in 2013/2014. This is likely to have contributed to the large decrease in the absence level of this age group compared with the other age groups.

The contribution of each age group to the overall NICS absence level, and how this has changed over time, is shown in Table 9.4, Appendix 9. In 2013/2014, staff aged 55+ contributed the most (0.19 of a day) to the overall reduction in the NICS absence level.

Certified absence levels increased with age group from 4.1 days for staff in the youngest age category to 9.0 days for staff aged 55+ (Table 3.6, Appendix 3).

Figure 4

Average Number of Working Days Lost per Staff Year by Age Group (2009/2010 to 2013/2014)



Chapter 2
Spells of Sickness Absence

2. Spells of Sickness Absence

This chapter looks at the number and duration of sickness absence spells, as well as the certification of spells. Supporting information can be found in Appendix 6.

2.1 Number of Absence Spells

The proportion of staff with no sickness absence in 2013/2014 was 55.3%, compared with 52.3% in 2012/2013. Less than one third of staff (30.7%) had one recorded absence, with 10.3% absent on two separate occasions during the year. The remaining 3.6% of staff were absent from work through illness on three or more occasions.

The proportion of staff with no absence varied markedly between Departments. Less than half of staff in DSD (49.1%) had no absence compared with over 60% of staff in DRD, DARD and OFMDFM (Table 6.10, Appendix 6). The proportion of staff with three or more absences was highest in DSD (5.3%) and DFP (4.1%).

Staff in the NICS had an average of less than one spell of sickness absence per staff year (0.7).

Figure 5

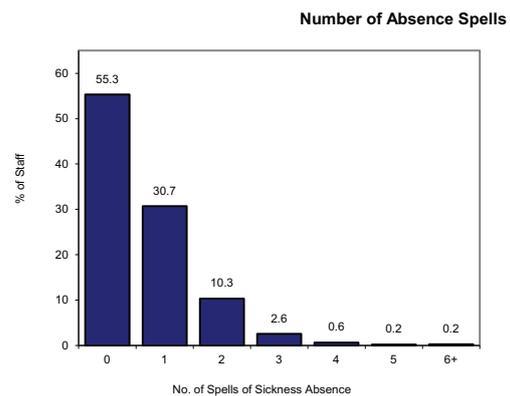


Figure 6

Figure 6 shows that while 55.3% of staff lost no working days to sickness absence, more than one fifth (21.8%) were absent for between one and five days. Just over one in ten staff (11.4%) were absent for more than 20 days in total, down slightly from the previous year (Table 6.8, Appendix 6).

Working Days Lost (Grouped)

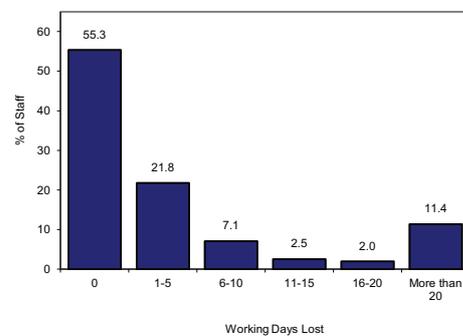


Figure 7

2.2 Duration of Absence Spells

Figure 7 shows that the majority of absence spells were short-term in nature. Around two thirds (67.7%) lasted for five working days or less. These absences accounted for 13.9% of the total working days lost.

Long-term spells of absence (i.e. those lasting for more than 20 consecutive working days) accounted for only 16.9% of all spells of absence but nearly three quarters (73.0%) of the total working days lost.

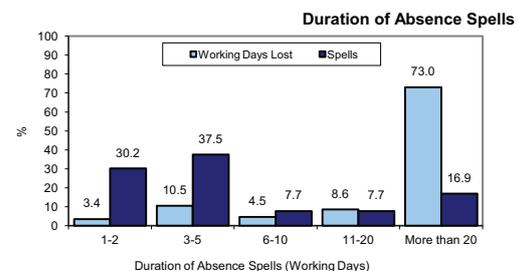
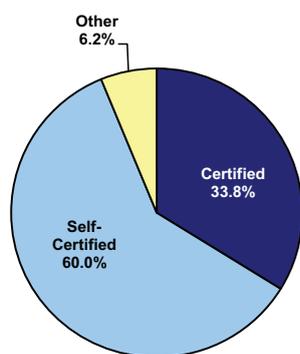


Figure 8

Absence Spells by Certification



2.3 Absence Certification

Almost 19,000 spells of sickness absence were recorded for NICS staff during 2013/2014, with self-certified absences making up 60.0% of these. Absence spells that were covered by a medical certificate accounted for approximately one third (33.8%) of spells.

Absences that were uncertified, or where the certification was missing ('Other'), accounted for the remaining 6.2% of spells.

Figure 9

Working Days Lost by Certification

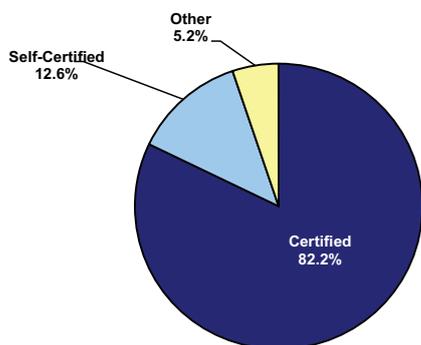


Figure 9 shows that just over four out of every five (82.2%) working day lost was certified by a medical certificate, up slightly from the previous year. This gave rise to 8.3 days lost per staff year or 3.7% of available working days (Table 3.3, Appendix 3).

Shorter term absences covered by self-certification accounted for 12.6% of the working days that were lost, resulting in 1.3 days lost per staff year (0.6% of available working days).

Absences that were uncertified, or where the certification was missing, accounted for 5.2% of the working days lost.

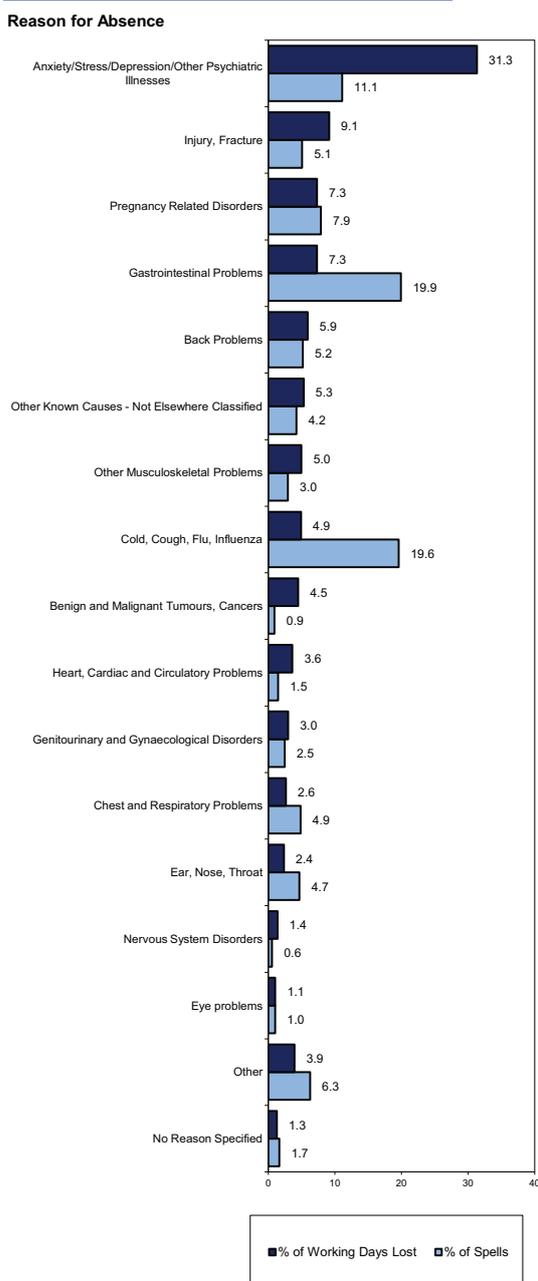
On average, self-certified absences lasted for 2.9 working days, whereas certified absences lasted 33.6 working days (Table 6.1, Appendix 6).

Chapter 3
Reason for Sickness Absence

3. Reason for Sickness Absence

This chapter looks at the reason for sickness absence. More analyses are presented in Appendix 7.

Figure 10^{1,2}



3.1 NICS Overall

As in previous years, the reason for the highest proportion of working days lost was *Anxiety/Stress/Depression/ Other Psychiatric Illnesses* (31.3%). Absences in this category tended to be long-term, lasting an average of 39.1 working days, up from an average of 36.3 days in 2012/2013 (Table 7.6, Appendix 7).

Almost one third of the working days lost in this illness category (30.8%) were recorded as *Stress - Work Related*, a similar proportion as for those recorded as *Stress - Not Work Related* (Table 7.4, Appendix 7).

The contribution each reason for absence has made to the overall NICS sickness absence level is shown in Table 9.5, Appendix 9. A majority of the overall NICS reduction in 2013/2014 was due to decreases in absences recorded as *Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified* and *Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza*.

Table 2²

Reason for Absence	Average Duration (Working Days)
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	66.6
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	39.1
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	34.0
Nervous System Disorders	33.7
Substance Abuse	27.8
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	25.1
Injury, Fracture	24.8
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	23.3
Blood Disorders	22.5
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	17.3
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	16.6
Back Problems	15.7
Eye Problems	14.0
Pregnancy Related Disorders	12.8
Infectious Diseases	11.2
Skin Disorders	9.9
Chest and Respiratory Problems	7.5
Ear, Nose, Throat	6.9
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	6.6
Asthma	6.5
Gastrointestinal Problems	5.1
Dental and Oral Problems	4.4
Headache/Migraine	4.4
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	3.5
No Reason Specified	10.7

¹ The category 'Other' contains any absence with a reason that accounted for less than 1% of working days lost.

² The category 'No Reason Specified' contains any absence for which the reason was 'Not Specified', 'Awaiting Reason' or missing.

SICKNESS ABSENCE IN THE NICS 2013/2014

The following three tables show the percentage of the total working days lost attributable to each reason for absence, broken down by grade level, gender and age group. Shading has been used in each table to highlight the illness category which accounted for the largest proportion of the working days lost.

3.2 Grade Level

With the exception of Industrial staff, the main cause of absence at every other grade level was *Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses*, with at least one fifth of absences being classified as such. For Industrial staff, *Injury, Fracture* (25.2%) was the predominant reason for absence. In fact, *Back Problems, Other Musculoskeletal Problems* and *Injury, Fracture* accounted for just under half (47.0%) of their total working days lost. The higher level of absence due to *Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers* at Grade 7 and above is likely to be a consequence of the older age profile of that group of staff.

Table 3¹

Reason for Absence by Grade Level

Reason for Absence	% of Working Days Lost								
	G7+	DP	SO	EOI	EOII	AO	AA	Industrial	Prison Grade
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	20.9	32.6	30.7	33.9	34.9	31.5	31.3	16.3	34.0
Asthma	-	-	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.0
Back Problems	9.5	4.1	4.5	4.7	3.9	5.6	5.0	9.5	11.7
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	17.9	6.2	5.1	4.6	5.3	3.4	3.6	4.0	0.6
Blood Disorders	-	1.1	0.2	0.5	0.5	1.1	1.1	-	n/a
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	n/a	-	-	0.1	-	0.0	-	-	-
Chest and Respiratory Problems	3.1	3.9	2.7	3.4	2.8	2.2	4.0	2.2	1.4
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	2.9	5.1	4.9	5.6	6.0	5.5	5.1	3.8	1.4
Dental and Oral Problems	0.4	0.5	0.1	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.1
Ear, Nose, Throat	1.5	1.8	2.2	3.0	2.6	2.6	4.1	0.6	0.7
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	n/a	1.8	1.1	0.8	0.2	0.9	0.2	-	-
Eye Problems	0.7	1.4	1.0	1.3	0.6	1.4	1.7	0.4	0.2
Gastrointestinal Problems	6.1	6.6	5.9	8.2	8.4	7.9	8.9	7.8	3.7
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	3.8	3.2	3.1	2.6	3.7	3.4	1.8	2.1	1.5
Headache/Migraine	0.3	0.7	0.6	0.6	1.1	1.3	0.5	0.4	1.0
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	3.9	2.6	6.6	4.2	2.0	3.1	3.1	6.8	3.7
Infectious Diseases	1.8	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.5	-	0.1
Injury, Fracture	7.5	6.7	6.4	8.4	8.2	7.4	7.6	25.2	15.9
Nervous System Disorders	3.0	2.2	2.5	1.4	1.1	1.0	2.6	-	-
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	4.0	6.3	7.2	4.6	3.6	4.2	2.4	1.9	15.1
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	3.2	4.9	5.9	5.6	5.4	4.0	5.3	12.3	3.0
Pregnancy Related Disorders	6.6	4.8	7.3	3.4	6.7	10.9	7.9	-	4.1
Skin Disorders	0.8	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.5	1.2	0.6	0.3
Substance Abuse	n/a	n/a	-	0.1	-	0.3	-	0.9	-
No Reason Specified	1.3	2.8	1.0	1.6	1.1	1.1	1.6	1.7	1.0
NICS Overall	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Cells with small numbers of occurrences have been suppressed (-)

n/a: No cases recorded

¹ The category 'No Reason Specified' contains any absence for which the reason was 'Not Specified', 'Awaiting Reason' or missing.

SICKNESS ABSENCE IN THE NICS 2013/2014

3.3 Gender

Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses accounted for the largest proportion of the total working days lost among both males and females (31.5% and 31.2% respectively). For males, *Injury, Fracture* accounted for the second highest proportion (11.9%) whilst for females it was *Pregnancy Related Disorders* (12.9%).

Table 4¹

Reason for Absence by Gender

Reason for Absence	% of Working Days Lost	
	Male	Female
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	31.5	31.2
Asthma	0.2	0.2
Back Problems	7.8	4.5
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	4.5	4.5
Blood Disorders	0.7	0.6
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	0.1	0.0
Chest and Respiratory Problems	2.9	2.4
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	6.3	3.9
Dental and Oral Problems	0.3	0.2
Ear, Nose, Throat	1.8	2.8
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	0.3	0.9
Eye Problems	1.3	0.9
Gastrointestinal Problems	8.1	6.7
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	1.0	4.4
Headache/Migraine	0.8	1.1
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	5.8	2.0
Infectious Diseases	0.3	0.5
Injury, Fracture	11.9	7.0
Nervous System Disorders	1.1	1.6
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	5.4	5.3
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	5.5	4.6
Pregnancy Related Disorders	n/a	12.9
Skin Disorders	0.5	0.4
Substance Abuse	0.4	0.2
No Reason Specified	1.4	1.2
NICS Overall	100.0	100.0

n/a: No cases recorded

¹ The category 'No Reason Specified' contains any absence for which the reason was 'Not Specified', 'Awaiting Reason' or missing.

3.4 Age Group

Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses accounted for the largest proportion of working days lost in all age groups in 2013/2014. As might be expected, the impact of a number of illnesses varied with age. For example, *Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers* and *Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems* accounted for a total of 16.9% of the days lost in the 55+ age group but did not account for any working days lost in the 16-24 age group.

Table 5¹

Reason for Absence by Age Group

Reason for Absence	% of Working Days Lost				
	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	21.1	27.9	35.4	34.3	24.5
Asthma	n/a	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1
Back Problems	1.8	5.0	7.0	6.3	5.0
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	n/a	-	2.7	6.0	8.4
Blood Disorders	-	0.4	0.7	0.7	0.9
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	-	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1
Chest and Respiratory Problems	4.1	1.6	2.2	3.2	3.4
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	8.5	6.3	5.6	4.0	4.0
Dental and Oral Problems	-	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.4
Ear, Nose, Throat	2.8	2.7	2.3	2.5	1.7
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	-	0.5	0.6	0.9	0.6
Eye Problems	n/a	0.8	0.7	1.2	1.7
Gastrointestinal Problems	13.7	8.9	7.3	6.8	6.2
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	0.6	1.9	4.0	3.3	2.4
Headache/Migraine	0.2	0.9	0.9	0.7	1.5
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	n/a	1.5	1.5	4.1	8.5
Infectious Diseases	2.8	0.4	0.5	0.3	0.5
Injury, Fracture	18.8	7.9	9.0	9.2	10.3
Nervous System Disorders	n/a	0.7	1.3	1.8	1.8
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	4.9	4.1	4.8	6.3	5.6
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	2.5	2.5	3.0	5.8	9.4
Pregnancy Related Disorders	15.7	22.9	8.2	0.3	n/a
Skin Disorders	-	0.4	0.6	0.5	0.5
Substance Abuse	n/a	-	0.2	0.7	n/a
No Reason Specified	1.2	1.1	1.2	0.9	2.5
NICS Overall	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Cells with small numbers of occurrences have been suppressed (-)

n/a: No cases recorded

¹ The category 'No Reason Specified' contains any absence for which the reason was 'Not Specified', 'Awaiting Reason' or missing.

Chapter 4
Long-term Sickness Absence

4. Long-term Sickness Absence

A long-term absence is defined as any spell of absence that lasted more than 20 consecutive working days during the financial year. Supporting information can be found in Appendix 8.

4.1 Prevalence of Long-term Absence

Approximately one in ten staff (10.4%) were off sick for an average of around three months (59.8 working days) during 2013/2014.

A total of 3,066 staff (10.4%) in the NICS had one or more spell of long-term absence, the same proportion as in the previous year.

The 3,198 long-term absence spells recorded in 2013/2014 equated to a long-term Frequency Rate¹ of 10.9%.

Long-term absences accounted for 73.0% of the total working days lost which, for illustrative purposes, could be equated to losing the work of approximately 860 full-time staff for the entire year.

Table 6

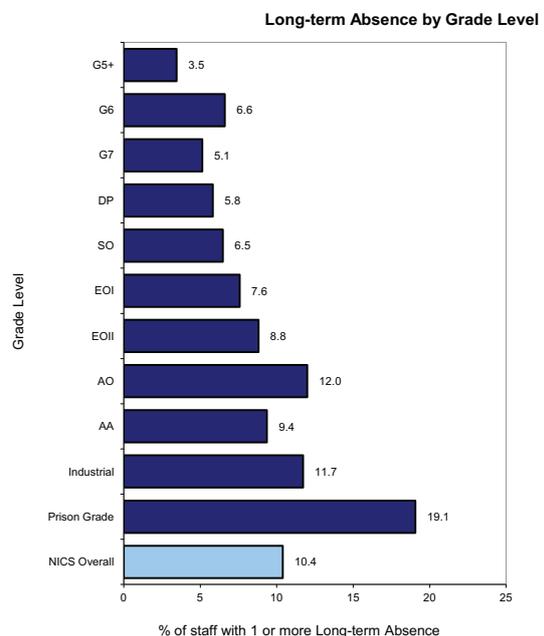
Number of Long-term Absence Spells	Number of Staff	Percentage of Staff
0	26,358	89.6
1	2,942	10.0
2	117	0.4
3+	7	0.0
NICS Overall	29,424	100.0

4.2 Grade Level

Prison Grade staff had the highest incidence of long-term absence, with 19.1% having had one or more spell. This represents an increase from 17.6% in 2012/2013.

In the administrative grades the incidence of long-term absence tended to decrease as grade level increased. A particularly high level was found at AO level, where more than one in ten staff had one or more spell of long-term absence.

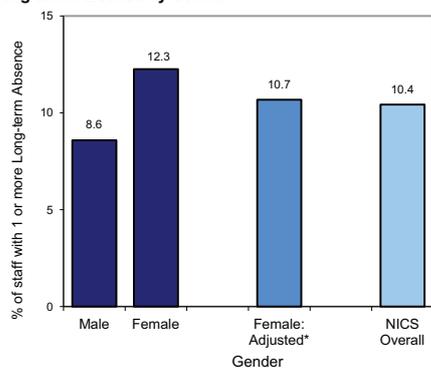
Figure 11



¹ Frequency Rate is the average number of long-term absences per employee, expressed as a percentage. (No of spells of long-term absence in the period/No. of employees) x 100

Figure 12

Long-term Absence by Gender



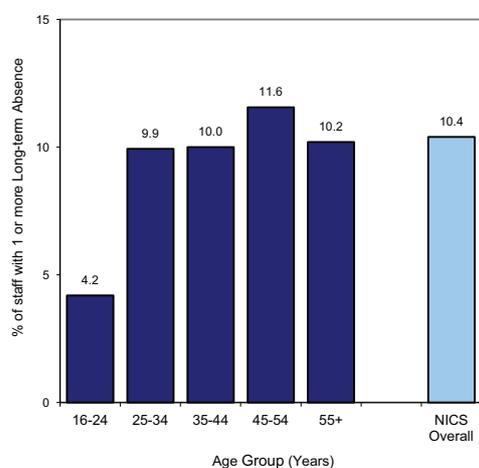
* Excludes absences due to *Pregnancy Related Disorders*

4.3 Gender

The incidence of long-term absence among women (12.3%) was higher than that among men (8.6%). These figures were similar to 2012/2013. The incidence of long-term absence among females remained higher than that for males even after long-term absences due to *Pregnancy Related Disorders* were excluded.

Figure 13

Long-term Absence by Age Group



4.4 Age Group

The incidence of long-term absence was highest for those aged 45-54 (11.6%) and was lowest for those aged 16-24, with 4.2% having had one or more long-term absence spell.

4.5 Reason for Long-term Absence

Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses accounted for over one in three (38.4%) working days lost to long-term absence. Just over one in ten long-term working days lost (10.3%) were due to *Injury, Fracture* - the second largest contributor.

Table 7¹

Reason for Long-term Absence
(% of Long-term Working Days Lost)

Reason for Absence	% of Long-term Working Days Lost
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	38.4
Injury, Fracture	10.3
Pregnancy Related Disorders	6.6
Back Problems	6.0
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	5.9
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	5.7
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	5.3
Gastrointestinal Problems	4.5
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	4.4
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	3.0
Nervous System Disorders	1.7
Chest and Respiratory Problems	1.3
Ear, Nose, Throat	1.3
Eye Problems	1.0
Other	3.5
No Reason Specified	1.1
NICS Overall	100.0

¹The category 'Other' contains any absence with a reason that accounted for less than 1% of Long-term Working Days Lost. The category 'No Reason Specified' contains any absence for which the reason was 'Not Specified', 'Awaiting Reason' or missing.

**Chapter 5
Absence Targets**

5. Targets

5.1 Introduction

In 2010, a Ministerial target was agreed for an overall reduction in sickness absence within the NICS to 8.5 days lost per staff year by the end of the 2014/2015 financial year; this reflected a 24% reduction from the 2009/2010 base year¹ figure of 11.2 days. A commitment to achieve this target, and associated milestones, is contained in the Executive's Programme for Government.

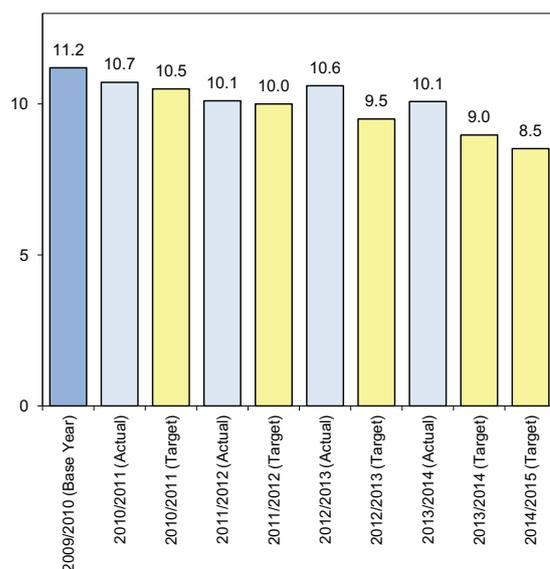
To help maintain a focus on the key determinants of the high level of absence in the NICS, strategic targets were also set in relation to a reduction in both the frequency and duration of long-term absences. It was agreed that Departmental targets, while differing in absolute terms, should be equally challenging and achievable. This chapter charts how individual Departments, and the NICS overall, have progressed towards their targets.

¹ Targets were set based on the number and composition of staff in each of the NI Departments during 2009/2010 as, at the time of setting, this was the most recent information available. The base year figures for 2009/2010 were reworked to include industrial staff and to take account of the creation of the Department of Justice and the Public Prosecution Service.

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Figure 14¹

Average Number of Working Days Lost per Staff Year



5.2 Absence Targets - NICS Overall

While there were decreases across all the target measures when compared with 2012/2013, none of the NICS targets were met. The overall level of absence decreased from 10.6 to 10.1 days, but the target of 9.0 days was missed.

The Frequency Rate of long-term absences (10.9%) fell short of its target of 9.8%.

The average duration of long-term absences (59.8 days) fell well short of the target of 51.0 days.

Table 8

Frequency and Duration of Absence

Absence Target		2009/2010 ¹	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014		2014/2015
		(Base Year)	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target
Overall	Average days lost per staff year	11.2	10.7	10.1	10.6	10.1	9.0	8.5
	Frequency Rate ³ (%)	11.4	11.3	11.0	11.1	10.9	9.8	9.5
	Average Duration ⁴ (working days)	62.5	61.2	58.6	60.0	59.8	51.0	48.5

Green text denotes target met
Red text denotes target not met

¹ Targets were set based on the number and composition of staff in each of the NI Departments during 2009/2010 as, at the time of setting, this was the most recent information available. The base year figures for 2009/2010 were reworked to include industrial staff and to take account of the creation of the Department of Justice and the Public

² For the purpose of target-setting, absences are split into long-term and short-term, with long-term being defined as greater than 20 consecutive working days.

³ Frequency Rate is the average number of long-term spells per employee, expressed as a percentage.

⁴ Throughout this report, the duration of absence relates only to days lost in the corresponding financial year.

5.3 Days Lost per Staff Year by Department

The table below shows the NICS performance against its overall target, broken down by Department. Only one Department (DSD) achieved its individual target, while the remaining twelve Departments fell short. DETI and PPS were the closest of the other Departments to meeting their target.

Table 9

Days Lost per Staff Year

Department	2009/2010 ¹	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014		2014/2015
	(Base Year)	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target
DARD	9.3	8.5	8.0	9.4	9.1	7.8	7.5
DCAL	6.5	7.5	8.0	8.5	8.6	6.5	6.5
DE	10.5	8.3	7.9	9.6	9.7	8.3	7.8
DEL	10.7	10.6	11.4	11.5	10.4	8.4	7.9
DETI	8.3	8.1	7.3	8.1	8.0	7.6	7.5
DFP	10.3	9.5	9.3	10.5	9.4	8.1	7.6
DHSSPS	9.4	8.5	7.1	8.8	9.4	7.8	7.5
DOE	10.1	9.2	9.8	9.4	9.5	8.0	7.5
DOJ	12.3 ²	12.9	12.6	12.9	11.6	9.7	9.2
DRD	8.2	8.5	8.2	8.5	8.7	7.6	7.5
DSD	14.4	13.4	11.1	11.4	11.1	11.4	10.7
OFMDFM	8.4	5.4	8.7	7.8	8.9	7.7	7.5
PPS	9.0 ²	10.2	9.8	10.2	8.2	7.8	7.5
NICS Overall	11.2	10.7	10.1	10.6	10.1	9.0	8.5

Green text denotes target met

Red text denotes target not met

¹ Targets were set based on the number and composition of staff in each of the NI Departments during 2009/2010 as, at the time of setting, this was the most recent information available. The base year figures for 2009/2010 were reworked to include industrial staff and to take account of the creation of the Department of Justice and the Public Prosecution Service.

² The 2009/2010 absence information, for staff in areas that became part of the Department when it was established as an NICS Department on the 12th April 2010, was used to calculate the Base Year figure.

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5.4 Long-term¹ Frequency²

The NICS fell short of its overall target for long-term Frequency Rate (10.9% compared with a target of 9.8%). Three Departments (DETI, DFP and DSD) achieved their individual target. DEL, despite not achieving its target, recorded a notable reduction from the previous year.

Table 10

Long-term Frequency

Department	2009/2010 ³	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014		2014/2015
	(Base Year)	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target
DARD	9.3	9.2	8.3	9.8	9.7	8.2	8.0
DCAL	7.0	8.7	6.8	6.9	8.6	6.2	6.0
DE	10.7	8.7	9.4	10.0	9.8	9.4	9.2
DEL	10.3	11.2	13.3	11.7	10.7	9.1	8.9
DETI	8.8	8.4	6.7	6.9	7.8	7.8	7.6
DFP	10.0	9.9	9.3	10.5	8.2	8.8	8.6
DHSSPS	9.4	7.9	7.1	8.4	8.6	8.3	8.1
DOE	9.3	9.5	10.2	9.9	9.8	8.2	8.0
DOJ	14.4 ⁴	15.2	15.3	13.2	14.1	12.7	12.3
DRD	8.4	8.6	8.9	9.3	9.2	7.4	7.2
DSD	14.3	13.5	12.1	11.5	11.5	12.7	12.3
OFMDFM	7.7	5.6	8.5	7.2	7.7	6.8	6.6
PPS	8.9 ⁴	10.2	9.5	9.4	9.5	7.8	7.6
NICS Overall	11.4	11.3	11.0	11.1	10.9	9.8	9.5

Green text denotes target met
Red text denotes target not met

¹ For the purpose of target-setting, absences are split into long-term and short-term, with long-term being defined as greater than 20 consecutive working days.

² Frequency Rate is the average number of Long-term spells per employee, expressed as a percentage.

³ Targets were set based on the number and composition of staff in each of the NI Departments during 2009/2010 as, at the time of setting, this was the most recent information available. The base year figures for 2009/2010 were reworked to include industrial staff and to take account of the creation of the Department of Justice and the Public Prosecution Service.

⁴ The 2009/2010 absence information, for staff in areas that became part of the Department when it was established as an NICS Department on the 12th April 2010, was used to calculate the Base Year figure.

5.5 Long-term¹ Duration²

The overall NICS target of 51.0 days for the average duration of a long-term sickness absence was not achieved, with the average duration of 59.8 days being very similar to the previous year. While five of the 13 Departments improved on the previous year, none met its individual target in 2013/2014. However, there were notable reductions recorded for PPS and DCAL compared with the previous year.

Table 11

Long-term Duration

Department	2009/2010 ³	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014		2014/2015
	(Base Year)	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target
DARD	68.5	64.5	64.4	63.4	62.9	55.8	53.0
DCAL	47.5	52.7	68.8	65.7	56.6	38.7	36.7
DE	64.7	54.0	52.5	55.6	59.3	52.7	50.1
DEL	62.7	59.5	53.9	60.2	60.6	51.1	48.5
DETI	57.2	59.0	57.6	64.3	59.5	46.6	44.2
DFP	61.9	58.9	58.2	58.5	63.3	50.4	47.9
DHSSPS	62.9	65.2	57.5	63.8	68.5	51.3	48.7
DOE	73.0	64.6	64.5	59.8	62.8	59.5	56.5
DOJ	57.2 ⁴	57.8	57.4	57.7	58.0	46.6	44.2
DRD	63.9	67.8	66.5	65.1	66.2	52.1	49.5
DSD	61.6	62.0	55.5	58.9	56.1	50.1	47.6
OFMDFM	72.5	61.1	72.1	65.5	65.6	59.1	56.1
PPS	59.4 ⁴	55.9	58.8	65.4	52.4	48.4	46.0
NICS Overall	62.5	61.2	58.6	60.0	59.8	51.0	48.5

Green text denotes target met

Red text denotes target not met

¹ For the purpose of target-setting, absences are split into long-term and short-term, with long-term being defined as greater than 20 consecutive working days.

² Throughout this report, the duration of absence relates only to days lost in the corresponding financial year.

³ Targets were set based on the number and composition of staff in each of the NI Departments during 2009/2010 as, at the time of setting, this was the most recent information available. The base year figures for 2009/2010 were reworked to include industrial staff and to take account of the creation of the Department of Justice and the Public Prosecution Service.

⁴ The 2009/2010 absence information, for staff in areas that became part of the Department when it was established as an NICS Department on the 12th April 2010, was used to calculate the Base Year figure.

Chapter 6
Absence Insight

6. Absence Insight

In 2013/2014 the average number of working days lost fell from 10.6 days to 10.1 days. This chapter aims to provide an insight into some of the factors underpinning this and other changes.

What is behind the fall in absence?

As can be seen in Figure 15, approximately three quarters of the 0.5 of a day reduction since 2012/ 2013 can be attributed to a decrease in short-term absences. Of this, Cold/Flu was the largest single factor accounting for 36.8% (0.14 of a day) of the reduction in short-term working days lost.

Staff at the AO level have the highest incidence of Cold/Flu (15.2 spells per 100 staff compared with 11.5 spells in the other grades). Male AOs were particularly susceptible; they were 1.5 times more likely than female AOs to be off sick because of a Cold/Flu.

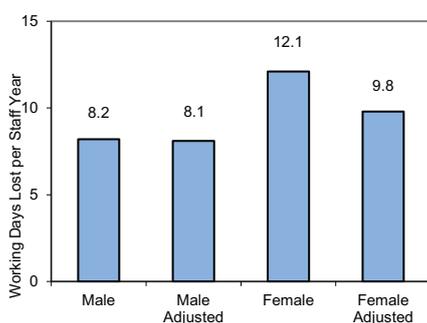
Figure 15

Contribution to the Reduction in Working Days Lost



Figure 16

Impact of Gender Specific Absences



Why do females have a higher level of absence?

Gender specific absences (i.e. Pregnancy Related Disorders, some Genitourinary/Gynaecological Disorders and specific Cancers) were found to be the main reason for the higher level of absence among females, accounting for some 60% of the difference.

After adjusting for these gender specific reasons, Mental Health absences were the main cause of the remaining difference, with females found to be 50% more likely than males to have had a Mental Health related absence spell (see Table 12 below).

Moreover, while there was no significant difference in the incidence of Depression or Work Related Stress, females were found to be around twice as likely as males to have an Anxiety or Non-Work Related Stress absence.

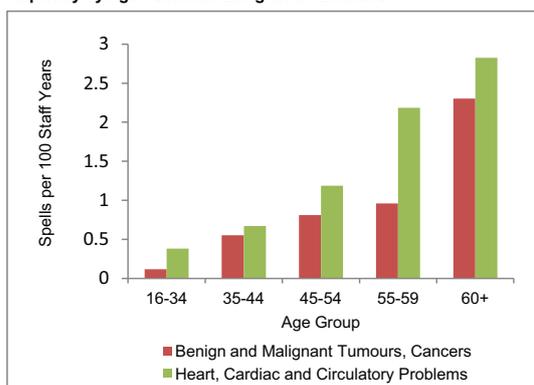
Table 12: Incidence of Mental Health Illnesses - Gender Differences

Sub-Reason	No. of Spells per 100 Staff	
	Male	Female
Stress - Not Work Related	1.5	3.4
Anxiety	0.8	1.4
Not Specified	0.3	0.6
Other *	0.3	0.4
Depression - Not Pregnancy Related	0.8	1.0
Stress - Work Related	2.0	1.7
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	5.7	8.5

* The category 'Other' contains any absences with a reason that accounted for less than 1% of the Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses working days lost.

Figures 17

Frequency by Age - Selected Long-term Absences



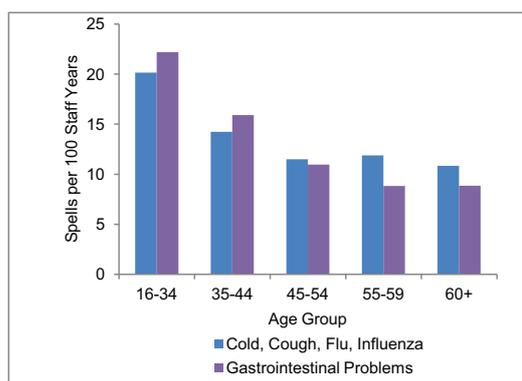
Do older staff have higher levels of absence?

While in recent years the overall level of absence has tended to be higher for staff aged 55 and over, this was not the case in 2013/2014. Indeed, among AA/AOs who comprise around one third of the staff working in the NICS, absence levels were actually lowest among those aged 55-59.

While it would be incorrect to say that older staff have higher levels of sickness absence it would be accurate to say that older staff have fewer absences but when they were off sick it was more likely to be due to a long-term illness such as cancers and heart problems.

Figure 18

Frequency by Age - Selected Short-term Absences



**Appendix 1
Data Quality**

Appendix 1

Data Quality

Relevance

This report covers sickness absences during the 2013/2014 financial year that were recorded on HRConnect (the HR system used by the NICS) for industrial and non-industrial staff in the Northern Ireland Civil Service. The report also includes sickness absence information for the parts of the Department of Justice that are not held on HRConnect, namely: Youth Justice Agency (data taken from their Simply Personnel system) and Northern Ireland Prison Service (data taken from their COMPASS system).

Absence information is presented by Department, grade level, gender, age group, length of service and reason for absence. Some comparisons with figures for the previous four years are also included along with progress against relevant sickness absence targets.

Accuracy

Sickness absence records for all staff held on HRConnect and COMPASS were extracted six weeks after the end of the financial year reporting period; this allowed for the updating of absence records and personnel moves. Absence records from the Simply Personnel system were extracted on a monthly basis a week after the end of each month of the 2013/2014 financial year.

Any information provided in this report relating to lost production is calculated, where possible, on the basis of each individual's actual salary and the associated employer's National Insurance and Superannuation contributions.

Users should note that some figures may not add to the totals due to rounding.

Timeliness and Punctuality

The report relates to the 2013/2014 financial year and was published on 16th October 2014.

Accessibility and Clarity

No issues relating to accessibility or clarity were received during a stakeholder consultation process in November 2009. The report contains contact details for further information and is available to download through the NISRA and DFP websites.

Coherence and Comparability

Prior to 2010/2011 industrial staff were not included in the analyses, nor were staff in the Department of Justice or the Public Prosecution Service. Historic figures are therefore not directly comparable with analyses for 2010/2011 onwards.

Prison Grade staff have been incorporated into the sickness absence targets. This increased the 2009/2010 base year figure for DOJ from 11.3 days to 12.3 days and, applying the same methodology as for the original targets, the DOJ 2014/2015 target was increased from 8.4 days to 9.2 days. The DOJ targets relating to long-term frequency and duration were revised on the same basis. The inclusion of Prison Grade staff only increased the NICS 2009/2010 base year figure from 11.1 days to 11.2 days and as a consequence the NICS targets remained unchanged.

Trade-offs between Output Quality and Components

No trade-offs applied.

Assessment of User Needs and Perceptions

A user consultation undertaken in November 2009 received positive feedback on the annual publication. A request for the report to include analyses by disability was not able to be met at this time.

Performance, Cost and Respondent Burden

There is no respondent burden since the data are held on an administrative system and extracted using an automated process.

Confidentiality, Transparency and Security

Suppression is applied where the number of cases in a cell is less than three. Suppression is also applied, where necessary, to the next lowest valued cell in order that identification by subtraction is not possible.

Data are held on a network that is only accessible to the few statisticians who need access. Printouts containing individual records or small cell sizes are locked away and shredded as soon as possible.

**Appendix 2
Calculations**

Appendix 2

Calculations

Absence levels are presented in a number of ways throughout the report and are defined as follows:

$$\text{\% of Available Working Days Lost} = \frac{\text{Number of Working Days Lost}}{\text{Number of Available Working Days}} \times 100$$

$$\text{Working Days Lost per Staff Year} = \frac{\text{Number of Working Days Lost}}{\text{Number of Staff Years}}$$

$$\text{Spells per Staff Year} = \frac{\text{Number of Absence Spells}}{\text{Number of Staff Years}}$$

The "Working days lost per staff year" approach was recommended by the Cabinet Office in the review *"Managing Attendance in the Public Sector (1999)"*. This approach replaced 'working days lost per person' which does not always permit valid comparisons to be made between or within organisations that differ in their proportions of part-time staff and/or their levels of staff turnover. In particular, it can misrepresent the absence rate in organisations that have a high proportion of part-time staff and/or high levels of staff turnover. For the majority of people, a staff year is approximately **222** working days, but clearly this depends on date of entry and/or date of leaving, and annual leave entitlement which varies by grade, length of service, and work pattern. For each individual a 'staff year' was therefore calculated taking all of these factors into account. The following simple example highlights the rationale for the methodology used by the Cabinet Office.

Example

There are 2 members of staff **A** and **B**.

- A.** Worked Full-time all year (hence 1 staff year), and
- B.** Worked Full-time for ½ year (hence ½ staff year)

If **A** was absent for 20 working days and **B** was absent for 10 working days, then the number of working days lost per staff year are calculated as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Total Number of working days lost} &= 30 \\ \text{Total Number of Staff Years} &= 1 + 0.5 = 1.5 \end{aligned}$$

$$\text{Working Days Lost per Staff Year} = \frac{30}{1.5} = 20$$

According to the other approach, the number of days lost per person would be:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Total Number of working days lost} &= 30 \\ \text{Total Number of People} &= 2 \end{aligned}$$

$$\text{Working Days Lost per Person} = \frac{30}{2} = 15$$

which overlooks the fact that one of the staff was only employed for six months.

Appendix 3
(Tables Relating to Chapter 1)
Working Days Lost through Sickness Absence

Appendix 3

Tables Relating to Chapter 1

Table 3.1: Department by Grade Level

When assessing the variation in days lost per staff year in the table below it should be noted that the number of staff involved can be relatively small. Even a small number of long-term absences can therefore strongly influence the overall level of absence in these groupings.

Department	No. of Days Lost per Staff Year								
	G7+	DP	SO	EOI	EOII	AO	AA	Industrial	Prison Grade
DARD	6.3	5.3	8.3	8.6	6.8	12.3	14.0	12.3	n/a
DCAL	3.3	7.6	8.6	7.6	7.7	6.8	23.1	15.3	n/a
DE	8.7	8.5	12.9	8.5	6.9	11.2	14.0	n/a	n/a
DEL	8.0	5.5	9.1	8.7	10.8	12.9	7.1	n/a	n/a
DETI	6.1	2.0	5.1	8.4	11.9	13.5	8.9	n/a	n/a
DFP	7.0	6.6	6.4	9.3	9.9	13.0	12.9	2.3	n/a
DHSSPS	8.9	7.8	11.2	10.7	7.4	8.4	13.6	n/a	n/a
DOE	3.0	7.1	8.1	10.7	9.4	10.9	16.8	7.1	n/a
DOJ	3.4	7.7	9.6	8.7	10.6	9.9	11.8	8.2	15.1
DRD	1.4	4.1	5.2	5.9	8.7	11.7	15.2	12.8	n/a
DSD	5.1	5.7	7.3	9.2	9.4	14.2	9.5	n/a	n/a
OFMDFM	7.4	8.0	11.0	3.9	14.0	9.0	4.7	n/a	n/a
PPS	5.5	9.4	1.5	13.7	8.0	10.7	4.9	n/a	n/a
NICS Overall	5.9	6.4	7.8	8.7	9.4	12.7	11.6	12.1	15.1

n/a: No cases recorded

Table 3.2: Absence Levels by Occupational Grouping

Occupational Groupings (with more than 200 staff)

Occupational Grouping	Days Lost per Staff Year			
	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
Prison Grade	16.0	17.0	16.1	15.1
Industrial	11.8	11.7	12.9	12.1
Support Grade Staff	9.6	10.4	10.4	12.0
General Service	11.6	10.5	11.2	10.6
Driving Examiner	9.0	8.9	10.8	9.9
Drawing Officer	8.0	8.5	7.2	9.4
Secretarial / Typing	11.3	9.4	10.1	8.6
Planning	6.2	8.1	7.3	8.2
Scientific Officer	7.9	5.7	6.9	7.8
Other	8.1	7.4	7.3	7.7
Statistician	6.6	9.0	9.5	7.2
Computing	5.8	5.7	5.1	6.1
Agricultural Inspector	6.0	5.8	6.3	6.0
Civil Eng (inc assistants)	4.6	5.0	6.5	4.1
Casual	n/a	n/a	6.0	3.7

Green text denotes a reduction from the previous financial year

Red text denotes an increase from the previous financial year

Appendix 3

Table 3.3: Certification by Department

Department	No. of Days Lost per Staff Year			% of Available Working Days Lost		
	Self-Certified	Certified	Overall	Self-Certified	Certified	Overall
DARD	0.9	7.9	9.1	0.4	3.6	4.1
DCAL	1.2	6.7	8.6	0.5	3.0	3.9
DE	1.2	8.3	9.7	0.5	3.7	4.4
DEL	1.3	8.9	10.4	0.6	4.0	4.7
DETI	1.3	6.4	8.0	0.6	2.9	3.6
DFP	1.5	7.6	9.4	0.7	3.4	4.2
DHSSPS	1.1	7.8	9.4	0.5	3.5	4.2
DOE	1.2	7.8	9.5	0.5	3.6	4.3
DOJ	0.7	10.8	11.6	0.3	4.9	5.2
DRD	1.0	7.6	8.7	0.4	3.4	3.9
DSD	1.8	8.0	11.1	0.8	3.6	5.0
OFMDFM	1.1	7.4	8.9	0.5	3.4	4.0
PPS	1.1	6.8	8.2	0.5	3.1	3.7
NICS Overall	1.3	8.3	10.1	0.6	3.7	4.6

Table 3.4: Certification by Grade Level

Grade Level	No. of Days Lost per Staff Year			% of Available Working Days Lost		
	Self-Certified	Certified	Overall	Self-Certified	Certified	Overall
G5+	0.4	3.2	3.6	0.2	1.4	1.6
G6	0.4	7.6	8.0	0.2	3.4	3.6
G7	0.5	5.2	5.9	0.2	2.3	2.7
DP	0.8	5.3	6.4	0.4	2.4	2.9
SO	1.0	6.4	7.8	0.4	2.9	3.5
EOI	1.2	7.3	8.7	0.5	3.3	3.9
EOII	1.4	7.2	9.4	0.7	3.3	4.3
AO	1.9	10.0	12.7	0.9	4.5	5.7
AA	1.7	9.1	11.6	0.7	4.1	5.2
Industrials	0.9	10.9	12.1	0.4	4.9	5.5
Prison Grade	0.2	14.9	15.1	0.1	6.9	7.0
NICS Overall	1.3	8.3	10.1	0.6	3.7	4.6

Table 3.5: Certification by Gender

Gender	No. of Days Lost per Staff Year			% of Available Working Days Lost		
	Self-Certified	Certified	Overall	Self-Certified	Certified	Overall
Male	1.1	6.7	8.2	0.5	3.1	3.7
Female	1.4	10.0	12.1	0.6	4.5	5.5
NICS Overall	1.3	8.3	10.1	0.6	3.7	4.6

Table 3.6: Certification by Age Group

Age Group	No. of Days Lost per Staff Year			% of Available Working Days Lost		
	Self-Certified	Certified	Overall	Self-Certified	Certified	Overall
16-24	1.7	4.1	6.1	0.7	1.8	2.7
25-34	2.0	7.8	10.5	0.9	3.5	4.7
35-44	1.3	7.8	9.4	0.6	3.5	4.3
45-54	1.0	8.7	10.3	0.5	4.0	4.7
55+	0.9	9.0	10.3	0.4	4.1	4.7
NICS Overall	1.3	8.3	10.1	0.6	3.7	4.6

SICKNESS ABSENCE IN THE NICS 2013/2014

Appendix 3

Table 3.7: % of Available Working Days Lost by Department

Department	% of Available Working Days Lost				
	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
DARD	3.9	3.9	3.6	4.3	4.1
DCAL	3.1	3.4	3.6	3.9	3.9
DE	4.7	3.8	3.6	4.4	4.4
DEL	4.8	4.8	5.2	5.3	4.7
DETI	3.7	3.7	3.3	3.7	3.6
DFP	4.6	4.3	4.2	4.8	4.2
DHSSPS	4.2	3.8	3.2	4.0	4.2
DOE	4.4	4.2	4.5	4.3	4.3
DOJ	n/a	5.8	5.7	5.9	5.2
DRD	3.0	3.9	3.7	3.9	3.9
DSD	6.5	6.1	5.1	5.2	5.0
OFMDFM	3.4	2.4	4.0	3.6	4.0
PPS	n/a	4.6	4.4	4.7	3.7
NICS Overall	4.9	4.9	4.6	4.9	4.6

Table 3.8: % of Available Working Days Lost by Grade Level

Grade Level	% of Available Working Days Lost				
	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
G5+	1.6	2.4	1.3	1.9	1.6
G6	0.9	1.7	1.5	2.7	3.6
G7	2.2	2.2	2.5	2.8	2.7
DP	3.0	3.0	2.9	3.2	2.9
SO	3.2	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.5
EOI	4.2	4.3	3.7	4.2	3.9
EOII	5.6	5.1	4.7	4.6	4.3
AO	6.7	5.9	5.3	6.0	5.7
AA	6.1	5.6	5.6	5.7	5.2
Industrial	n/a	5.3	5.5	5.9	5.5
Prison Grade	n/a	7.5	8.0	7.5	7.0
NICS Overall	4.9	4.9	4.6	4.9	4.6

Table 3.9: % of Available Working Days Lost by Gender

Gender	% of Available Working Days Lost				
	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
Male	3.5	3.9	3.8	4.0	3.7
Female	6.4	5.9	5.4	5.8	5.5
NICS Overall	4.9	4.9	4.6	4.9	4.6

Table 3.10: % of Available Working Days Lost by Age Group

Age Group	% of Available Working Days Lost				
	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
16-24	5.1	4.4	4.2	3.4	2.7
25-34	5.0	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.7
35-44	4.8	5.0	4.5	4.7	4.3
45-54	4.9	4.8	4.4	4.8	4.7
55+	5.1	5.4	5.2	5.5	4.7
NICS Overall	4.9	4.9	4.6	4.9	4.6

Green text denotes a reduction from the previous financial year

Red text denotes an increase from the previous financial year

Appendix 4
Seasonal Effects on the Onset of Absence

Appendix 4

Seasonal Effects on the Onset of Absence

The following tables examine seasonal effects on the onset of sickness absence.

Table 4.1: Onset of Absence by Month

Month	% of Spells Starting in Month		
	Self-Certified	Certified	Overall
April	8.6	7.5	8.2
May	7.2	7.4	7.3
June	6.2	6.6	6.4
July	5.8	7.3	6.3
August	6.0	6.6	6.2
September	8.6	8.3	8.5
October	9.7	9.2	9.5
November	9.8	9.0	9.4
December	8.3	6.9	7.9
January	10.9	10.3	10.7
February	9.2	9.0	9.2
March	9.7	12.0	10.6

Table 4.2: Onset of Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses by Month

Month	% of Spells Starting in Month
April	6.4
May	7.4
June	6.8
July	6.6
August	7.3
September	8.8
October	9.1
November	8.8
December	7.2
January	10.6
February	9.9
March	11.1

Table 4.3: Onset of Absence by Weekday

Weekday	% of Spells Starting on Weekday		
	Self-Certified	Certified	Overall
Sunday	0.2	0.9	0.4
Monday ¹	35.0	33.4	34.6
Tuesday	22.8	20.4	21.9
Wednesday	18.8	17.1	18.2
Thursday	15.0	16.1	15.3
Friday	8.0	10.1	8.8
Saturday	0.3	2.0	0.9

¹ It should be noted that absences that actually started on a Saturday or Sunday, and then continued into the working week, may have been recorded as if they had started on a Monday.

Appendix 5
Standardised Departmental Absence Levels

Appendix 5

Standardised Departmental Absence Levels

The following figures show the extent to which a Department's staffing profile can influence its overall absence level. In Figures 5.1 and 5.2 below, the staffing profile of each Department has been standardised by grade level, gender and age group to that of the NICS as a whole.

It should be noted that in reports prior to 2011/2012, DFP was used as the staffing profile against which all other Departments were standardised. However, this is no longer a suitable staffing profile to use as there are no Prison Grade staff in DFP. A similar approach to that used by the GB Civil Service has therefore been adopted for this illustration, and the staffing profile of the NICS as a whole is being used.

Figure 5.1: Working Days Lost Per Staff Year

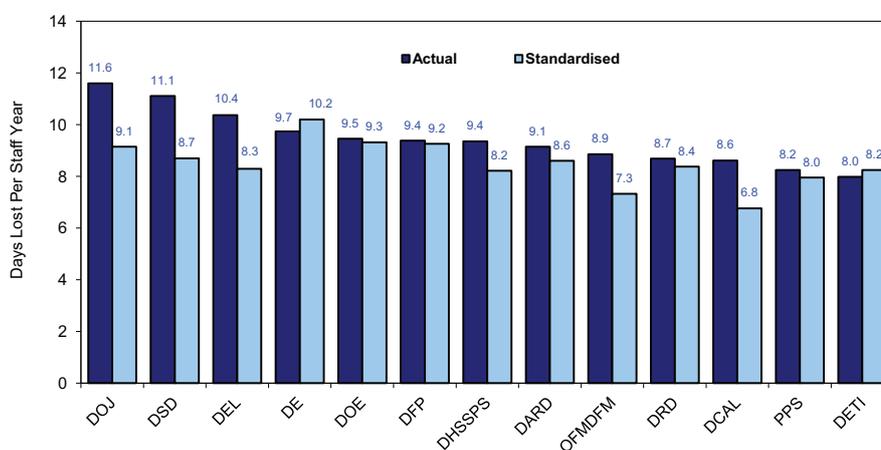
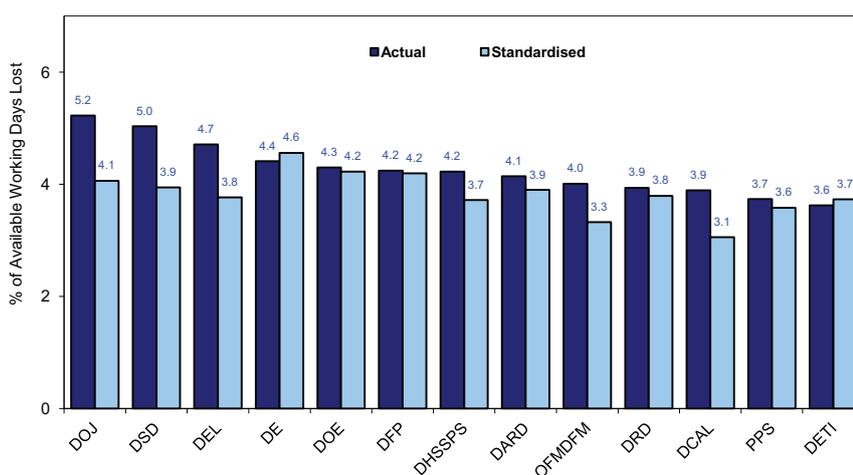


Figure 5.2: % of Available Working Days Lost



Appendix 6
(Tables Relating to Chapter 2)
Spells of Sickness Absence

Appendix 6

Tables Relating to Chapter 2

Table 6.1: Average Duration and Number of Spells by Certification and Department

Department	Self-Certified Absences		Certified Absences		Overall	
	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)
DARD	0.3	2.8	0.2	37.6	0.5	16.7
DCAL	0.5	2.4	0.2	31.7	0.8	11.3
DE	0.4	2.8	0.3	31.7	0.7	13.5
DEL	0.5	2.8	0.2	36.3	0.7	14.5
DETI	0.5	2.6	0.2	33.6	0.7	11.1
DFP	0.5	2.8	0.2	32.6	0.8	11.7
DHSSPS	0.4	2.8	0.2	37.9	0.6	14.5
DOE	0.4	3.0	0.2	35.4	0.6	14.7
DOJ	0.3	2.9	0.4	28.5	0.6	17.9
DRD	0.3	3.3	0.2	38.1	0.5	17.2
DSD	0.6	3.0	0.2	34.7	0.9	11.8
OFMDFM	0.4	2.7	0.2	34.1	0.7	13.3
PPS	0.4	2.8	0.2	31.7	0.7	12.5
NICS Overall	0.4	2.9	0.2	33.6	0.7	13.8

Table 6.2: Average Duration and Number of Spells by Certification and Grade Level

Grade Level	Self-Certified Absences		Certified Absences		Overall	
	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)
G5+	0.2	2.3	0.1	42.5	0.2	14.5
G6	0.1	2.8	0.1	53.9	0.3	28.0
G7	0.2	2.5	0.1	38.3	0.4	15.8
DP	0.3	2.7	0.2	30.8	0.5	12.6
SO	0.4	2.8	0.2	33.5	0.6	13.6
EOI	0.4	2.9	0.2	34.2	0.7	13.3
EOII	0.5	2.9	0.2	32.5	0.8	12.1
AO	0.6	3.0	0.3	33.9	1.0	12.8
AA	0.6	2.9	0.3	30.9	1.0	11.9
Industrial	0.3	3.4	0.3	43.0	0.6	22.0
Prison Grade	0.0	3.6	0.5	29.8	0.6	27.3
NICS Overall	0.4	2.9	0.2	33.6	0.7	13.8

Appendix 6

Table 6.3: Average Duration and Number of Spells by Certification and Gender

Gender	Self-Certified Absences		Certified Absences		Overall	
	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)
Male	0.4	3.0	0.2	34.5	0.6	13.6
Female	0.5	2.8	0.3	33.0	0.9	14.1
NICS Overall	0.4	2.9	0.2	33.6	0.7	13.8

Table 6.4: Average Duration and Number of Spells by Certification and Age Group

Age Group	Self-Certified Absences		Certified Absences		Overall	
	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)	No. of Spells per Staff Year	Average Duration (Working Days)
16-24	0.6	2.7	0.2	18.7	0.9	6.7
25-34	0.7	2.9	0.3	30.5	1.0	10.3
35-44	0.4	2.9	0.3	31.1	0.7	12.8
45-54	0.3	3.0	0.2	35.8	0.6	16.9
55+	0.3	2.9	0.2	38.6	0.6	18.2
NICS Overall	0.4	2.9	0.2	33.6	0.7	13.8

SICKNESS ABSENCE IN THE NICS 2013/2014

Appendix 6

Table 6.5: Number of Absence Spells - % of Staff

Number of Absence Spells	% of Staff				
	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
0	50.1	51.8	53.7	52.3	55.3
1	31.6	31.9	30.7	32.0	30.7
2	12.6	11.8	11.2	11.4	10.3
3	4.0	3.2	3.1	3.1	2.6
4	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.6
5	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2
6+	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2

Table 6.6: Duration of Absence Spells - % of Spells

Duration of Absence Spells (Working Days)	% of Spells				
	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
1-2	33.0	31.3	31.6	29.7	30.2
3-5	37.5	36.9	36.3	37.7	37.5
6-10	8.5	8.3	8.3	8.5	7.7
11-20	6.9	7.7	7.8	8.4	7.7
More than 20	14.1	15.8	15.9	15.7	16.9

Table 6.7: Average Duration of Short-term Absence Spells - Working Days

Department	Average Duration (Working Days)				
	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
DARD	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.7	4.9
DCAL	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.6	4.3
DE	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.4	4.7
DEL	4.5	4.5	4.8	4.6	4.4
DETI	4.2	4.1	4.5	4.0	4.0
DFP	4.4	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.4
DHSSPS	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.3
DOE	4.4	4.5	4.7	4.7	4.6
DOJ	n/a	5.0	5.0	6.0	5.0
DRD	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.6	5.0
DSD	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.3	4.2
OFMDFM	4.1	4.0	4.7	3.8	4.7
PPS	n/a	5.2	4.5	4.5	4.5
NICS Overall	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.5

Green text denotes a reduction from the previous financial year

Red text denotes an increase from the previous financial year

Appendix 6

Table 6.8: Distribution of Working Days Lost

Cumulative Number of Working Days Lost	% of Staff			
	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
0	51.8	53.7	52.3	55.3
1-5	23.1	22.2	23.0	21.8
6-10	8.1	7.7	8.2	7.1
11-15	3.1	2.8	3.2	2.5
16-20	2.1	1.9	1.8	2.0
More than 20	11.8	11.7	11.6	11.4

Table 6.9: Duration of Absence in Working Days Lost

Duration of Absence (Working Days)	% of Working Days Lost			
	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
1-2	3.6	3.7	3.5	3.4
3-5	10.7	10.7	11.0	10.5
6-10	5.0	5.2	5.2	4.5
11-20	8.7	9.1	9.6	8.6
More than 20	72.0	71.3	70.7	73.0

Table 6.10: Number of Absence Spells by Department - % of Staff

Number of Absence Spells	% of Staff													
	DARD	DCAL	DE	DEL	DETI	DFP	DHSSPS	DOE	DOJ	DRD	DSD	OFMDFM	PPS	NICS Overall
0	63.3	55.6	56.3	57.1	58.4	55.2	59.9	59.5	57.7	65.0	49.1	60.2	58.4	55.3
1	27.7	29.6	30.1	30.2	29.1	29.2	28.5	29.1	30.7	26.5	32.8	28.9	30.0	30.7
2	7.4	11.4	10.0	9.3	8.5	11.4	9.1	8.4	8.9	7.0	12.7	8.6	9.0	10.3
3	1.2	2.5	3.0	2.6	2.7	2.9	1.8	2.0	1.8	1.3	3.7	1.2	1.7	2.6
4	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.9	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.3	0.8	0.7	0.5	0.6
5	0.2	0.6	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2
6+	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.2	0.2

Appendix 7
(Tables Relating to Chapter 3)
Reason for Sickness Absence

Tables Relating to Chapter 3

Table 7.1: Certification by Reason for Absence¹

Reason for Absence	% of Available Working Days Lost		
	Self-Certified	Certified	Overall
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	0.0	1.3	1.4
Asthma	0.0	0.0	0.0
Back Problems	0.0	0.2	0.3
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	0.0	0.2	0.2
Blood Disorders	0.0	0.0	0.0
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	0.0	0.0	0.0
Chest and Respiratory Problems	0.0	0.1	0.1
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	0.2	0.0	0.2
Dental and Oral Problems	0.0	0.0	0.0
Ear, Nose, Throat	0.0	0.1	0.1
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	0.0	0.0	0.0
Eye Problems	0.0	0.0	0.0
Gastrointestinal Problems	0.1	0.2	0.3
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	0.0	0.1	0.1
Headache/Migraine	0.0	0.0	0.0
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	0.0	0.2	0.2
Infectious Diseases	0.0	0.0	0.0
Injury, Fracture	0.0	0.4	0.4
Nervous System Disorders	0.0	0.1	0.1
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	0.0	0.2	0.2
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	0.0	0.2	0.2
Pregnancy Related Disorders	0.0	0.3	0.3
Skin Disorders	0.0	0.0	0.0
Substance Abuse	0.0	0.0	0.0
No Reason Specified	0.0	0.0	0.1
NICS Overall	0.6	3.7	4.6

¹ The category 'No Reason Specified' contains any absence for which the reason was 'Not Specified', 'Awaiting Reason' or missing.

SICKNESS ABSENCE IN THE NICS 2013/2014

Appendix 7

Table 7.2: % of Absence Spells by Reason for Absence¹

Reason for Absence	% of Spells				
	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	9.3	10.4	10.7	10.9	11.1
Asthma	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4
Back Problems	3.9	5.0	5.2	4.6	5.2
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	0.6	0.8	0.9	1.0	0.9
Blood Disorders	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
Chest and Respiratory Problems	4.4	5.3	5.1	5.3	4.9
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	27.4	23.0	19.8	22.7	19.6
Dental and Oral Problems	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.8
Ear, Nose, Throat	4.7	4.5	5.2	4.4	4.7
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Eye Problems	0.8	0.9	1.0	0.9	1.0
Gastrointestinal Problems	17.9	18.0	19.3	19.3	19.9
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	2.0	2.2	2.6	2.4	2.5
Headache/Migraine	3.2	2.7	2.9	2.4	2.9
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	1.1	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.5
Infectious Diseases	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.5
Injury, Fracture	4.1	5.7	5.3	5.0	5.1
Nervous System Disorders	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	n/a	1.2	3.6	4.4	4.2
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	2.5	2.9	3.3	2.9	3.0
Pregnancy Related Disorders	7.1	6.1	7.9	7.0	7.9
Skin Disorders	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
Substance Abuse	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2
No Reason Specified	6.7	5.6	2.0	1.7	1.7
NICS Overall	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

n/a: No cases recorded

¹ The category 'No Reason Specified' contains any absence for which the reason was 'Not Specified', 'Awaiting Reason' or missing.

Appendix 7

Table 7.3: % of Working Days Lost by Reason for Absence¹

Reason for Absence	% of Working Days Lost				
	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	30.5	29.8	29.0	29.8	31.3
Asthma	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Back Problems	4.7	6.3	6.5	5.6	5.9
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	3.7	3.5	4.0	4.4	4.5
Blood Disorders	1.2	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.7
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1
Chest and Respiratory Problems	3.2	3.1	3.4	3.3	2.6
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	9.3	6.3	5.3	6.2	4.9
Dental and Oral Problems	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Ear, Nose, Throat	2.4	2.1	2.5	2.1	2.4
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.7
Eye Problems	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.1
Gastrointestinal Problems	7.5	6.6	7.7	7.7	7.3
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	2.8	2.9	3.0	3.3	3.0
Headache/Migraine	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.0	0.9
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	3.0	4.0	3.5	3.8	3.6
Infectious Diseases	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4
Injury, Fracture	6.0	9.8	9.1	8.3	9.1
Nervous System Disorders	1.7	1.9	1.3	1.4	1.4
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	n/a	1.7	5.0	6.7	5.3
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	4.4	4.8	5.8	4.9	5.0
Pregnancy Related Disorders	6.8	5.6	6.9	6.4	7.3
Skin Disorders	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.5
Substance Abuse	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.3
No Reason Specified	8.3	6.2	2.1	1.5	1.3
NICS Overall	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

n/a: No cases recorded

¹ The category 'No Reason Specified' contains any absence for which the reason was 'Not Specified', 'Awaiting Reason' or missing.

Appendix 7

Table 7.4: Breakdown of Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses

Sub-reason for Absence	% of Working Days Lost		
	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
Anxiety	14.7	15.8	14.6
Depression - Not Pregnancy Related	15.9	14.8	15.6
Stress - Not Work Related	25.3	26.3	29.3
Stress - Work Related	26.0	30.8	30.8
Other ¹	4.2	3.4	3.8
No Reason Specified	13.8	8.9	5.8
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 7.5: Breakdown of Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses

Sub-reason for Absence	% of Spells		
	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
Anxiety	16.6	16.6	15.2
Depression - Not Pregnancy Related	13.1	11.4	12.8
Stress - Not Work Related	29.6	31.6	34.5
Stress - Work Related	22.6	24.0	26.3
Other ¹	4.3	3.6	4.9
No Reason Specified	13.7	12.7	6.2
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	100.0	100.0	100.0

¹ The category 'Other' contains any absence with a sub-reason that is not shown elsewhere in the analysis.

Appendix 7

Table 7.6: Average Duration by Reason for Absence

Reason for Absence	Average Duration (Working Days)			
	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	38.8	35.7	36.3	39.1
Asthma	8.2	5.8	8.0	6.5
Back Problems	17.0	16.5	16.2	15.7
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	58.9	61.0	60.2	66.6
Blood Disorders	22.7	20.6	19.3	22.5
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	5.8	7.7	4.8	6.6
Chest and Respiratory Problems	8.0	8.9	8.1	7.5
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	3.7	3.5	3.6	3.5
Dental and Oral Problems	3.4	3.7	3.7	4.4
Ear, Nose, Throat	6.2	6.4	6.5	6.9
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	20.6	15.8	22.3	25.1
Eye Problems	12.9	11.9	14.6	14.0
Gastrointestinal Problems	5.0	5.2	5.3	5.1
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	17.6	15.0	17.8	16.6
Headache/Migraine	5.7	4.7	5.3	4.4
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	35.8	32.4	36.6	34.0
Infectious Diseases	9.6	9.5	10.6	11.2
Injury, Fracture	23.2	22.5	22.0	24.8
Nervous System Disorders	35.5	26.0	29.8	33.7
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	18.8	18.5	20.1	17.3
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	22.8	23.4	22.4	23.3
Pregnancy Related Disorders	12.3	11.5	12.2	12.8
Skin Disorders	14.7	14.0	15.0	9.9
Substance Abuse	40.7	27.0	25.7	27.8
No Reason Specified	14.9	13.6	11.4	10.7

Green text denotes a reduction from the previous financial year

Red text denotes an increase from the previous financial year

Appendix 8
(Tables Relating to Chapter 4)
Long-term Sickness Absence

Tables Relating to Chapter 4

Table 8.1: Long-term Absence by Grade Level

Grade Level	Long-term Absence		
	No. of Spells per 100 Staff Years	Average Duration (Working Days)	% of Days Lost due to Long-term Absence
G5+	4.2	68.8	79.3
G6	8.6	81.9	87.3
G7	6.8	66.8	76.5
DP	7.9	56.6	69.9
SO	9.0	63.1	72.5
EOI	10.1	61.7	71.5
EOII	12.0	55.3	70.1
AO	15.7	57.4	71.2
AA	13.4	58.5	67.6
Industrial	13.0	75.8	81.2
Prison Grade	21.2	60.5	84.8
NICS Overall	12.3	59.8	73.0

Table 8.2: Long-term Absence by Gender

Gender	Long-term Absence		
	No. of Spells per 100 Staff Years	Average Duration (Working Days)	% of Days Lost due to Long-term Absence
Male	9.5	62.6	72.5
Female	15.3	57.9	73.3
NICS Overall	12.3	59.8	73.0

Table 8.3: Long-term Absence by Age Group

Age Group	Long-term Absence		
	No. of Spells per 100 Staff Years	Average Duration (Working Days)	% of Days Lost due to Long-term Absence
16-24	6.8	38.3	43.0
25-34	12.3	55.0	64.4
35-44	11.8	56.9	71.0
45-54	12.9	62.0	77.6
55+	12.2	66.7	78.9
NICS Overall	12.3	59.8	73.0

SICKNESS ABSENCE IN THE NICS 2013/2014

Appendix 8

Table 8.4: Long-term Absence by Grade Level

Grade Level	% of Days Lost due to Long-term Absence				
	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
G5+	77.1	77.2	76.4	75.2	79.3
G6	61.9	84.2	75.9	79.2	87.3
G7	72.3	70.1	76.2	73.4	76.5
DP	71.4	71.7	68.9	72.5	69.9
SO	68.0	72.1	72.6	70.2	72.5
EOI	71.3	73.7	71.3	67.5	71.5
EOII	70.4	71.6	68.6	68.5	70.1
AO	69.8	68.3	67.5	67.4	71.2
AA	68.5	70.5	70.0	69.1	67.6
Industrial	n/a	n/a	80.9	79.5	81.2
Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	82.8	83.3	84.8
NICS Overall	70.0	72.0	71.3	70.7	73.0

Table 8.5: Long-term Absence by Gender

Gender	% of Days Lost due to Long-term Absence				
	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
Male	65.4	71.5	72.0	71.0	72.5
Female	72.6	72.4	70.7	70.4	73.3
NICS Overall	70.0	72.0	71.3	70.7	73.0

Table 8.6: Long-term Absence by Age Group

Age Group	% of Days Lost due to Long-term Absence				
	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
16 - 24	56.0	54.1	53.7	54.2	43.0
25 - 34	61.5	61.0	62.4	61.7	64.4
35 - 44	70.2	72.9	69.9	70.0	71.0
45 - 54	76.3	76.6	75.2	74.2	77.6
55+	78.5	80.5	80.2	76.9	78.9
NICS Overall	70.0	72.0	71.3	70.7	73.0

Green text denotes a reduction from the previous financial year

Red text denotes an increase from the previous financial year

Appendix 8

Table 8.7: Long-term Absence by Reason for Absence¹

Reason for Absence	% of Long-term Working Days Lost				
	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	39.5	37.0	35.8	37.1	38.4
Asthma	0.4	-	-	0.1	-
Back Problems	4.6	6.5	6.6	5.8	6.0
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	5.1	4.7	5.4	5.8	5.9
Blood Disorders	1.4	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.7
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	-	-	0.0	-	-
Chest and Respiratory Problems	2.3	1.7	2.3	1.8	1.3
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	1.5	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.3
Dental and Oral Problems	-	n/a	-	-	0.1
Ear, Nose, Throat	1.2	0.9	1.3	1.1	1.3
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.7	0.8
Eye Problems	1.0	0.8	0.7	1.0	1.0
Gastrointestinal Problems	5.0	4.1	4.9	4.9	4.5
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.4	3.0
Headache/Migraine	0.7	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.5
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	3.8	4.9	4.4	4.8	4.4
Infectious Diseases	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3
Injury, Fracture	6.6	10.8	10.3	9.2	10.3
Nervous System Disorders	2.2	2.4	1.6	1.7	1.7
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	n/a	1.8	5.3	7.2	5.3
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	5.1	5.5	6.7	5.5	5.7
Pregnancy Related Disorders	6.3	5.0	5.8	5.6	6.6
Skin Disorders	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.3
Substance Abuse	0.3	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.3
No Reason Specified	8.7	6.3	2.1	1.4	1.1
NICS Overall	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Cells with small numbers of occurrences have been suppressed (-)

n/a: No cases recorded

¹ The category 'No Reason Specified' contains any absence for which the reason was 'Not Specified', 'Awaiting Reason' or missing.

SICKNESS ABSENCE IN THE NICS 2013/2014

Appendix 8

Table 8.8: % of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence by Department

Department	% of Staff with 1 or more Long-term Absence			
	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
DARD	8.6	8.0	9.4	9.5
DCAL	7.7	6.2	6.6	8.0
DE	8.1	8.8	9.2	9.3
DEL	10.5	12.4	11.2	10.4
DETI	7.8	5.9	6.9	7.0
DFP	9.3	8.6	10.0	8.0
DHSSPS	7.3	6.7	8.1	8.3
DOE	8.7	9.5	9.7	9.3
DOJ	14.2	14.4	12.1	13.6
DRD	8.3	8.3	9.0	8.9
DSD	12.7	11.2	10.8	10.9
OFMDFM	5.2	7.7	7.2	7.7
PPS	9.4	8.9	8.9	8.9
NICS Overall	10.8	10.4	10.4	10.4

Table 8.9: % of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence by Grade Level

Grade Level	% of Staff with 1 or more Long-term Absence			
	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
G5+	4.6	2.2	4.1	3.5
G6	4.3	3.0	5.7	6.6
G7	4.3	5.0	4.9	5.1
DP	6.3	6.0	5.8	5.8
SO	7.8	7.6	6.9	6.5
EOI	8.4	7.9	7.9	7.6
EOII	10.7	9.9	8.7	8.8
AO	11.9	11.2	11.7	12.0
AA	10.0	10.6	10.7	9.4
Industrial	12.1	11.0	12.3	11.7
Prison Grade	18.6	20.6	17.6	19.1
NICS Overall	10.8	10.4	10.4	10.4

Table 8.10: % of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence by Gender

Gender	% of Staff with 1 or more Long-term Absence			
	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
Male	8.9	8.7	8.7	8.6
Female	12.7	12.2	12.2	12.3
Female Adjusted*	11.3	10.6	10.8	10.7
NICS Overall	10.8	10.4	10.4	10.4

Table 8.11: % of Staff with one or more Long-term Absence by Age Group

Age Group	% of Staff with 1 or more Long-term Absence			
	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
16-24	8.8	8.2	6.3	4.2
25-34	9.7	9.8	9.7	9.9
35-44	11.1	10.1	10.1	10.0
45-54	10.9	10.7	10.7	11.6
55+	11.9	11.7	12.1	10.2
NICS Overall	10.8	10.4	10.4	10.4

Green text denotes a reduction from the previous financial year

Red text denotes an increase from the previous financial year

* Excludes absences due to Pregnancy Related Disorders.

Appendix 9
Contribution to overall Working Days Lost

SICKNESS ABSENCE IN THE NICS 2013/2014

Appendix 9

Contribution to overall Working Days Lost

The tables presented in this Appendix show the main components of absence (Department, grade level, gender, age group, reason and duration) and how these components have contributed to the overall level of absence in the NICS. It also shows how the contribution of these components has changed when compared with the previous year.

This analysis takes account of the absence level of each component and also its size in relation to the NICS. For example, a high absence level for a large group of staff such as AO makes for a larger contribution to the overall NICS absence level than a small group of staff with a higher absence level, such as Prison Grade staff.

Table 9.1: Contribution of each Department to the overall Working Days Lost per Staff Year¹

Department	No. of Days Lost per Staff Year		
	2012/2013	2013/2014	Change
DARD	1.02	1.00	-0.02
DCAL	0.09	0.09	0.00
DE	0.21	0.22	0.01
DEL	0.84	0.78	-0.06
DETI	0.13	0.13	0.00
DFP	1.29	1.16	-0.13
DHSSPS	0.19	0.20	0.01
DOE	0.91	0.92	0.01
DOJ	1.86	1.67	-0.19
DRD	0.73	0.72	-0.01
DSD	2.96	2.88	-0.08
OFMDFM	0.10	0.11	0.01
PPS	0.20	0.16	-0.04
NICS Overall	10.6	10.1	-0.51

Table 9.2: Contribution of each Grade Level to the overall Working Days Lost per Staff Year¹

Grade Level	No. of Days Lost per Staff Year		
	2012/2013	2013/2014	Change
G5+	0.04	0.04	0.00
G6	0.06	0.08	0.02
G7	0.27	0.29	0.02
DP	0.61	0.58	-0.03
SO	0.96	0.95	-0.01
EOI	1.16	1.11	-0.05
EOII	1.65	1.54	-0.11
AO	3.59	3.43	-0.16
AA	0.75	0.67	-0.08
Industrials	0.51	0.48	-0.03
Prison Grade	0.97	0.91	-0.06
NICS Overall	10.6	10.1	-0.51

¹The Change figures in this table are calculated from unrounded figures.

Appendix 9

Table 9.3: Contribution of each Gender to the overall Working Days Lost per Staff Year¹

Gender	No. of Days Lost per Staff Year		
	2012/2013	2013/2014	Change
Male	4.65	4.33	-0.32
Female	5.93	5.74	-0.19
NICS Overall	10.6	10.1	-0.51

Table 9.4: Contribution of each Age Group to the overall Working Days Lost per Staff Year¹

Age Group	No. of Days Lost per Staff Year		
	2012/2013	2013/2014	Change
16-24	0.13	0.08	-0.05
25-34	2.33	2.27	-0.06
35-44	2.58	2.42	-0.16
45-54	3.63	3.57	-0.05
55+	1.92	1.73	-0.19
NICS Overall	10.6	10.1	-0.51

Table 9.5: Contribution of each Reason for Absence to the overall Working Days Lost per Staff Year^{1,2}

Reason for Absence	No. of Days Lost per Staff Year		
	2012/2013	2013/2014	Change
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	3.16	3.16	0.00
Asthma	0.02	0.02	0.00
Back Problems	0.60	0.60	0.00
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	0.47	0.45	-0.02
Blood Disorders	0.05	0.07	0.02
Burns, Poisoning, Frostbite, Hypothermia	0.00	0.01	0.01
Chest and Respiratory Problems	0.35	0.27	-0.08
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	0.65	0.50	-0.15
Dental and Oral Problems	0.02	0.02	0.00
Ear, Nose, Throat	0.22	0.24	0.02
Endocrine/Glandular Problems	0.07	0.07	0.00
Eye Problems	0.10	0.11	0.01
Gastrointestinal Problems	0.81	0.74	-0.07
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	0.35	0.30	-0.05
Headache/Migraine	0.10	0.09	-0.01
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	0.40	0.36	-0.04
Infectious Diseases	0.04	0.04	0.00
Injury, Fracture	0.88	0.92	0.04
Nervous System Disorders	0.14	0.14	0.00
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	0.71	0.54	-0.17
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	0.52	0.50	-0.02
Pregnancy Related Disorders	0.68	0.74	0.06
Skin Disorders	0.07	0.05	-0.02
Substance Abuse	0.02	0.03	0.01
No Reason Specified	0.16	0.13	-0.03
NICS Overall	10.6	10.1	-0.51

¹ The *Change* figures in this table are calculated from unrounded figures.

² The category 'No Reason Specified' contains any absence for which the reason was 'Not Specified', 'Awaiting Reason' or missing.

SICKNESS ABSENCE IN THE NICS 2013/2014

Appendix 9

Table 9.6: Contribution of each Grade Level, within Department, to the overall Working Days Lost per Staff Year¹

Department / Grade Level		Days Lost per Staff Year			Department / Grade Level		Days Lost per Staff Year		
		2012/ 2013	2013/ 2014	Change			2012/ 2013	2013/ 2014	Change
DARD	G7+	0.05	0.07	0.02	DFP	G7+	0.09	0.09	0.00
	DP	0.03	0.05	0.02		DP	0.14	0.12	-0.02
	SO	0.17	0.16	-0.01		SO	0.15	0.13	-0.02
	EOI	0.13	0.15	0.02		EOI	0.17	0.17	0.00
	EOII	0.12	0.10	-0.02		EOII	0.17	0.16	-0.01
	AO	0.21	0.18	-0.03		AO	0.44	0.40	-0.04
	AA	0.11	0.10	-0.01		AA	0.12	0.09	-0.03
	Industrial	0.19	0.19	0.00		Industrial	0.01	0.00	-0.01
	Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a		Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a
	DARD Overall	1.02	1.00	-0.02		DFP Overall	1.29	1.16	-0.13
DCAL	G7+	0.00	0.00	0.00	DHSSPS	G7+	0.03	0.04	0.01
	DP	0.01	0.01	0.00		DP	0.05	0.04	-0.01
	SO	0.02	0.02	0.00		SO	0.03	0.05	0.02
	EOI	0.02	0.01	-0.01		EOI	0.03	0.02	-0.01
	EOII	0.01	0.01	0.00		EOII	0.01	0.02	0.01
	AO	0.02	0.01	-0.01		AO	0.02	0.02	0.00
	AA	0.01	0.01	0.00		AA	0.02	0.02	0.00
	Industrial	0.00	0.01	0.01		Industrial	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a		Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a
	DCAL Overall	0.09	0.09	0.00		DHSSPS Overall	0.19	0.20	0.01
DE	G7+	0.03	0.04	0.01	DOE	G7+	0.03	0.02	-0.01
	DP	0.02	0.03	0.01		DP	0.09	0.09	0.00
	SO	0.02	0.04	0.02		SO	0.12	0.14	0.02
	EOI	0.02	0.02	0.00		EOI	0.13	0.16	0.03
	EOII	0.03	0.02	-0.01		EOII	0.09	0.08	-0.01
	AO	0.06	0.05	-0.01		AO	0.36	0.34	-0.02
	AA	0.02	0.02	0.00		AA	0.07	0.08	0.01
	Industrial	n/a	n/a	n/a		Industrial	0.03	0.02	-0.01
	Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a		Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a
	DE Overall	0.21	0.22	0.01		DOE Overall	0.91	0.92	0.01
DEL	G7+	0.02	0.02	0.00	DOJ	G7+	0.02	0.02	0.00
	DP	0.04	0.03	-0.01		DP	0.05	0.07	0.02
	SO	0.06	0.06	0.00		SO	0.13	0.13	0.00
	EOI	0.14	0.11	-0.03		EOI	0.15	0.11	-0.04
	EOII	0.27	0.26	-0.01		EOII	0.14	0.11	-0.03
	AO	0.29	0.29	0.00		AO	0.33	0.26	-0.07
	AA	0.02	0.01	-0.01		AA	0.05	0.04	-0.01
	Industrial	n/a	n/a	n/a		Industrial	0.02	0.01	-0.01
	Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a		Prison Grade	0.97	0.91	-0.06
	DEL Overall	0.84	0.78	-0.06		DOJ Overall	1.86	1.67	-0.19
DETI	G7+	0.01	0.01	0.00	DRD	G7+	0.01	0.01	0.00
	DP	0.01	0.01	0.00		DP	0.04	0.03	-0.01
	SO	0.02	0.02	0.00		SO	0.10	0.06	-0.04
	EOI	0.02	0.02	0.00		EOI	0.12	0.10	-0.02
	EOII	0.02	0.03	0.01		EOII	0.04	0.04	0.00
	AO	0.04	0.04	0.00		AO	0.13	0.18	0.05
	AA	0.01	0.01	0.00		AA	0.03	0.05	0.02
	Industrial	n/a	n/a	n/a		Industrial	0.26	0.25	-0.01
	Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a		Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a
	DETI Overall	0.13	0.13	0.00		DRD Overall	0.73	0.72	-0.01

n/a: No cases recorded

continued over

¹The Change figures in this table are calculated from unrounded figures.

Appendix 9

Table 9.6 (cont): Contribution of each Grade Level, within Department, to the overall Working Days Lost per Staff Year¹

Department / Grade Level		Days Lost per Staff Year		
		2012/ 2013	2013/ 2014	Change
DSD	G7+	0.02	0.03	0.01
	DP	0.07	0.05	-0.02
	SO	0.12	0.12	0.00
	EOI	0.19	0.21	0.02
	EOII	0.69	0.66	-0.03
	AO	1.62	1.59	-0.03
	AA	0.25	0.21	-0.04
	Industrial	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a
	DSD Overall	2.96	2.88	-0.08
OFMDFM	G7+	0.02	0.02	0.00
	DP	0.01	0.02	0.01
	SO	0.02	0.03	0.01
	EOI	0.02	0.00	-0.02
	EOII	0.01	0.02	0.01
	AO	0.01	0.01	0.00
	AA	0.01	0.00	-0.01
	Industrial	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a
	OFMDFM Overall	0.10	0.11	0.01
PPS	G7+	0.02	0.02	0.00
	DP	0.04	0.04	0.00
	SO	0.00	0.00	0.00
	EOI	0.01	0.02	0.01
	EOII	0.04	0.02	-0.02
	AO	0.06	0.06	0.00
	AA	0.03	0.01	-0.02
	Industrial	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Prison Grade	n/a	n/a	n/a
	PPS Overall	0.20	0.16	-0.04
NICS Overall	10.6	10.1	-0.51	

Table 9.7: Contribution of Long-term and Short-term absence to the overall Working Days Lost per Staff Year¹

Duration	Days Lost per Staff Year		
	2012/ 2013	2013/ 2014	Change
Short-term absence	3.10	2.71	-0.39
Long-term absence	7.48	7.33	-0.15
NICS Overall	10.6	10.1	-0.51

n/a: No cases recorded

¹ The *Change* figures in this table are calculated from unrounded figures.

Appendix 10
Departmental analysis:
Industrial, Non-Industrial and Prison Grade

Appendix 10

Departmental analysis: Industrial, Non-Industrial and Prison Grade

Table 10.1: Departmental analysis

Department	No. of Days Lost per Staff Year		
	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
DARD	8.0	9.4	9.1
DARD Industrial	9.8	11.9	12.3
DARD Non-Industrial	7.6	9.0	8.6
DCAL	8.0	8.5	8.6
DCAL Industrial	10.1	5.1	15.3
DCAL Non-Industrial	7.8	8.8	8.1
DE	7.9	9.6	9.7
DEL	11.4	11.5	10.4
DETI	7.3	8.1	8.0
DFP	9.3	10.5	9.4
DFP Industrial	21.9	23.3	2.3
DFP Non-Industrial	9.2	10.4	9.4
DHSSPS	7.1	8.8	9.4
DOE	9.8	9.4	9.5
DOE Industrial	15.7	13.7	7.1
DOE Non-Industrial	9.7	9.3	9.5
DOJ	12.6	12.9	11.6
DOJ Industrial	24.7	17.5	8.2
DOJ Non-Industrial	9.2	10.5	9.1
DOJ Prison Grade	17.0	16.1	15.1
DRD	8.2	8.5	8.7
DRD Industrial	12.5	13.5	12.8
DRD Non-Industrial	6.9	7.1	7.4
DSD	11.1	11.4	11.1
OFMDFM	8.7	7.8	8.9
PPS	9.8	10.2	8.2
NICS Overall	10.1	10.6	10.1
Industrial Overall	12.0	12.9	12.1
Non-Industrial Overall	9.5	10.1	9.7
Prison Grade Overall	17.0	16.1	15.1

¹ Staff in AOCC, HSENI and OAGNI are included in the NICS Overall figures.

Appendix 11
List of Abbreviations

List of Abbreviations

AA	Administrative Assistant
AO	Administrative Officer
AOCC	Assembly Ombudsman Commissioner for Complaints
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
DCAL	Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
DE	Department of Education
DEL	Department for Employment and Learning
DETI	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
DFP	Department of Finance and Personnel
DHSSPS	Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
DOE	Department of the Environment
DOJ	Department of Justice
DP	Deputy Principal
DRD	Department for Regional Development
DSD	Department for Social Development
EOI	Executive Officer I
EOII	Executive Officer II
G5+	Grade 5 and above
G6	Grade 6
G7	Grade 7
G7+	Grade 7 and above
GB	Great Britain
HR	Human Resources
HSENI	Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland
NI	Northern Ireland
NIAUR	Northern Ireland Authority for Utilities Regulation
NICS	Northern Ireland Civil Service
NICTS	Northern Ireland Courts and Tribunals Service
NIPS	Northern Ireland Prison Service
NISRA	Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency
OAGNI	Office of the Attorney General Northern Ireland
OFMDFM	Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
PPS	Public Prosecution Service
SO	Staff Officer
YJA	Youth Justice Agency

NISRA analysis of sickness absence by gender and age



Assembly Section

Clare House
303 Airport Road West
BT3 9ED

Tel No: 02890 816715
email: Gearoid.cassidy@dfpni.gov.uk

Mr Shane McAteer
Clerk
Committee for Finance and Personnel
Room 419
Parliament Buildings
Stormont

Our Ref: CFP/301/11-15

09 April 2014

Dear Shane,

Analysis of Sickness Absence in the NICS by Gender and Staff Aged 55+

As part of its ongoing examination of absenteeism in the public sector and the Northern Ireland Civil Service, the Committee requested, when available, two pieces of research by NISRA which analysed sickness absence by gender and staff aged 55 and older.

The requested research is attached.

Yours sincerely,



Gearóid Cassidy

Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer

Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: by Gender



Report prepared by HR Consultancy Services (NISRA): 24th March 2014



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Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: by Gender

1. Executive Summary

This research report looks at sickness absence patterns for males and females in 2012/2013. The primary objective of the research was to provide an explanation for the higher level of sickness absence among females. In 2012/13 female staff lost 12.6 days per staff year whereas males lost 8.8 days. Despite female absence levels reducing by almost one quarter since 2007/08 they still remained 43% higher than for males. The key findings were:

1. Gender specific absences (i.e. Pregnancy Related Disorders, some Genitourinary/Gynaecological disorders and specific Cancers) were the main reason for the higher level of female sickness absence. They added just over 2 days (around 20%) to the level of female absence.
2. The proportion of females failing to return to work, following maternity leave, due to sickness absence (18.3%) has reduced considerably from the 80% figure observed back in 1999. It was, however, also observed that the shorter the period of maternity leave taken the more likely that a period of sickness absence would follow.
3. When gender specific absences were excluded from our comparative analyses, Mental Health illnesses accounted for the vast majority of the remaining difference between the male and female absence levels. More specifically, females were approximately twice as likely as males to be absent because of anxiety or non-work related stress.
4. The prevalence of short-term cold/flu or stomach problems was similar for males and females.
5. Females were found to be slightly more likely than males to take Special Leave. The same held true for both paid and unpaid Special Leave.

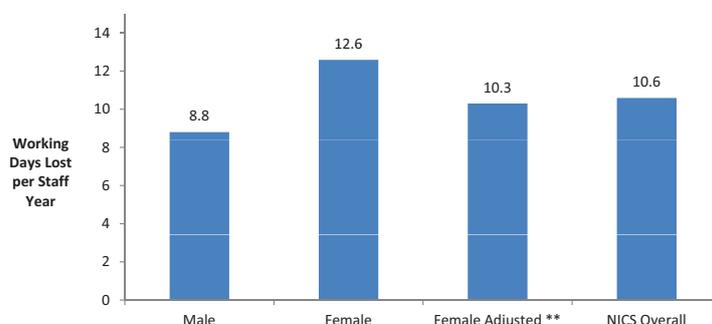
Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: by Gender

1

2. Gender

The level of sickness absence for females has reduced by almost one quarter since 2007/08. Despite this reduction, female absence levels were still 43% higher than that of males.

Average Number of Working days Lost per Staff Year by Gender



After adjustment was made for gender specific health reasons the female absence level was still 18% higher than the male level.

If Mental Health illnesses were also removed the female absence level was, however, only 4% higher (see Appendix I).

** Excluding gender specific illnesses: Pregnancy Related Disorders, some Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders and specific Cancers.
Note: The impact of adjusting the male absence level by excluding gender illnesses was very small (see Appendix I).

Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: by Gender

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3. Pregnancy Related Disorders

The largest cause of the difference (almost 40%) between male and female absence levels can, somewhat predictably, be assigned to Pregnancy Related Disorders.

Accounting for 7.0% of all absence spells and 6.4% of all working days lost in the NICS, Pregnancy Related Disorders added nearly one and a half days to the female absence level.

Post Natal Illnesses (Debility and Depression) contributed over a third of the working days lost to Pregnancy Related Disorders and tended to be long-term in nature (more than 10 working weeks on average). Approximately 40% of spells were recorded as Other Pregnancy Related Conditions.

Sub Reason	% of Working Days Lost	% of Spells	Average Duration of Absence (Working Days)
Other Pregnancy Related Conditions	27.5	40.2	8.3
Post Natal Depression	17.6	3.9	55.3
Post Natal Debility	16.7	3.9	52.5
Morning Sickness	14.0	25.6	6.7
Not Specified	10.3	13.3	9.5
Miscarriage	10.2	7.0	17.8
Other *	3.8	6.2	7.6
Pregnancy Related Disorders	100.0	100.0	12.2

* The Other category contains absences with a reason that accounted for less than 1% of the working days lost.



Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: by Gender

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4. Sickness Immediately after Maternity Leave

There has been a substantial reduction in the proportion of women who failed to return to work, immediately after maternity leave, due to sickness absence. The figure has reduce from approximately 80% in 1999 to around 18% in 2012/13.

Those staff who took less maternity leave were more likely to subsequently take sick leave.

Length of Maternity Leave	Period of Maternity Leave *	Staff not returning to work due to sickness**		Average Duration of Absence (Working Days)
		No. of Staff	%	
Less than 6 months	87	46	52.9%	65.1
6 months to less than 9 months	285	50	17.5%	46.1
9 months and greater	262	20	7.6%	59.5
NICS Overall	634	116	18.3%	55.9

* Maternity leave ended within the financial year.

** Staff with an absence spell, greater than 5 working days, recorded within 3 days of returning from maternity leave.

Note: For Information by Department see Appendix II.

52% of the staff whose maternity leave ended in 2012/13 had no subsequent spell of sickness absence in that financial year.



Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: by Gender

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4. Sickness Immediately after Maternity Leave

Absences immediately after Maternity Leave tended to be long-term, lasting around 11 working weeks. Pregnancy related illnesses accounted for the vast majority (67.2%) of these absences.

Reason for Absence	Number of Staff *	Average Duration of Absence (Working Days)
Pregnancy Related Disorders	78	58.0
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	21	44.8
Other	17	60.1
NICS Overall	116	55.9

* Number of staff with an absence spell, greater than 5 working days, recorded within 3 days of returning from maternity leave.

Staff who took longer Maternity Leave were less likely to fail to return to work due to a Pregnancy Related Disorder.

Reason for Absence	Length of Maternity Leave					
	Less than 6 months		6 months to less than 9 months		9 months and greater	
	No. of Staff *	%	No. of Staff *	%	No. of Staff *	%
Pregnancy Related Disorders	37	80.4	31	62.0	10	50.0
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	4	8.7	12	24.0	5	25.0
Other	5	10.9	7	14.0	5	25.0
NICS Overall	46	100.0	50	100.0	20	100.0

* Number of staff with an absence spell, greater than 5 working days, recorded within 3 days of returning from maternity leave.

Long-term (more than 20 working days) absences immediately following Maternity Leave only accounted for 5% of all female long-term absences.

Gender specific long-term absences accounted for 18.6% of female long-term absences but only 1.4% for males.



Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: by Gender

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5. Prevalence of Sickness Absence by Reason

Including gender specific reasons, females were 1.3 times more likely to have a spell of sickness absence than males.

Reason	No. of Spells per 100 Staff		Proportional Difference
	Male	Female	
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	0.6	2.8	4.5
Ear, Nose, Throat	2.2	4.0	1.8
Nervous System Disorders	0.3	0.5	1.7
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	6.2	9.3	1.5
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	1.8	2.3	1.3
Other *	4.0	5.0	1.3
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	2.8	3.4	1.2
Chest and Respiratory Problems	3.5	4.1	1.2
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	0.6	0.7	1.1
Gastrointestinal Problems	13.5	13.8	1.0
No Reason Specified	1.2	1.2	1.0
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	16.8	15.2	1.1
Back Problems	3.6	2.9	1.2
Injury, Fracture	4.0	3.1	1.3
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	1.2	0.7	1.7
Total	62.3	79.1	1.3

* The category 'Other' contains any absences with a reason that accounted for less than 1% of the total working days lost.

Higher female prevalence

Higher male prevalence

While females were four and a half times as likely as males to have a Genitourinary/ Gynaecological absence, they also had nearly twice the prevalence of absences recorded as Ear, Nose and Throat or Nervous System Disorders.

Males, on the other hand, had a higher prevalence of heart problems.

The prevalence of short-term cold/flu or stomach problems was similar for males and females.



Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: by Gender

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6. Mental Health Illnesses

Overall, Mental Health illnesses account for the largest proportion of working days lost in the NICS.

Within this area, females had a substantially higher number of spells - they were around twice as likely as males to be absent due to anxiety or non-work related stress.

The prevalence of work related stress was, however, similar for males and females.

Sub Reason	No. of Spells per 100 Staff		Proportional Difference
	Male	Female	
Stress - Not Work Related	1.6	3.3	2.1
Anxiety	0.9	1.7	1.8
Not Specified	0.3	0.6	1.8
Other *	0.6	1.0	1.7
Stress - Work Related	1.9	1.9	1.0
Depression - Not Pregnancy Related	0.9	0.9	1.0
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	6.2	9.3	1.5

* The category 'Other' contains any absences with a reason that accounted for less than 1% of the Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses working days.

Higher female prevalence Higher male prevalence



Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: by Gender

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7. Duration of Sickness Absence by Reason

Reason	Average Duration of Absence (Working Days)		Proportional Difference
	Male	Female	
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	50.7	68.8	1.4
Nervous System Disorders	24.8	32.7	1.3
No Reason Specified	10.7	12.1	1.1
Cold, Cough, Flu, Influenza	3.6	3.6	1.0
Back Problems	16.3	16.0	1.0
Injury, Fracture	22.1	21.8	1.0
Other *	10.1	9.7	1.0
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	18.5	17.7	1.0
Gastrointestinal Problems	5.4	5.1	1.1
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	23.2	21.7	1.1
Ear, Nose, Throat	6.8	6.3	1.1
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	38.5	34.8	1.1
Other Known Causes - Not Elsewhere Classified	21.4	19.0	1.1
Chest and Respiratory Problems	8.9	7.5	1.2
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	41.7	27.9	1.5
Total	13.2	13.4	1.0

* The category 'Other' contains any absences with a reason that accounted for less than 1% of total working days lost.

Higher average female duration Higher average male duration

The longest duration for absence was associated with cancer. Females with cancer were absent for more than three and a half working weeks longer than males on average. This difference may well reflect the different types of cancers and/or treatment processes.

In contrast, for heart problems males were off for 50%, nearly 3 working weeks, longer than females on average.

Most other illnesses, including cold/flu and stomach problems had a similar duration for males and females.

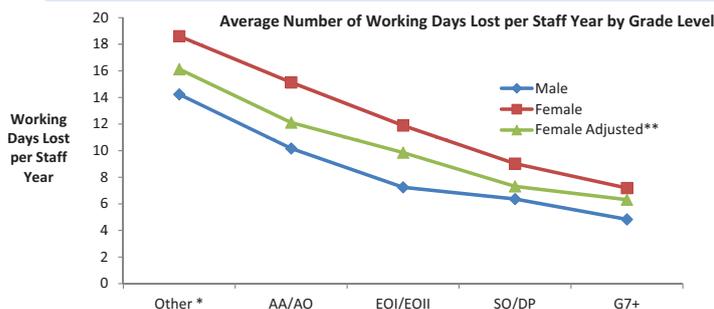


Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: by Gender

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8. Grade

Absence levels were higher for females at all grades; they were still higher when adjustment was made for gender specific illnesses.



The largest proportional difference was observed for EOI/EOII grades where the female adjusted absence level was 38% higher than males.

* Other category: Industrial and Prison Grade Staff.
 ** Excluding gender specific illnesses.

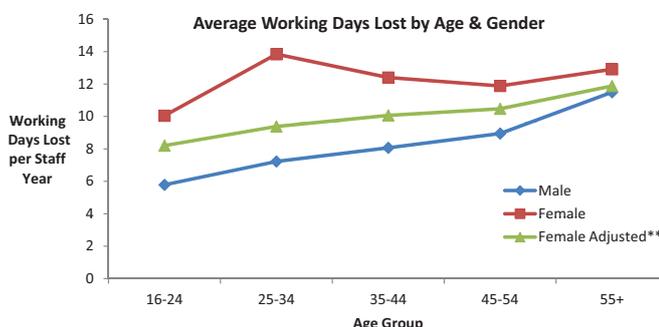
Female absence levels follow the same general trend as male absence levels: decreasing as grade increases. Since there are proportionately more females at lower grades this contributes to a higher overall female absence level.



Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: by Gender

9. Age

Female absence levels peaked for the 25-34 age group. This peak was due to Pregnancy Related Disorders.



Once the gender specific absence adjustment was made, the difference between male/female absence levels decreased as age increased.

Female absence levels were about 1.4 times higher than males at the 16-24 age group. This steadily decreased to around 1.1 times that of males at the 55+ age group.

Further analysis by grade level can be found in Appendix III.

** Excluding gender specific illnesses.



Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: by Gender

10. Special Leave

Females were found to be slightly more likely than males to take Special Leave. The same held true for both paid and unpaid Special Leave.

	No. of Staff	Special Leave Days	
		No. of Staff	%
Male	14,690	3,251	22.1
Female	14,594	4,219	28.9
NICS Overall	29,284	7,470	25.5



Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: by Gender

11. Appendix I

Working Days Lost per Staff Year by Gender

	Staff Years	Working Days Lost				Working Days Lost per Staff Year	
		All Absences	Gender Specific Absences			All Absences	Adjusted **
			Pregnancy Related Disorders	Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders *	Gender Specific Cancers		
Male	13,746.2	120,983.1	0.0	651.6	763.0	8.8	8.7
Female	12,249.2	154,187.2	17,642.5	6,335.9	4,831.9	12.6	10.3
NICS Overall	25,995.4	275,170.3	17,642.5	6,987.4	5,594.9	10.6	9.4

* Gender specific Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders and those recorded as 'Not Specified' or 'Other Genitourinary or Gynaecological Disorders'.
 ** Excluding Gender Specific Absences.

	Staff Years	Working Days Lost			Working Days Lost per Staff Year		
		All Absences	Gender Specific *	Mental Health	All Absences	Adjusted (Gender Specific)	Adjusted (Gender Specific/Mental Health)
Male	13,746.2	120,983.1	1,414.5	35,016.4	8.8	8.7	6.1
Female	12,249.2	154,187.2	28,810.3	47,090.6	12.6	10.3	6.3
NICS Overall	25,995.4	275,170.3	30,224.8	82,107.0	10.6	9.4	6.2

* Pregnancy Related Disorders, gender specific Cancers, gender specific Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders and those recorded as 'Not Specified' or 'Other Genitourinary or Gynaecological Disorders'.



Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: by Gender

11. Appendix II

Sickness Immediately after Maternity Leave by Department.

Department	Periods of Maternity Leave *	Staff not returning to work due to sickness**		Average Duration of Absence (Working Days)
		No. of Staff	%	
DARD	55	8	14.5	56.4
DCAL	-	-	-	-
DE	-	-	-	-
DEL	51	10	19.6	65.1
DETI	13	3	23.1	51.8
DFP	88	15	17.0	45.9
DHSSPS	-	-	-	-
DOE	82	17	20.7	50.0
DOJ	68	11	16.2	56.6
DRD	24	4	16.7	69.3
DSD	186	42	22.6	58.9
OFMDFM	-	-	-	-
PPS	-	-	-	-
Other ***	-	-	-	-
NICS Overall	634	116	18.3	55.9

- Suppressed due to very small numbers.

* Maternity leave ended within the financial year.
 ** Staff with an absence spell, greater than 5 working days, recorded within 3 days of returning from maternity leave.
 *** Staff in AOCC, OAGNI and HSENI.

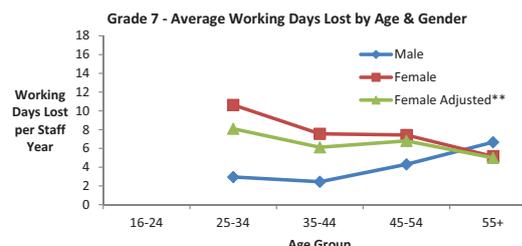
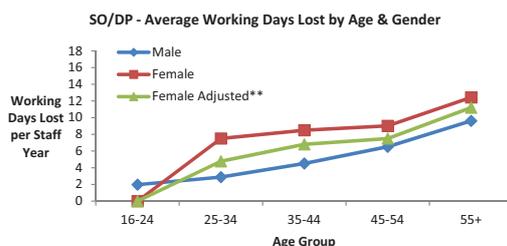
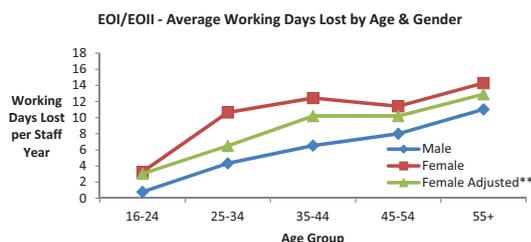
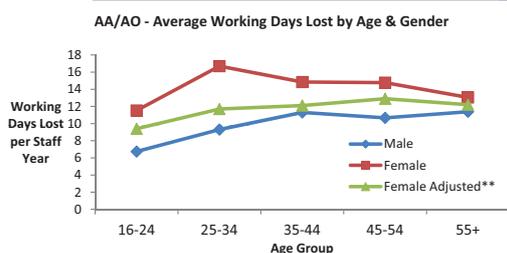
Care should be taken when drawing inferences from this table due to the small numbers of staff, in each Department, with maternity leave ending within the financial year.



Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: by Gender

11. Appendix III

Average Working Days Lost by Age for different Grade Levels



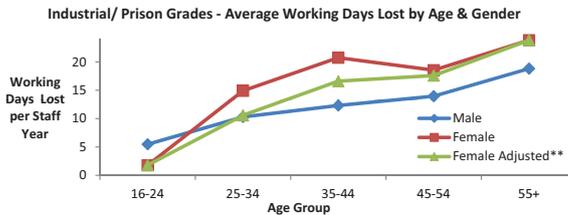
** Excluding gender specific illnesses.



Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: by Gender

11. Appendix III

Average Working Days Lost by Age for different Grade Levels



** Excluding gender specific illnesses.



Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: staff aged 55+



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Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: staff aged 55+

1. Executive Summary

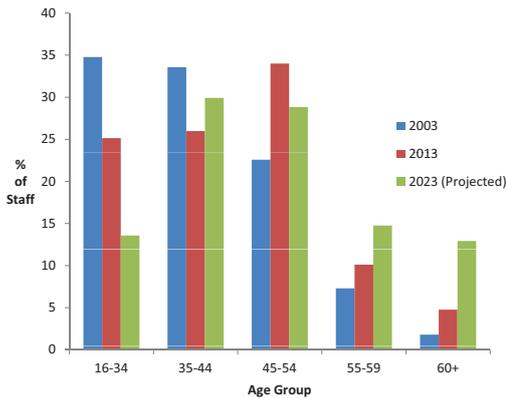
This report looks at sickness absence patterns for 2012/2013 by age group, with a focus on staff aged 55+, who are a growing part of the NICS workforce. The key findings were:

1. The age profile of the NICS is changing and the pace of change is increasing. There are fewer staff in the youngest age group and the number of staff in the oldest age group is growing. Projections indicate that these changes would result in a modest increase in the level of absence.
2. While the overall level of absence is typically highest for staff aged 55+, this needs to be treated with caution. There is a complex relationship between age and sickness absence. To say that absence simply increases with age is an oversimplification – there are large groups of staff in the NICS for whom this is not the case. For example, among AA/AOs, the largest group of staff in the NICS, absence levels are lowest among those aged 55+.
3. Older staff tend to have fewer absences, but when they are sick the illnesses tend to be of longer duration.
4. Older staff tend to be absent for different reasons than their younger counterparts. They have a higher propensity to be sick for reasons that are more likely to be long term in nature, such as cancers and heart problems. In contrast, younger staff are twice as likely as older staff to be absent for cold/flu or stomach problems.
5. Engaged staff have lower levels of absence. Employee engagement tends to increase with age, most noticeably at AA/AO. This would fit in with older staff having fewer short-term spells of absence.
6. In some groups of staff, most notably in grades EOII and above and in males, the level of absence reduces noticeably in the 60+ age group. The most likely explanation of this finding is that staff with significant health problems in this age group would have left the service, leaving those in better health in employment.

Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: staff aged 55+

2. The changing age profile of the NICS

Change in % of staff in each Age Group (2003 to 2023)

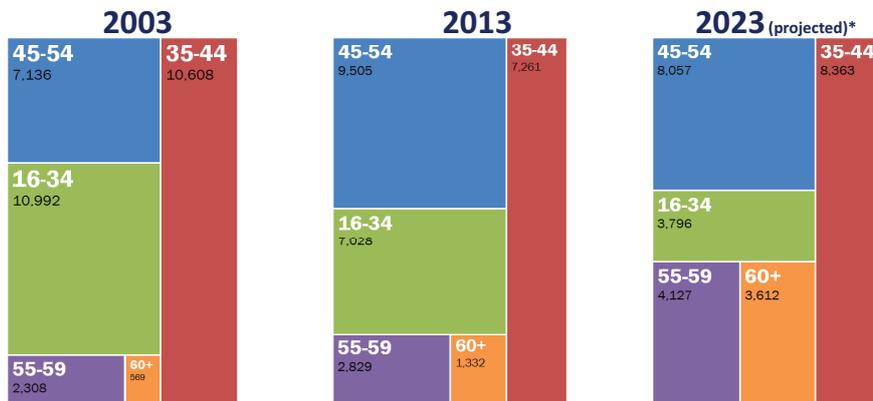


The age profile of the NICS is changing - there are fewer younger and more older staff. Moreover, the pace of change is accelerating over time.

Projections based on the 2013 figures suggest that the number of staff aged 16-34 will almost halve, while those aged 60+ will nearly triple. By 2023 the proportion of staff in the youngest and oldest age groups is likely to be similar.



2. The changing age profile of the NICS



What impact will the change in the NICS age profile have on absence levels?

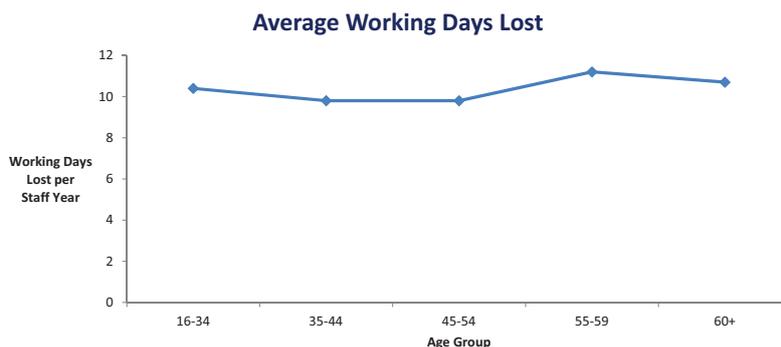
While the proportion of staff aged 55+ is likely to treble over the next decade, this substantial change would, all else being equal, be associated with a modest increase of 0.3 of a day in the overall absence level.

* It is assumed that the total number of staff is constant over the period 2013 to 2023.



3. Age

Older staff typically have higher levels of sickness absence, but this is not true for all groups of staff. Eg. AA/AOs.

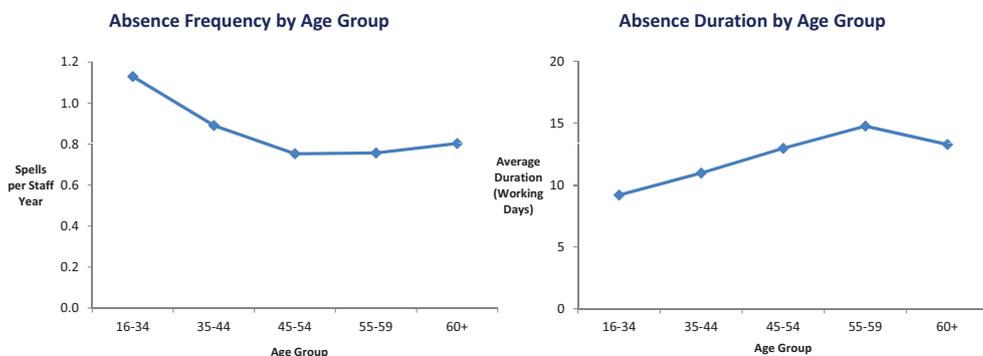


For simplification of analysis/presentation the information on this page, and in the rest of this report, is based on 2012/2013 information and excludes Industrial and Prison Grade Staff.



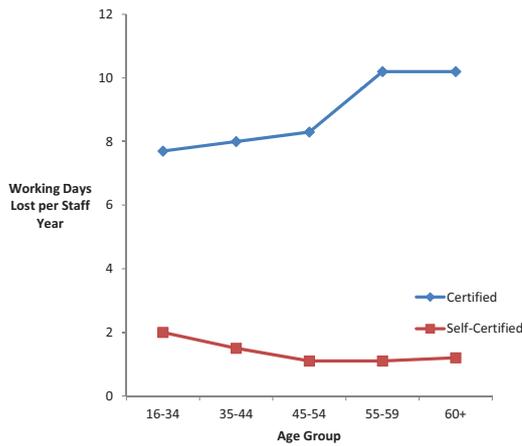
4. Frequency & duration of absence

Older staff tend to have fewer absences, but when they are sick the illnesses tend to be of longer duration.



5. Absence certification

Working Days Lost by Certification



While older staff have the highest level of certified absences, younger staff have the highest level of self-certified absences.

Younger staff are twice as likely as older staff to be absent for cold/flu or stomach problems.



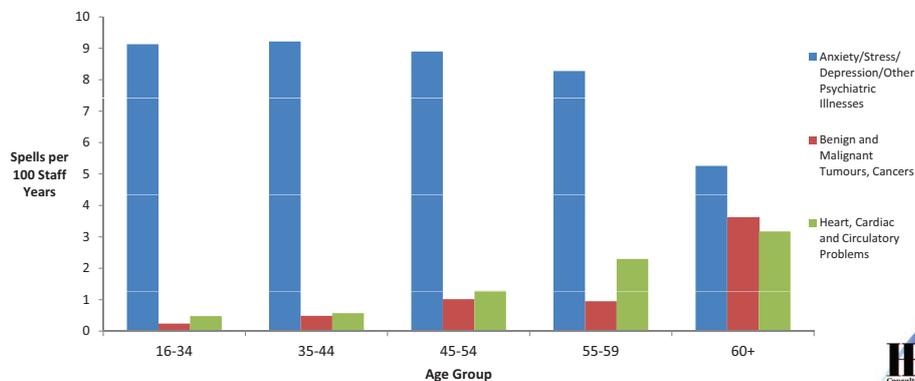
Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: staff aged 55+

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6. Absence reason - frequency

In 2012/13 the longest durations of absence were for *Cancers* (60.2 days), *Heart Problems* (36.6 days) and *Psychiatric/Psychological Illnesses (including Stress)* (36.3 days). With the notable exception of *Psychiatric/Psychological Illnesses* the incidence of these was highest in the 55+ age group.

Absence Frequency by Reason



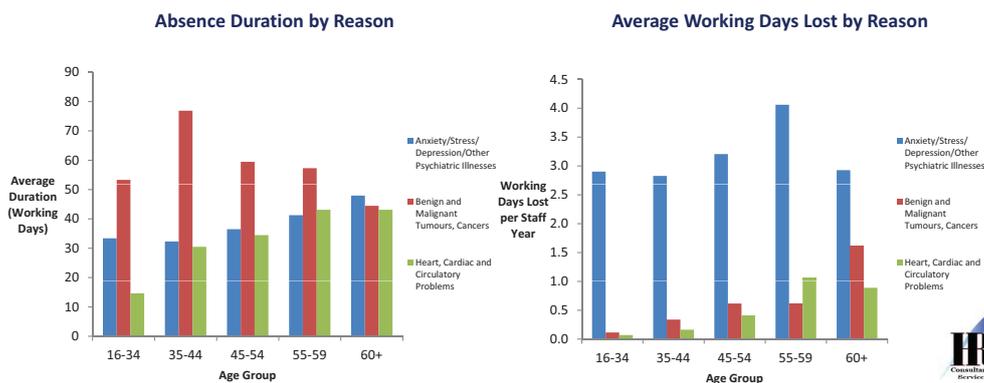
Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: staff aged 55+

7

7. Absence reason - duration and days lost

The average absence duration for *Heart and Psychiatric/Psychological* related illnesses increased with age, whereas the duration for *Cancers* was highest for staff aged 35-44 and lowest for those aged 60+.

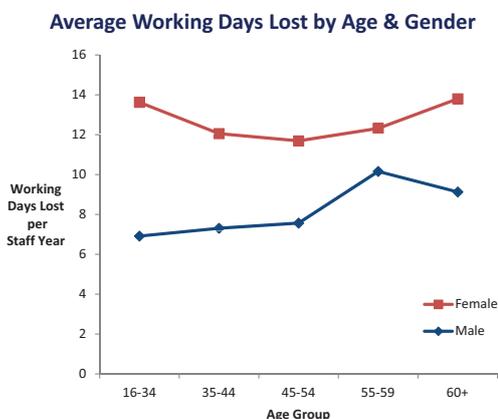
The most days lost due to *Heart and Psychiatric/Psychological* related illnesses were for staff aged 55-59. Staff aged 60+ lost significantly more days per staff year to *Cancers* than any other age group.



Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: staff aged 55+ 8

8. Age & gender

The relationship between age and absence is different for men and women, particularly those aged 55+.



Females:
For females the level of absence is similar for the youngest and oldest age groups and lower for the age groups in between. Had *Pregnancy Related Disorders* been excluded, however, the level of absence would have increased with each successive age group (see Appendix).

Males:
The pattern for males is different with the average number of days lost per staff year increasing with each successive age group, peaking at 55-59, before dropping considerably for those aged 60+.

Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: staff aged 55+ 9

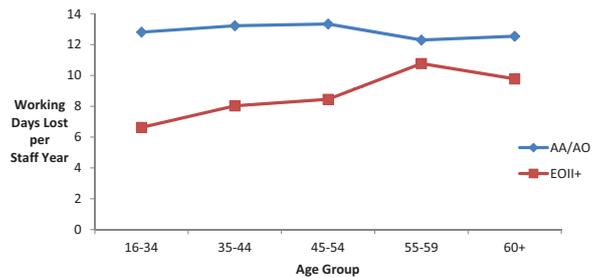
9. Age & grade

The pattern of absence for age varies across grades.

For staff at EOII and above the level of absence follows a similar pattern to that shown for Males, increasing with each successive age group, peaking at 55-59, before decreasing notably for those aged 60+.

Staff at AA/AO, however, do not conform to this pattern. In fact, for this group of staff, the level of absence is lowest for those aged 55-59 and 60+. Had *Pregnancy Related Disorders* been excluded the pattern would change again with the level of absence for staff aged less than 45 years being lower than for those aged 55+ (see Appendix).

Average Working Days Lost by Age and Grade Level



Presentational note:

* Staff at EOII to G5+ have been grouped together, as have staff at AA/AO grades. These grades displayed a similar pattern with regards to sickness absence and age.

For information:

*AA/AO staff contributed approximately one third to the NICS workforce in 2012/2013. Staff at EOII+ formed over half (the remainder were Industrial staff and Prison Grade staff that have been excluded from this analysis).

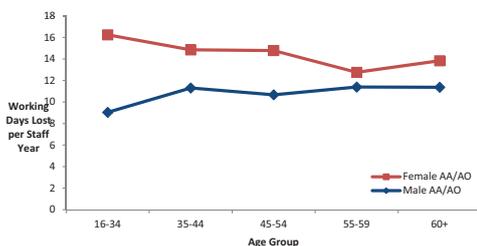


Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: staff aged 55+

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10. Age, grade & gender

AA/AO - Average working days lost by Age & Gender

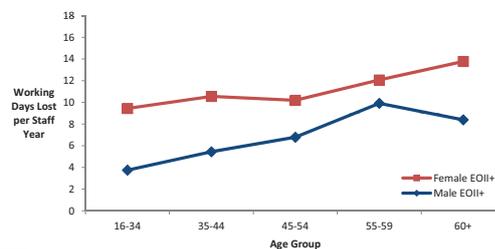


AA/AO:

For female AA/AO staff, the level of absence decreases, to a low for those aged 55-59, before increasing slightly for those aged 60+. This contrasts markedly with female staff at grades EOII and above. The pattern is again different when *Pregnancy Related Disorders* are excluded (see Appendix).

For male AA/AOs, absence is lowest for the youngest age group and then is fairly level at every other age group.

EOII+ - Average Working Days Lost by Age & Gender



EOII+:

For males, the average number of days lost increases with each successive age group before dropping for those aged 60+, whereas for females the level of absence generally increases with each successive age group.

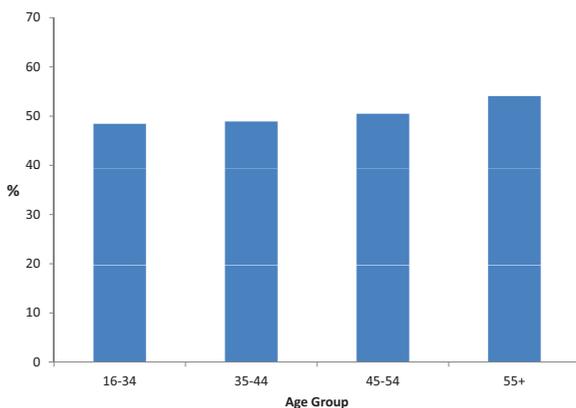


Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: staff aged 55+

11

11. Employee engagement

Employee Engagement (%) by Age Group



Older staff have been shown to have a higher level of employee engagement than their younger counterparts.

Analysis has shown that staff who are more engaged in their job tend to have a lower level of absence. This is contrary to the image of older staff having a higher level of absence, but fits with the fact that older staff have fewer short-term absences.

This discrepancy can be explained by older staff being more prone to absences that can keep them off work for longer periods such as heart problems and cancers.

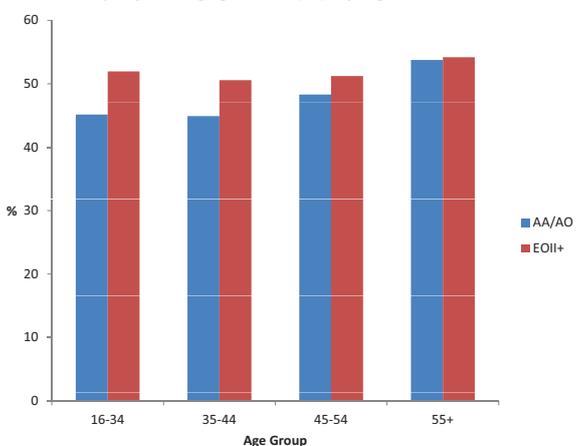


Note: It has not been possible to split the 55+ age groups for this analysis.

Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: staff aged 55+

11. Employee engagement

Employee Engagement (%) by Age and Grade



Even when looked at by grade, staff aged 55+ have the highest levels of employee engagement.

The contrast with the levels of engagement among younger staff is most noticeable for the AA/AO grades.

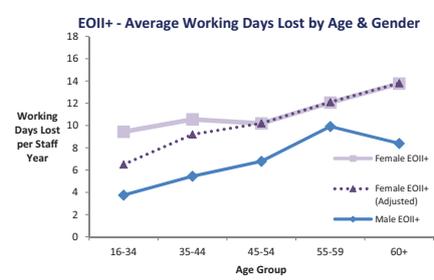
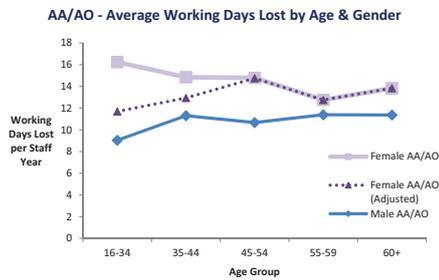
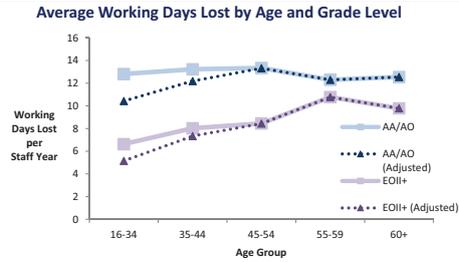
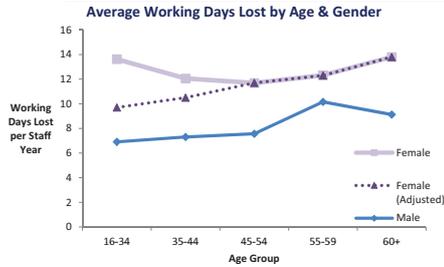


Note: It has not been possible to split the 55+ age groups for this analysis.

Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: staff aged 55+

12. Appendix

These graphs include figures that were adjusted to exclude Pregnancy Related Disorders.



Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: staff aged 55+

12. Appendix

Average Working Days Lost by Age and Department - AA/AO

Department	Age Group				
	16-34	35-44	45-54	55-59	60+
DARD	14.1	17.9	12.0	14.5	17.0
DCAL	12.6	12.9	18.2	2.3	0.0
DE	12.6	14.9	12.0	20.8	4.9
DEL	11.8	10.3	17.1	13.7	4.3
DETI	16.1	4.1	10.8	18.4	2.1
DFP	13.0	15.2	16.2	13.0	16.4
DHSSPS	8.9	16.2	12.0	4.3	4.1
DOE	11.8	11.5	12.9	9.9	10.9
DOJ	8.5	12.7	15.1	12.9	19.6
DRD	8.9	7.3	7.7	7.4	9.8
DSD	14.1	14.6	13.5	12.5	13.2
OFMDFM	6.5	7.2	5.7	21.7	1.5
PPS	12.8	7.8	8.2	25.1	1.9
Overall	12.8	13.2	13.3	12.3	12.5

Average Working Days Lost by Age and Department - EOII+

Department	Age Group				
	16-34	35-44	45-54	55-59	60+
DARD	4.7	6.4	7.8	9.4	7.9
DCAL	3.9	3.9	11.3	4.9	12.1
DE	4.3	7.0	9.3	6.2	12.0
DEL	6.4	13.0	10.2	12.5	11.1
DETI	9.3	8.8	5.0	6.6	2.7
DFP	7.1	7.1	9.2	12.1	8.4
DHSSPS	2.1	5.5	8.6	12.7	12.0
DOE	7.1	6.6	8.2	8.7	11.0
DOJ	6.9	9.1	8.9	14.2	10.6
DRD	5.1	6.6	5.4	8.9	11.0
DSD	7.4	8.4	8.7	12.3	9.9
OFMDFM	6.8	4.6	8.2	9.4	21.2
PPS	6.1	13.7	7.0	10.3	5.0
Overall	6.6	8.0	8.4	10.8	9.8

Care should be taken when drawing inferences from these tables due to the small staff numbers in some age groups.



Analysis of sickness absence in the NICS: staff aged 55+

DEMOS Report “Flexible work benefits business and society, but its future hangs in the balance...” July 2011

“Flexible work benefits
business and society,
but its future hangs in
the balance...”

REINVENTING THE WORKPLACE

Dan Leighton
Thomas Gregory

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First published in 2011
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*Magdalen House, 136 Tooley Street,
London, SE1 2TU, UK*

ISBN 978 1 906693 74 9
Series design by modernactivity
Typeset by Chat Noir Design, Charente
Printed by Lecturis, Eindhoven

Set in Gotham Rounded
and Baskerville 10
Cover paper: Flora Gardenia
Text paper: Munken Premium White



REINVENTING THE WORKPLACE

Dan Leighton
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Acknowledgements

First and foremost we would like to thank John Lewis Partnership for generously funding this research, in particular Charlotte Cool and Neil Spring. Others at John Lewis, particularly Peter Meyler and Petra McDowell Finn provided invaluable support in setting up research interviews and focus groups with 70 other John Lewis, Peter Jones and Waitrose members of staff. We'd also like to thank all the registrars and partners that gave up their lunch hours to participate in focus groups in Peter Jones, Sloane Square and the John Lewis stores in Newcastle and Kingston.

Regarding our field work we would like to extend our most sincere thanks to everyone who take part in research interviews: Emma Stewart and staff at Women Like Us, Sarah Jackson at Working Families, Andrew Carruthers at the Family and Parenting Institute, Professor George Bain, Katie O'Donovan at Mumsnet, Marie-Claude Hemming at the Federation of Small Businesses, Philippa Newis at Gingerbread, Guy Bailey at the CBI, Tom Hadley at the Recruitment and Employment Confederation and Katherine Wilson at Carers UK.

At Demos we'd like to thank Max Wind-Cowie for his support throughout the project and Claudia Wood and Julia Margo for commenting on and reviewing draft reports. Thanks to Bethan Hacche, Luqman Meedin and Susanna Pettigrew for their excellent research support over the course of the project. Thank you to Sarah Kennedy, Ralph Scott and Beatrice Karol Burks for their expert co-ordination of the launch, media and publication of this report.

As always, all errors or omissions are our own.

Dan Leighton
Thomas Gregory
July 2011

Foreword: Flexible working is essential for growth

It is in difficult economic times that government and business should make the boldest decisions. We need to keep the long-term firmly in view and that is not always easy. Political leaders of all parties are calling for a culture of greater flexibility in the workplace yet there is understandable nervousness about the pace and direction of change. So this report is timely, and if it does not hold all the answers, it should serve to harden our resolve. If we adapt and learn now when times are tough we will be in a stronger position to grow in the future. It is clear that greater flexibility will be integral to the workplace of the future.

The global landscape of work is changing dramatically. As our economies grow, businesses will need to be agile and responsive to new demands from consumers and employees. It is inevitable. Our 24/7 economy demands flexibility.

That is why adaptable labour markets are essential. They help to ensure that we can respond to the ups and downs of the economic cycle. Most recently, flexible working helped to keep people in employment during the recession. Car manufacturers like Toyota and Jaguar Land Rover were able to maintain production and protect jobs by reducing working hours.

At the John Lewis Partnership we are already voluntarily implementing many of the recommendations in this report – not because the Government wants us to, but because flexible working brings many tangible benefits. It allows us to recognise our employees as individuals as our business grows, and it enables us to retain our best talent – the experienced mother returning from maternity leave, the mature student gaining extra qualifications, the home carer who needs some part-time income. We offer various flexible arrangements – condensed weeks (which allow partners to work four long days instead of five),

Foreword

time banking and role changes that fit with preferred shift patterns.

But flexible working is a two-way street. As employers place increasing demands on their employees' time – in our case, asking for more weekend and evening hours – we should offer greater flexibility in return. Even for the most dedicated employees, we are only one part of their busy lives. If we make it easier for them, they will be more engaged and productive when they are at work.

Most of us agree with this principle and are looking at ways of modernising workplaces. We know instinctively that a whole new world of virtual working is opening up before us, and with that comes new opportunities.

But legislation around these issues has become a divisive sticking point and it shouldn't be. By its very nature, flexible working cannot be imposed purely from above. It requires commitment and flexible thinking. We believe that flexible working can be delivered most effectively by businesses, in their own way, without the heavy hand of additional new regulation.

Businesses that get this right are putting themselves at a significant competitive advantage over those that do not. To maintain and increase productivity, employees must see the link between their contribution and the success of the business as it grows. They will have deployed the advantages of flexible working in their plans, attracted a keen and equipped workforce, retained the best talent and renewed the psychological contract with their employees.

Charlie Mayfield
John Lewis Partnership
July 2011

Executive summary

This report, which is based on new polling of employees and employers as well as extensive focus groups and structured interviews with managers and employees in ‘vanguard’ businesses, makes the case for safeguarding and extending flexible working practices. This is particularly important in a sluggish economic climate where employment legislation has been cast as a potential barrier to job creation and growth.

The core message is that the Government should be resolute in implementing a maximal rather than a minimal framework for entrenching and extending flexible working practices. These are critical in ensuring that a framework for two-way dialogue between the needs of employers and employees can take place. Yet while the legislation continues to be necessary it will never be sufficient; the ethos and culture of organisations will ultimately determine whether flexible working entitlements can work to the mutual benefit of employers and employees.

It would be short sighted to sacrifice flexible working rights on the altar of short-term economic recovery, particularly because they can be complementary, in that greater availability of flexible working allows for a more inclusive labour market, expanding the size of the labour force and increasing output. Yet it would also betray a dangerously narrow interpretation of the responsibilities employers owe toward not just their employees but also society at large. By learning from vanguard employers, society can forge a settlement on working practices that enshrines flexibility on both sides – employer and employee – in order to reap business and social benefits. Flexibility in the workplace needs to be based on the principles of reciprocity and mutual responsibility between employers and employees in order to reach a mutual accommodation.

Executive summary

Our survey has given us the ability to identify certain barriers, or ‘risk factors’, to flexibility such as firm size and sector. This report draws on our polling, comparing it with other datasets, to construct an image of the modern British workplace and to analyse how risk factors are distributed across the economy. We used varying statistical methodology including regression analysis. Alongside this we draw on structured interviews and focus groups by two major employers, BT and John Lewis Partnership, and a small firm at the vanguard of flexible working, Women Like Us. This allows us to identify the areas of ‘low flexibility’ that policy makers need to address.

The results of our research show that flexible working has become entrenched in the working lives of most people – a substantial achievement for flexible working advocates:

- Today, 91 per cent of employers offer at least one form of flexible working arrangement to their employees.
- Almost 60 per cent of employees stated they currently used a form of flexible working and 83 per cent of requests for flexible working are approved.

Yet our results also present some pessimistic predictions for future expansion:

- 81 per cent of employers did not expect that their organisation would extend flexible working in the next two years.
- Of the firms that currently do not offer any form of flexible working arrangement, 92 per cent said they were unlikely to start offering it in the next two years.
- Half of firms with fewer than 50 employees said they granted less than 1 in 4 flexible working requests.

Compounding the problem is lack of knowledge: 60 per cent of employees did not know who was covered by the legal right to request. Flexible working has also not been able to address many gender-based inequalities. Belying the narrative of the ‘new man’, men were less than half as likely to use flexible working in order to ‘look after children’ than women and 86 per

cent of men said they would not use a longer period of paternity leave if it was offered to them.

It is with the current political context – and the principles of reciprocity and mutual responsibility – in mind that this report arrives at a series of recommendations to Government and employers. It is not sufficient, nor is it likely to be wholly effective, simply to legislate on the bare minimum that employers must do. We must also provide employers with the guidance to make flexibility work for their employees, give recognition and support when they get it right, and join the vanguard and the correct infrastructure to ensure that flexibility is not burdensome for business.

Our recommendations aim to advance a maximal agenda of workplace flexibility, to make flexible working practices a more prominent indicator of corporate social responsibility and to enable men and women to share more equally in their caring and social obligations. Specifically they will:

- extend and normalise flexible working to all employees by making the right to request universal
- enhance shared responsibility between employers and employees through a code of practice
- give recognition to vanguard employers, target support to those struggling to implement flexible working practices and monitor progress to ‘name and shame’ recalcitrant employers
- make shared parental leave affordable for both partners and employers through a contributory ‘carers account’
- extend and formalise carers’ leave
- enable all workers, regardless of status, role or sector, to take up volunteering.

1 Introduction: flexible working in a cold climate

The way Britain works is at a critical juncture. This is particularly true of our approach to flexible working. In the midst of a faltering recovery from a traumatic global economic crisis, the Government's number one priority is job creation and economic growth. It is undertaking a significant programme of reform to employment law to 'deliver growth by breaking down barriers, boosting opportunities and creating the right conditions for businesses to start up and thrive'.¹ Employers' associations have claimed further extensions of flexible working rights are one such barrier to job creation. For example, the chief executive of the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC), David Frost, has argued that 'at a time when the government is looking to reduce unemployment, making further changes to employment legislation is absurd'.²

The narrative from some sections of the business community is that the centrepieces of a more progressive workforce – flexible working in particular – have reached their limits and may even be the luxuries of a booming economy that cannot be sustained as we seek to recover from recession.

The Government itself has sent mixed signals on its intentions for the future of flexible working. It has outlined the importance of flexible working to shared parenting and family life, while at the same time scrapping aspects of flexible working legislation to demonstrate a commitment to getting rid of red tape for employers. Flexible working legislation is variously framed as a social imperative and unnecessary hindrance on business performance.

Having initially promised to extend the right to request flexible working to all in the coalition agreement, the Government appeared to retreat on this by delaying this measure and at the same time rowing back on a promised extension to

Introduction: flexible working in a cold climate

parents of children under 18 rather than 17, and removing the obligation to consider existing requests for small businesses. Yet it signalled a return to its original intentions in May 2011, with a publication following a consultation on the modern workplace, which proposes the extension of the right to request flexible working to all employees, together with additional entitlements to maternity and paternity leave. Will the pendulum once again swing in the opposite direction if there is overwhelming opposition from employers in response to the consultation? This report argues that this would be both economically short-sighted and socially irresponsible.

Using immediate economic prospects to frame the viability of extending flexible working rights and practices fails to do justice to phenomena that are driven by long-term social changes and reap long-term gains for employers, employees and society at large. The recession and its impacts will not go on forever. Current projections indicate that by 2020 the rate of unemployment is due to drop to 1.8 million from 2.5 million in 2011. The number of economically active people is expected to reach 32.1 million in 2020, equivalent to an increase of 6.7 per cent from 2005. The economic activity rate of people aged 16 and over is projected to fall to 61.7 per cent in 2020, and the activity rate of people of working age (16–59/64) is projected to rise to 79.8 per cent in 2020.³ In addition, these demographic projections show an aging working population and shrinking talent pipeline made up of people who want greater flexibility over when and how they work. Flexible working provision will be essential for those companies wanting to attract and retain the best talent.

But the justification for flexible working cannot be reduced to the business case or be seen as entirely contingent on it. The case for flexibility stems from a wider need to balance the distribution of people's time between different obligations, needs and desires. The key question is not whether businesses can afford flexible working arrangements but whether in the twenty-first century countries like Britain can afford to forego them. Flexible working is the means to a plurality of vital and positive social outcomes; if unrealised, the state and middle-income households that feel the impact of increased taxation the hardest

will end up being disproportionately burdened. There is now strong evidence to show that more involved parenting improves the life chances of children, a better work–life balance increases individual happiness, a more flexible workforce is more able to bear the burden of an ageing population, and the Big Society will require people to have more time to be active citizens.

While it would be unreasonable to place sole responsibility for the social harms indirectly created by the way people work on employers, it would be equally unreasonable to claim they have no responsibility at all. Corporate social responsibility is best judged according to the extent to which organisations attempt to mitigate the ‘negative externalities’ they may generate in the process of pursuing core business goals. Flexible working arrangements need to be framed more strongly as a social obligation, and employers should do their utmost to respond by meeting the needs of employees half way. And where employers refuse to meet employees half way, there is an important role for government in legislating to enforce a basic framework in which employees can be empowered to start a dialogue with their employers.

The next chapter provides context on the range of long term drivers behind flexible working, the range of practices available and evidence on benefits and barriers to take up. Chapter 3 presents the findings from our quantitative and qualitative research, investigating in greater detail the risk factors that indicate that employees are likely to have low access or usage of flexible working practices and how case study organisations have mitigated such factors. Chapter 4 presents recommendations based on these findings.

2 Flexible working: principles and practices

In this chapter we lay out the defining trends that have changed Britain's workplaces, the causes that have been identified, and the sections of society that may have been left behind. It is not enough simply to argue that 'flexibility is good' – we must understand what has the potential to change working patterns (and has succeeded in doing so).

Jones et al define flexible working in a usefully holistic and encompassing manner:

[Flexible working] is about being able to work in different places, at and for different times (shift systems, longer and shorter hours) and about being able to work in different ways, using technology and the different skills that people have. It is also about moving flexibility away from a singular perspective towards a notion of 'shared' flexibility. Rather than restrict ideas about flexibility to a small number of policies, we argue that flexibility is about being able to achieve desired outcomes in a range of ways, being flexible about how, when and where people work.⁴

From this definition it is possible to suggest that the term 'flexible working' comprises two elements: practices (or policies) that centre on allowing employees to be flexible as to when and where they work – harnessing their skills and new technological advancements to good effect; and principles or ethos, maintaining an adaptable and shared sense of flexibility so that practices can be altered and adapted according to need. This means that the very 'definition of flexibility is itself flexible'.⁵ This understanding of flexible working is also made apparent by the BCC and Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), which in their report *Flexible Working* state that 'flexibility in the workplace means anything that allows either employer or employee to adjust working arrangements'.⁶ Finally,

Flexible working: principles and practice

it is important to note that flexible working does not automatically mean working *fewer* hours; for some individuals, it may mean working more. Definitions of flexible working and work–life balance can mean different things for different people – for some, socio-economic circumstances may mean working more out of financial necessity.⁷

Flexible working as practice

In practice, flexible working arrangements encompass a range of options (box 1). According to the Family Friendly Working Hours Taskforce, these include:

- part-time working
- job-sharing
- flexible hours (or flexitime)
- compressed hours (eg a four-day week)
- term-time working
- working from home
- varying start and finish times.⁸

Another option – one not mentioned above – is the practice of mobile or teleworking.⁹ There are also, according to Isles, the options of:

- time banking
- taking a career break
- working a ‘nine-day fortnight’
- working annualised hours.¹⁰

Isles suggests that – as well as encouraging greater use of flexible working practices – the recession led to many employees opting to take extended holiday or time off on lower or no pay.¹¹

Box 1 Flexible working practices

These are some of the forms of flexible working:

- *part-time working: frequently defined as working for less than 30 hours a week, or for less than the typical working week of a comparable job;¹² according to the Family Friendly Working Hours Taskforce, this is often regarded by employers to mean working at fixed times during the working week – a pattern which, the Taskforce argues, can be too restrictive to adequately meet the needs of employers and employees¹³*
- *job sharing: part-time working when two or more people share responsibility for a job between them¹⁴*
- *flexible hours or flexitime: when employees can choose how to allocate their hours of work across a period of time*
- *varying start and finish times: when employees can choose – within certain limitations – when to begin and end their working day¹⁵*
- *compressed hours: the reallocation of time into fewer and longer blocks during the week or fortnight¹⁶*
- *term-time working: when employees are on a permanent contract, but can take paid or unpaid leave during school holidays¹⁷*
- *career breaks: extended periods of leave or sabbaticals – normally unpaid – for up to five years or more¹⁸*
- *annual hours: when the period within which full-time employees must work is defined over a year¹⁹*
- *mobile working: permits employees to work all or part of the working week at a location remote from their employer's official workplace²⁰*
- *hot-desking: when more than one employee can use a single workstation and desk space as required; used to increase flexibility, efficiency and employee mobility²¹*
- *community working: when an employee is given time off to work in the community*
- *secondment: when an employee is seconded to work in another organisation²²*

Another, perhaps less typical, initiative is:

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- ‘duvet days’: used by staff for employees they feel have worked particularly hard. On ‘duvet days’ employees do not need to set their alarm, but instead can come into the office late in the morning²³

Finally, flexible working is also said to include training workers and employees so they can perform a wide range of tasks more effectively.²⁴

Flexible working as a principle

However, as Viser and Williams argue in *Work-life Balance*, there remain reports of employers who pay ‘lip service’ to flexible working policies and the ideas of a better work–life balance, but fail to make sufficient investment in successfully implementing initiatives.²⁵ They note that although overall many people are achieving a better work–life balance than in the past, ‘there are some worrying variations in availability and take up’.²⁶ The current availability and prevalence of flexible working practices is investigated in more detail in chapter 3.

Such instances notwithstanding, flexible working arrangements seem to enjoy strong support – support that is likely to grow.²⁷ Data cited by Jones et al show some 60 per cent of people support extending the right to request flexible working arrangements to all employees.²⁸ However, the term ‘flexible working’ can also be perceived as encompassing a set of principles against which work is arranged and organised. For many, flexible working is about much more than the nature of working arrangements; it is about having power to decide and shape these arrangements for oneself. Jones et al note that ‘people want flexibility over time and space. They did not want fixed hours but instead expressed a *preference for choosing* which hours they work as long as they could ensure the job was done.’²⁹

Indeed, Richard Reeves places control over working time at the core of a new divide in the labour market. He argues:

It is no longer hours worked that is the issue; it is the ability to dictate those hours. The division in the labour market is not between those who work long

*hours and those [who] work short hours; it is between those who are in control of their hours, the ‘time sovereigns’; and those for whom hours at work are still laid down, the ‘time subjects’.*³⁰

There is evidence to suggest that employees place greater value on time sovereignty than they do on their pay level. In an example cited by the BCC and CIPD, employees of the legal services firm PI Costings are said to place considerable value on the ability to determine their own working arrangements and, in this case, such sovereignty can even offset being paid at less competitive levels.³¹

Drivers of change

The proliferation of flexible working is the result of a confluence of diverse social, economic and technological trends. The following five key drivers are of particular importance:

- the shift from a manufacturing-based to a service-centred economy
- the growing presence of women in the work force and older people in society
- rapid technological advancement
- public and political attention to ‘work–life balance’ debates
- the fallout from the financial crisis.

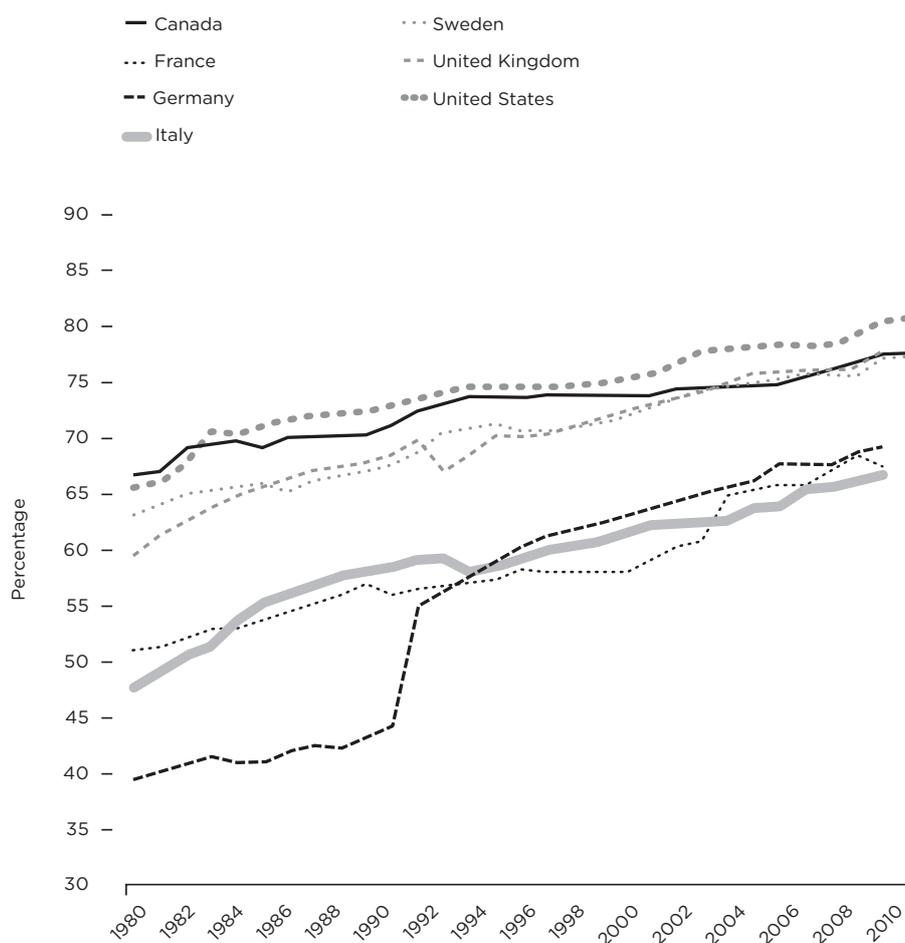
The rise of the service sector

In the shift to service-based industries from a manufacturing-based economy production-line workers have to be physically present at one spot at more or less the same time.³² Yet high-end service sector workers are not under the same obligation: the designer, the writer and the insurance broker can all work outside normal working hours with relative ease.³³

As figure 1 illustrates, in 2010 almost 80 per cent of employees in the UK were employed in the service sector. This is an increase of nearly a third since 1980. Of the peer nations shown, Britain has the second largest proportion of workers

Flexible working: principles and practice

Figure 1 **The proportion of the workforce employed in the service sector**



Source: OECD data³⁴

employed in its service sector after the USA – overtaking Sweden and Canada in the last 30 years. The service sector, in contrast to manufacturing, allows greater opportunity for work flexibility mainly because it is not involved in the creation of physical outputs.

However, a key gap in our understanding of flexible working is a lack of knowledge about how attitudes and practices differ within sectors and even within companies. It is clear that some sectors lend themselves better to flexibility. It is also clear that one's role is crucially important as a risk factor for inflexibility. The pattern changes across different companies and while broad sectoral pictures may be illustrative they do not accurately describe the variation within the workforce.

Women in the workforce and an ageing population

The makeup of our workforce has also changed. In the UK the proportion of women in work has risen from 59 per cent in 1980 to 70 per cent today. Now, the numbers of men and women at work are almost equal, with men performing 12.8 million jobs and women 12.7 million, though almost half of these are part-time. This 'feminisation' of the workforce has forced issues of family management and new debates about work–life balance into public debate.³⁵ This, combined with other demographic changes such as an ageing population and an ageing workforce, has created significant momentum for change.³⁶ Figure 2 shows the number of women in employment as a proportion of the female population in the UK and other countries between 1980 and 2008.

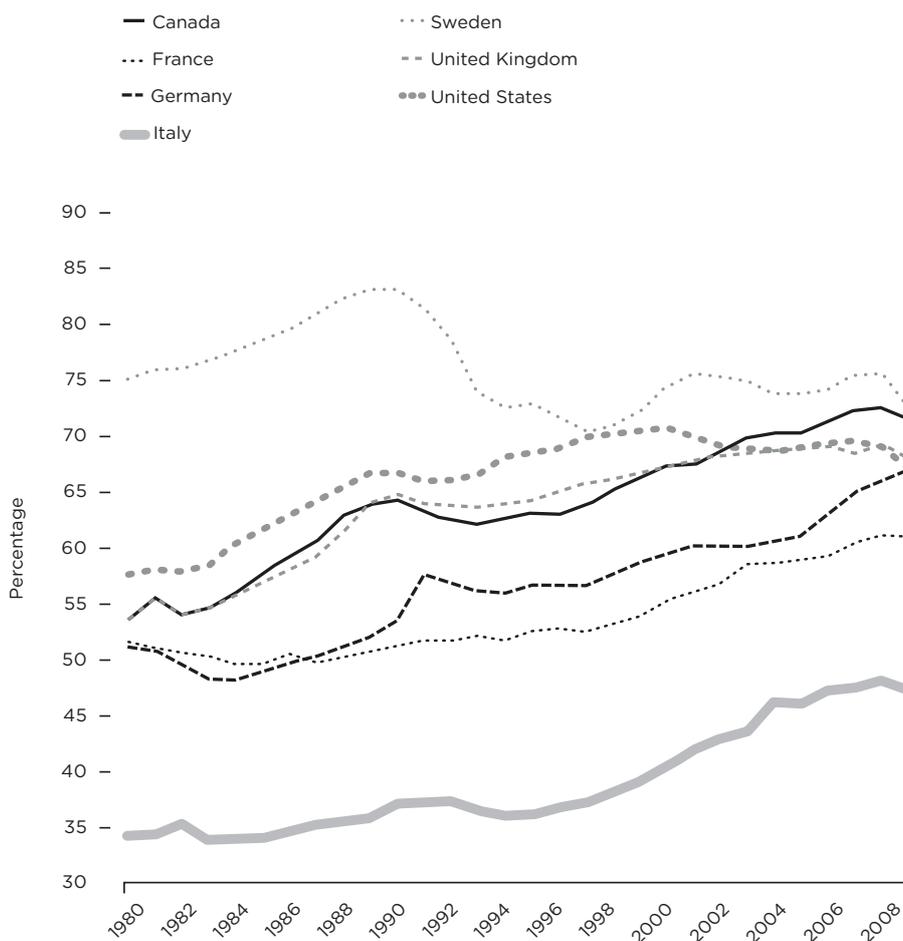
Technological change

The rapid rise of networked computing devices has enabled individuals to work more flexibly – where and when they want.³⁸ According to Isles, 'the advent of cheaper telecommunications, mobile telephony and fast broadband access has made working anytime, anywhere a reality'.³⁹ One such example that is striking in this instance is the case of IBM: less than two-thirds of the company's employees are office-based; 40 per cent work elsewhere.⁴⁰

Again though it is important to note that while 'working anytime or anywhere' may be a reality for those in high end service sector jobs, without a fundamental cultural and

Flexible working: principles and practice

Figure 2 **Women in employment as a proportion of the female population**



Source: OECD data³⁷

organizational change it remains unfeasible for those whose work requires them to be in a specific location or in customer facing roles.

BT is a good example of a large corporation that has successfully embedded aspects of the flexible working agenda in

a way that was enabled by technology, but ultimately embedded through leadership and cultural change. BT found that establishing flexible working practices had a major positive effect on retaining staff and cutting costs. Two measures the company has introduced are allowing 15,000 employees to work from home and equipping 64,000 to work flexibly. Although technology has played a substantial role in enabling BT's flexible working practices, the organisation believes:

Flexible working should be seen as a philosophy of business organisation, rather than a technological issue, comprising every aspect of the company, from its headquarters and international facilities office employees and remote employees, to its physical and intellectual assets, suppliers, partners, and of course, customer.

Box 2 The BT Workstyle project: from flexible to agile working*
One of the largest flexible working projects in Europe, 70,000 BT employees are now involved in the BT Workstyle Project. By 2005, BT was saving €725 million-plus per annum through reductions in its office estate. Within that figure, BT's 11,600 home workers save the company €104 million a year in accommodation costs, and are on average 20 per cent more productive than their office-based colleagues. BT have come to reframe flexible working as part of a wider concept of 'Agile Working', which is about making the best use of the most appropriate workplace locations to enable people to do their job. A re-definition of the term flexible working, Agile Working is based on the principle of selecting a work environment that best suits the individual, not on a rigid definition of the location and hours people can work.†

* Material drawn from BT White Paper, *Flexible Working: Can your company cope without it*, London: BT, 2007. As a multi-national corporation BT lists costs in Euros. To avoid inaccuracy, currencies have not been converted.

† Pedder K, 'Agile Working in BT, People, Property, Technology', presentation by Karl Pedder, Head of Property Services, BT Commercial Partnerships.

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Flexibility and competition

The starting point for the project was the recognition that in a digital, networked economy, competitive advantage relies on the ability to anticipate and react quickly to change. BT saw that flexible working would be a key enabler of the required transformation. Caroline Waters, BT Group Director of People and Policy, is clear that consumer expectations have been one of the key drivers of BT's embrace of flexibility as an organisational principle:

We have to satisfy demands for our products and services around-the-clock. There is no room for a traditional nine-to-five working day because that just can't meet the demands placed upon us as a business... It's about freeing our people. For customer-facing staff, the shift to flexible working would allow us to move from a very heavily process-oriented environment to one where our people would be empowered to make real time decisions for the customer.

Key practices and enablers

In addition to the use of remote technology platforms, the enabling factors for the BT Workstyle Project included clear policies and careful measurement, leadership from the top, cultural and behavioural change, and development of the right equipment and workspaces for people's jobs.

A phased approach was taken, with focused projects followed by a broader roll out. Home working is just one of the work styles that BT has implemented in a spectrum that includes nomadic and in-building flexible working around the world.

The Project incorporated the following key elements:

- *A robust, scalable and flexible technology platform
BT's Workstyle Technology Architecture provides platforms for normal flexible working employees, as well as for more specialised staff accessing corporate applications from home or other locations.*

- Creation of a flexible estate and accommodation rationalisation

The company established a number of carefully designed buildings for BT employees around the world, equipped with hot desks and touchdown areas. Employees can now book rooms and facilities in over 170 buildings across the globe. In 2005, BT introduced flexible working in its Budapest office, with employees working an average of three days a week from home. The capacity of the building increased dramatically, from 40 people to 90 people.

The company's flagship BT Centre in the City of London was re-created as a Workstyle building as part of an initiative that saw the closure of six major buildings in London. Now 1,600 workstations cater for 8,000-plus BT staff who choose to visit the building every day to work when they are in the centre of London. The building now acts as a resource for the entire company, UK and international, rather than just as a base for a small employee elite.

- Leadership and culture change

As a board-driven initiative, BT built a flexible working business case with clear milestones and return on investment calculations. Senior executives were then strongly encouraged to be early adopters to demonstrate management commitment.

Early on, a close working relationship was established between HR, estate management and IT. Clear policies and practices were defined and publicised. Mechanisms and processes were put in place to ensure that BT assiduously collected the data necessary to monitor and prove the flexible working business case. Metrics such as quality of service, productivity, staff retention, sickness absence and accidents were employed. The focus shifted from rewarding people's attendance to rewarding their contribution to the business and its customers.

Ensuring a collaborative relationship across all levels of employees was a vital component of the culture enabling the embedding of flexible working. According to David Dunbar:

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You can't impose flexible working on individuals. It is effectively a state of mind. Unless employees co-operate willingly and enthusiastically, it won't happen.

Policies were established to enable people to work flexibly in a sustainable way, and significant time and resources were allocated to training. A key focus was on ensuring that managers had the decision-making information to help them through the transition.

The rollout of BT Broadband in the UK was undoubtedly a key factor in the level of support that BT was able to provide to its remote employees. In particular, fast access to the BT corporate intranet was a crucial factor in cultural change. However, the Workstyle project was not just about technology. A number of flexible working arrangements were offered to staff, and managers were actively encouraged throughout the organisation to support flexible working requests, including job sharing, home working, occasional home working, local working (relocating to BT premises nearer home) and flexitime.

In addition, the web has also been used to provide information and guidance on managing and supporting these arrangements. Support facilities are provided through the BT intranet where an 'Achieving the Balance' website contains the complete portfolio of BT flexible working products and services, as well as working pattern alternatives. This enables staff to find out more about flexible working before discussing it further with their line manager. The intranet site also contains practical advice for managers.

Impact

BT's integration of flexibility as an organisational wider practice has produced tangible and substantial results in terms of cost savings, productivity, employee retention and carbon reduction:

- *The proportion of female BT employees in the UK who return to work after taking maternity leave is around 96–99 per cent – more than double the national average. This is estimated to save the company €7.4 million a year in recruitment and induction costs.*
- *Each home worker is reported to save the company £6,000 a year, a total of around £70 million per year.* Home working call centre operators also handle up to 20 per cent more calls than their office-based colleagues.*
- *The absentee rate among flexible workers is down 63 per cent and is now 20 per cent below the UK average.*
- *Cost savings of over €725 million a year through reduced office estate and €104 million a year through reduction in accommodation.*
- *Teleconferencing has eliminated the annual need for over 300,000 face-to-face meetings, leading to savings of over €38.6 million a year.*
- *Avoiding the purchase of approximately 12 million litres of fuel per year, resulting in 54,000 tonnes less CO₂ being generated in the UK.*

* Isles N, *The Good Work Guide: How to make organisations fairer and more effective*, London: Earthscan, 2010.

Striking a balance

In recent decades there has been growing concern about working arrangements constraining people's ability to balance their professional and personal responsibilities, and work–life balance debates have received increasing attention in public and political spheres. According to Visser and Williams:

Work-life balance is most frequently used to describe the equilibrium between responsibilities at work and responsibilities outside paid work; having a work-life balance means that this equilibrium is in the right position for the individual concerned.⁴¹

They argue that a poor work–life balance can have deleterious consequences for the individual, resulting in lack of

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motivation, stress and ill health.⁴² With this in mind, issues of work–life balance have moved further to the centre of public debate. Jones et al claim that during the last 30 years or so, more and more people have expressed a desire for a better work–life balance and the ability to work more flexibly.⁴³ A survey by PricewaterhouseCoopers conducted in 2010 showed flexible working to be the most valued benefit for employees – more valued than other, material benefits like bonuses.⁴⁴ Of some 1,167 professionals surveyed, nearly half (47 per cent) rated flexible working arrangements as the most important benefit.

Performance-related bonuses were rated second (19 per cent).⁴⁵

Furthermore, this survey shows that flexible working arrangements are given greater priority by women (54 per cent ranking it as the most valuable benefit) than men (41 per cent).⁴⁶ Whether or not this variation can be attributed to parenting and childcare responsibilities remains to be seen, but the impact of long working hours and an inadequate work–life balance on parents in particular is integral to wider flexible working debates. According to Hutton, around one in three fathers in the UK works more than 48 hours a week,⁴⁷ and as a result many do not see their children as much as they would like. Data show that some 62 per cent of fathers think that, generally, fathers should spend more time caring for their children, and 51 per cent of working parents felt their relationship with their children would improve if they could work flexibly.⁴⁸

Current flexible working policies for UK parents are briefly set out in box 3.

Box 3 Flexible working policies for parents

Maternity leave: under current arrangements, women in the UK are entitled to 52 weeks of maternity leave, regardless of how long they have worked for their employer.⁴⁹ The first 26 weeks of maternity leave are called Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML). Following the 26-week period, women employees are then able to take an additional 26 weeks' maternity leave called Additional Maternity Leave (AML) (totalling 52 weeks when combined with OML). This must follow directly on from

OML. During this period women are still entitled to the same rights enshrined in their employment contract, but whether they get paid or not is dependent on their contract. While women on maternity leave are not entitled to normal pay, most are able to receive Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) or Maternity Allowance.⁵⁰ Through Statutory Maternity Pay a mother receives 90 per cent of average gross weekly earnings for the first six weeks followed by 33 weeks at £124.88.

Paternity leave: Men in the UK are entitled to only 2 weeks of ordinary paternity leave (OPL) (paid at £124.88 per week). However, since April 2011 new mothers have been able to transfer the second half of their maternity leave (AML) to the father.⁵¹

Comparatively, Swedish policies appear more generous and seem to strike a better balance between mother and father. Swedish women are entitled to up to 15 weeks of maternity leave, but parents receive a statutory parental allowance for 480 days – of which 420 can be taken by one parent.⁵²

Elsewhere, job protected temporarily reduced hours options are available as part of parental leave in 12 of the 15 EU member states and Norway. In Norway, parents are entitled to paid parental leave full-time for up to one year. Parents are also able to combine this with working anything from 50 percent to 90 per cent of the usual working hours for up to three years.⁵³

In Belgium, an employee can extend their full-time job protection – as part of parental leave for three months – for up to 14 months if they combine it with working 80 per cent of their usual working hours.⁵⁴

Parents in Germany are able to work between 15 and 30 hours per week for up to three years after the birth of a child. By the end of this period they are then entitled to return to a job equivalent to the one they worked in before the child was born.⁵⁵

However, according to Visser and Williams, work–life balance debates have since widened in scope to move beyond

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‘family-friendly’ policies – essentially aimed at enabling previously working mothers to balance work and childcare responsibilities and return to employment – in recognition that flexible working is about helping employees access working arrangements that are compatible with other lifestyle responsibilities.⁵⁶

Reeves suggests that such work–life balance debates – which have undoubtedly influenced the increase in attention to and introduction of flexible working practices – are based on a false premise. He proposes that the idea that work and life are separated from one another reflects an out-dated, industrial era mindset, and assumes (wrongly) that most people do not like their jobs.⁵⁷ This mindset ‘assumes that work is dangerous and exploitative drudgery’ and overlooks the possibility ‘that people might actually like their jobs and therefore stick at them longer’.⁵⁸ This point is similarly articulated by Hutton, who says: ‘I would respond in any poll that I want to spend more time with my friends and family, yet continue to inflict long hours on myself. The answer is that I like what I do and, for the most part, I am in control of the hours I work, however many they may be.’⁵⁹

The financial crisis

The financial crisis did much to encourage the proliferation of flexible working practices. According to the Family Friendly Working Hours Taskforce, the recent recession ‘created a climate where there is an even stronger appetite for the business case for flexible working’.⁶⁰ The Taskforce points out that for many businesses and companies the downturn necessitated a shift towards flexible working practices in order to minimise redundancies.⁶¹ In a similar vein, the CBI observes that flexible working ‘proved its worth’ during the recession and claims that, although unemployment rose, ‘unprecedented’ cooperation between employers and employees helped minimise job losses.⁶² And while being encouraged by short-term circumstances, the CIPD suggests that increasing use of flexible working practices could well be something of a long-term effect from the recent recession.

In his CIPD report *Working Hours in the Recession*, Philpott shows that the recession had a dual effect on flexible working, causing a fall in employment, and a shift from full-time to part-time employment.⁶³ Between spring 2008 and spring 2010 full-time employment levels fell 4.1 per cent in the UK, while part-time employment rates rose 4.4 per cent. Philpott gives two explanations for this shift. First, some employees voluntarily opted for shorter working hours, enabling their employers to cut labour costs and, consequently, reduce redundancies. Second, there was an increase in the number and proportion of employees who undertook part-time work because they were unable to secure full-time employment; this shift in working pattern was involuntary for these employees. According to Philpott, the number of people in this situation increased by 400,000 to just over 1 million between spring 2008 and spring 2010. Between March and May 2008 and March and May 2010 the UK experienced a 3.5 per cent net fall (-32.7 million) in weekly working hours.⁶⁴

Legislation and prevalence of practice

*Flexibility is a business issue and legislation on the right to request flexible working has had no effect at all.*⁶⁵

The Coalition Government appeared keen to put forward measures that encouraged companies and businesses to employ greater use of flexible working measures,⁶⁶ and the promise to extend the right to request flexible working practices to all employees was a key pledge in its programme for government, published in May last year.⁶⁷ However, the Government has since sent some confusing signals on its intentions on this issue.

In September 2010, the Government did extend rights to request flexible working, but stopped short of extending it universally. Legislation was to be limited to parents of children under 18 years old (previous policy allowed employees with children under 17 to request flexible working arrangements).⁶⁸ Yet in March 2011, the Government scrapped the extension, on

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the grounds of reducing red tape to encourage growth. While this appeared to signal a reversal of its previous commitment, the position appears to have changed again with the consultation on the modern workplace in May 2011.⁶⁹ This once again proposes extending the right to request flexible working to all employees, with an intention to put new legislation into place by 2015. Making the ultimate decision contingent on the consultation response could be seen as way of rowing back on previous commitments or an attempt to bolster support for going ahead with these commitments. Thus at present there is a fair degree of uncertainty on where the Government stands on the question of the extension of existing rights relating to flexible working.

Policies in some European countries are quite different. The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany France and Finland have all introduced statutes that provide the right to request flexible working arrangements to all employees – irrespective of their reasons for seeking a change. It is also possible for employees to challenge their employer in court, should the latter refuse such a request.⁷⁰

Hegewish highlights three different sets of legislative approaches to encouraging flexible working practices:

- statutes that make the right to request conditional to particular activities such as caring for young children or dependent adults
- statutes that provide the right to request as part of protection against discrimination on the basis of sex, or family or caring responsibilities
- statutes that give the right to request to *all* employees, regardless of their reasons

and suggests that the right to request as it stands in the UK falls into the first category.⁷¹

Some advocates of flexible working have expressed deep scepticism about the potential for legislation as an incentive for employers to adopt flexible working patterns. This is emphasised in the BCC and CIPD report *Flexible Working*:

The increased uptake of flexible working has not come about because employers are required to do so by legislation: surveys suggest that two in five employers offer the chance to work flexibly to employees who have no statutory right to ask for it – in many cases, to all employees.⁷²

This is particularly pertinent in the case of small employers, which, the report suggests, are ‘less interested in sophisticated policies than in arrangements that will work and enable individual employees to adopt the patterns of work that suit them best’. Indeed, a very small-scale study cited in the report indicates that legislation to adopt the right to request has failed to ‘persuade’ businesses. Ultimately, ‘flexibility... is a business issue’.⁷³ The Third Work-Life Balance Employer Survey, analysed in a report by the Family Friendly Working Hours Taskforce in 2010, found that the vast majority of employers (92 per cent) would consider a request to change working patterns from *any* employee, despite being legally obliged to only consider the requests of *some* employees.⁷⁴

However, the results of a 2005 survey of employers, published by the CIPD, show that government legislation is a significant influence on a firm’s decision to adopt flexible working. Of some 564 respondents, 47 per cent said that making use of flexible working ‘to comply with legislation’ was ‘very important’. On a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being ‘not important’ and 5 being ‘very important’, a further 21 per cent ranked complying with legislation at 4.⁷⁵ These findings are reinforced by our own polling, set out in the next chapter.

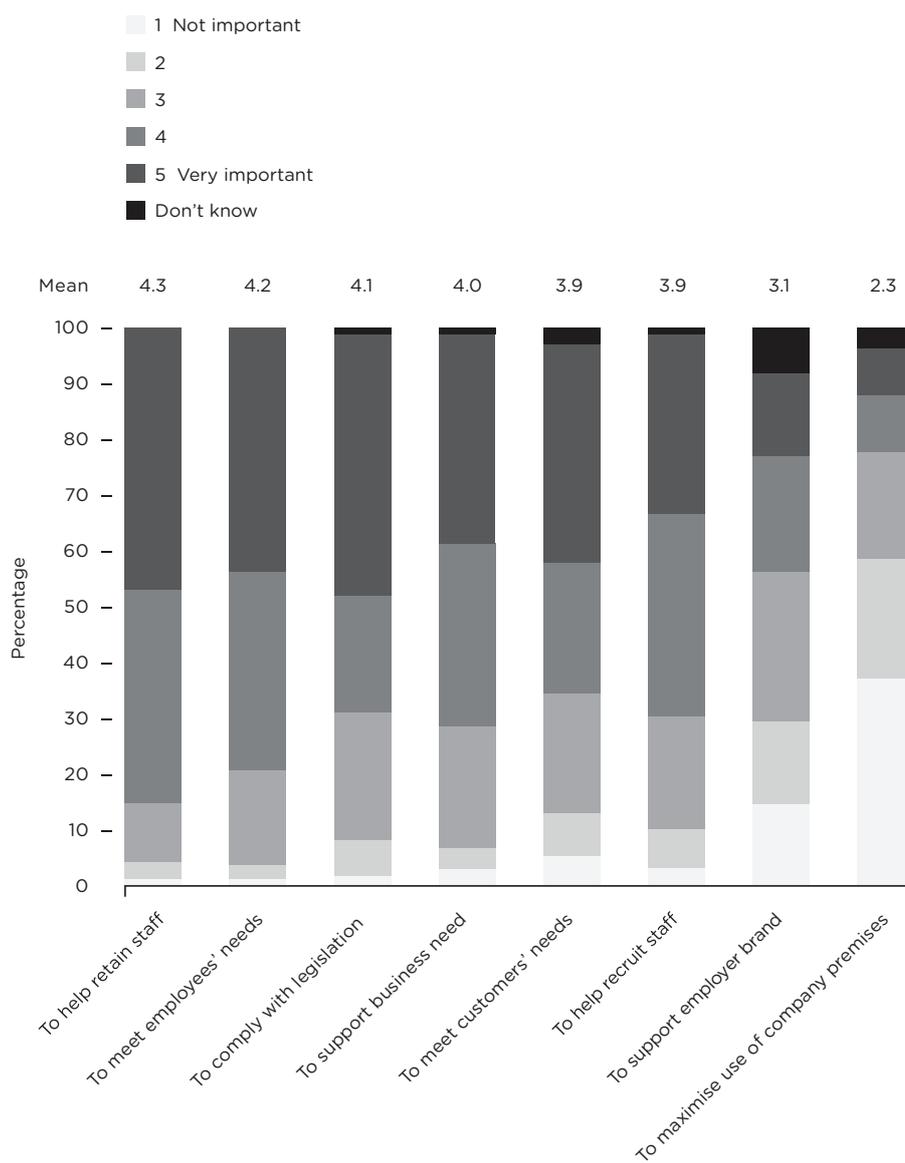
Benefits and barriers

The rewards

It is clear that the adoption of flexible working arrangements can result in real rewards for employer and employee alike. And while attention has already been paid to the wider socio-economic factors that have acted as drivers of change, encouraging greater use of flexible working, there are also more micro-factors specific to business to be considered. Figure 3, taken from a CIPD survey of employers in 2005, shows there is a

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Figure 3 **Reasons why organisations make use of flexible working practices**



Source: CIPD⁷⁶

variety of reasons for businesses introducing flexible working practices.

It shows that staff retention is perceived to be a major benefit of adopting flexible working arrangements. Indeed, retention is often cited in the existing literature as a reason for and benefit of introducing such policies, but there are several others. Visser and Williams suggest they include:

- improving productivity
- improving employee commitment
- reducing absenteeism (from 12 per cent to 2 per cent, according to Unison research)
- increasing retention rates (and reducing replacement costs)
- enabling organisations to recruit from a wider talent pool
- enabling organisations to offer services beyond usual business hours by employing workers on different shifts to fit with any caring responsibilities they may have.⁷⁷

Research by the Family Friendly Working Hours Taskforce supports this. The Taskforce found that evidence ‘demonstrates there is a strong and compelling business case for flexible working’:

- ‘65 per cent of employers said flexible working had a positive effect on recruitment and retention’ (saving recruitment, induction and training costs)
- 70 per cent of employers noted significantly improved employee relations – suggesting greater loyalty among staff
- 58 per cent of small- to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) reported improved productivity.⁷⁸

Improving productivity is an oft-cited benefit of adopting flexible working patterns. This appears especially apparent in the case of home working. In the case of legal services firm PI Costings, in contrast to office-based employees, individuals working from home achieve efficiencies of 20 per cent or more in output.⁷⁹ The Institute of Directors gives a considerably higher

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estimate and suggests that home workers are 65 per cent more productive than their office-based counterparts.⁸⁰

That flexible working practices can have a positive effect on recruitment is also borne out by evidence focusing on employees. According to the Family Friendly Working Hours Taskforce, over half – 54 per cent – of employees considered the availability of flexible working practices as ‘very important’ or ‘quite important’ in their decision whether or not to take up the job.⁸¹ In a similar vein, Jones et al found that some 92 per cent of non-working mothers said that flexible working would be ‘essential’ or ‘important’ in enabling them to return to work.⁸²

Reduced costs are another evident benefit of introducing flexible working practices. According to research conducted in 2000 cited by Jones et al, small businesses saved up to £250,000 by reducing staff turnover through implementing flexible working.⁸³

From the arguments, evidence and information outlined above it is apparent that flexible working practices can lead to a multitude of benefits, such as better staff retention and recruitment, improved employee motivation and commitment, higher productivity and lower costs. However, the benefits to be gained from flexible working are not always enjoyed by the employee – rather, as Jones et al argue, such arrangements can be designed so they only really benefit the employer. Working time flexibility can be organised so that employees are left with little choice over the shifts they work, to the detriment of their lives outside the workplace; or, additionally, workloads can be of a size that any access to flexible working is practically meaningless.⁸⁴ As Visser and Williams point out: ‘when we look at evidence on whether work–life balance policies have achieved all they set out to do and whether people are really able to achieve the work–life balance they want, a different picture emerges’.⁸⁵

The barriers

Despite the rewards that can result from introducing flexible working practices, there appear to remain real barriers

preventing organisations from successfully implementing such arrangements. In some instances, employers may find it difficult to see how to offer flexible working arrangements without putting at risk production or service targets, or causing resentment among other employees.⁸⁶

The CIPD's survey of human resources professionals also sheds some light on problems in implementing flexible working practices. Of the issues highlighted, operational pressures was the most commonly reported: more than two-thirds of respondents identified this as the most important constraint.⁸⁷ A survey of small businesses described by Peacock found that smaller employers find costs to be a significant barrier to adopting flexible and remote working. Of some 5,000 small businesses, 29 per cent felt that the technology required to roll out such programmes effectively was too expensive.⁸⁸

Other issues and potential barriers to introducing flexible working policies include:

- the impact of home working on corporate and client confidentiality
- issues of maintaining data protection and data management when using remote working systems
- problems with managing remote staff and people who are not in the office
- health and safety checks on home workers.⁸⁹

As well as these issues, organisational culture can also pose a significant challenge.⁹⁰ Cultural barriers are covered in the report by the Family Friendly Working Hours Taskforce, which states that a cultural change should increase the number and range of jobs that can be worked flexibly.⁹¹ This would in turn increase the supply of high-quality staff to employers. As the Taskforce points out, many employees are concerned that if they ask to work shorter hours their employer will consider them to be less committed to their job than other workers are. This is particularly a concern for employees working from home.⁹²

The Taskforce also draws attention to the problem of flexible working being seen as something for female employees –

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particularly women who are mothers – and not for their male counterparts. As well as perceptions of flexible working being mainly associated with female employees, the cultural fixation with ‘hours’ is also problematic and can inhibit implementation. The Taskforce notes that in the UK there is something of ‘a cultural tendency to solely design and advertise jobs on the basis of hours worked’, rather than consider how such roles could accommodate flexible working arrangements. There is, it claims, a tendency to offer flexible working *reactively*, rather than *proactively*, when designing and developing a job. The Taskforce points to a need for ‘a cultural shift to move managers and employers away from thinking of full-time, fixed hours and location as the norm’.⁹³

Summary

The landscape of work has changed dramatically in modern Britain. Over the course of the last 50 years there has been a radical shift in the number of women who work, the type of work people do and – crucially for this report – when and where they are employed. As we emerge slowly from recession, with an emphasis on growth and job creation, many business advocates claim that flexible working rights have reached a limit that cannot be breached without endangering recovery and inhibiting employers’ willingness to take on new workers. The BCC’s David Frost encapsulates the view that there is a zero sum logic at work here: ‘We have to ask the government what level of growth they expect to see from businesses dealing with yet more regulation.’⁹⁴

The implicit claim that flexible working entitlements are contingent on the economic cycle seriously occludes the longevity and depth of the social and demographic trends which have led to demand for it. The growth of dual earners households, changing expectations and necessities around parenting duties, and an ageing population, form the deep social roots in which flexible working arrangements are embedded. The drivers of change cannot depend only on the economic climate; the evolution of flexible working regulation is unlikely to grind to a halt because of a period of stagnant economic growth.

Beyond downplaying the range of drivers of flexible working, and their social importance, a blanket rejection of further regulation on the grounds that it impedes growth fails to take into account the way in which different organisations adapt or fail to adapt to legislative frameworks.

There are two key reasons for this lack of understanding. The first is that we have not developed a full understanding of what risk factors predispose some employees to working practices that are inflexible or 'brittle'. It is true that employees in small businesses and some sectors are less likely to be offered flexibility than others; however, there are important personal factors too and these must be explored in order to fully understand what drives flexibility and inflexibility. Second, proponents of flexible working have often failed to explain fully what vanguard flexible working organisations have that other employers do not. The next chapter aims to address these deficiencies in our understanding.

3 How brittle are British workplaces?

Demos ran two large-scale surveys to explore the modern British workplace, asking questions to a weighted sample of over 500 employers and over 1,500 employees. The surveys allowed us to better understand the composition and values of the labour force of 2011. It also enabled us to access the relationship between employer and employee, looking at who had autonomy over aspects of their work, how their time was spent and the location of their work.

Our results show that flexible working has become entrenched in the working lives of most people – a substantial achievement for flexible working advocates:

- Today, 91 per cent of employers offer at least one form of flexible working arrangement to their employees.
- Almost 60 per cent of employees stated they currently used a form of flexible working and 83 per cent of requests for flexible working are approved.

Yet our results overall show a mixed picture of flexibility more generally and present some pessimistic predictions for future expansion:

- 81 per cent of employers did not expect that their organisation would extend flexible working in the next two years.
- Of the firms that currently do not offer any form of flexible working arrangement, 92 per cent said they were unlikely to start offering it in the next two years.
- Half of firms with fewer than 50 employees said they granted less than 1 in 4 flexible working requests.

Compounding the problem is lack of knowledge: 60 per cent of employees did not know who was covered by the legal

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right to request. Flexible working has also not been able to address many gender-based inequalities. Belying the narrative of the ‘new man’, men were less than half as likely to use flexible working in order to ‘look after children’ than women and 86 per cent of men said they would not use a longer period of paternity leave if it was offered to them.

The surveys have given us the ability to identify certain barriers, or ‘risk factors’, to flexibility such as firm size and sector. This chapter will draw on our polling, comparing it with other datasets, to construct an image of the modern British workplace and will analyse how risk factors are distributed across the economy. We used varying statistical methodology including regression analysis. Alongside this we draw on structured interviews and focus groups by two major employers, BT and John Lewis Partnership, and a small firm at the vanguard of flexible working, Women Like Us. This allows us to identify the areas of ‘low flexibility’ that policy makers need to address.

Through focus groups and structured interviews, we asked two large employers about what they perceived to be the most important reasons for offering flexible working. The feminisation of the workforce was one key driver, not only because women were more likely to request flexible working – particularly mothers returning from maternity leave – but also in order to attract and retain talented women the firms needed to offer flexible working.

The importance of flexibility to women was demonstrated when speaking to a senior human resources manager in a large firm who stated:

My experience, from a head office perspective, is that undoubtedly the biggest source of demand for flexible working is the mother who comes back from paid maternity leave. It’s not exclusively, but that is the biggest group which has a demand.

I think I would say 80–90% of women who come back start flexible working. They might want to work full-time for financial reasons but it might also be ‘can I compress my hours’ or ‘can I start early and finish early’?

What the workforce values and wants

In order to understand people's conceptions of 'good work' in our poll we asked employees about what they valued in their working life. What motivates an employee to work can help explain the levels of flexibility they use. The results of the poll are shown in table 1.

Table 1 **What people value about their working life**

	Proportion of respondents saying it was 'very important'
Salary	49%
That work is personally fulfilling	46%
Having freedom to choose how best to do job	36%
How flexible working arrangements are	31%
That employer is ethical	28%
That you can have a positive impact on society	22%

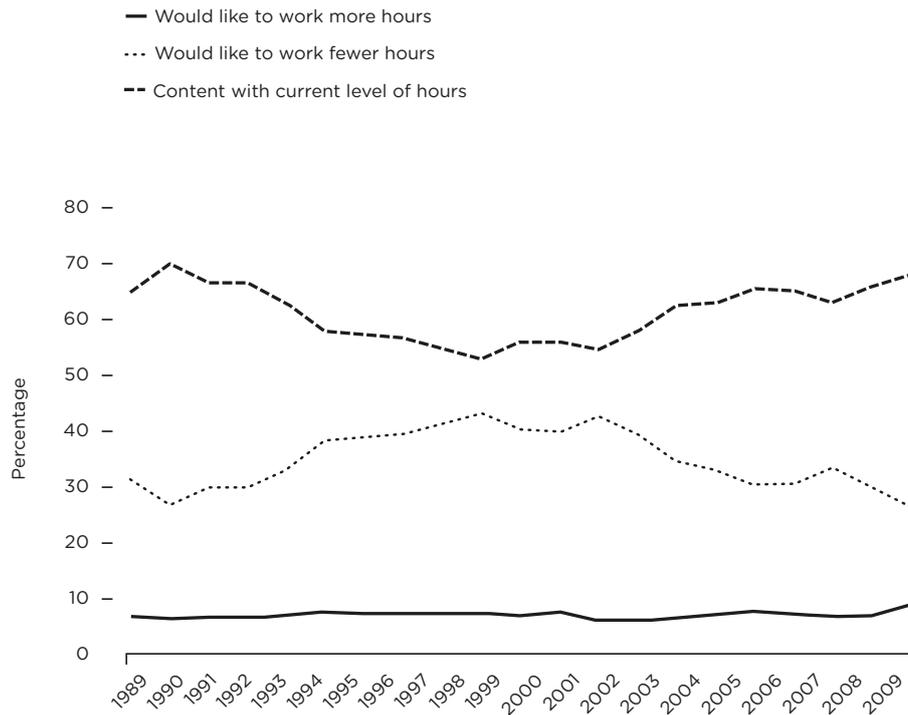
Source: Demos poll, 2011

These results show that salary is central to most employees' notions of 'good work'. However, not far behind, employees rank the level of fulfilment they have in the work they do. This is followed by factors based on control: choosing how best to do the job and how much control they have over the use of their time. Employees ranked below this the wider social impact of work: having an ethical employer and a positive impact on society. This gives us an idea of employees' hierarchy of motivations for work, or their conceptions of 'good work'. Individuals are concerned first with their material needs, second with their job satisfaction, third with their power and autonomy, and fourth with the social aspects of their work. However, there are variations, for instance women were about 50 per cent more likely to say that flexibility was 'very important' in their working life than men.

The British Social Attitudes (BSA) Survey asks respondents in each of its annual surveys, 'Would you prefer a job where you worked more, less or the same number of hours?'

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Figure 4 **People's working hour preferences over time**



Source: BSA Surveys⁹⁵

Over the past ten years, with the spread of flexible working, and especially following the introduction of the statutory right to request, employees became more content with their working hours (figure 4).

The data show there was increasing dissatisfaction with working times between 1990 and 1998, followed by a levelling out between 1998 and 2001, and after that increasing satisfaction with working times from 2001. It is hard to provide a testable explanation of this change but the increased contentment is likely to be related to the value New Labour placed on allowing flexible working from 2001. In its second term Labour set up a task force to analyse the future of flexible working. By 2003 the

right to request flexible working for certain groups entered law and it was extended several times in subsequent years.

What is particularly interesting is that reported levels of satisfaction with working hours are highest during recessions – in 1990 and 2009. The curve overall is inverse to the economic cycle. In 2007 there was a rise in the proportion of employees wanting to work fewer hours. This figure then fell in the following two years in which the economic crisis hit – and also corresponds with a rise in those who would like to work more hours. This suggests that during periods of higher risk of job loss, people's priority is not the quality or autonomy they have in their work, but to maintain their job, fitting the hierarchy of motivations or 'good work' system presented earlier. As the British economy starts to grow we may therefore expect satisfaction in working hours to fall again.

Access to flexible working arrangements

There has been a substantial expansion in the number of flexible working arrangements employers offer and the take up of flexible working by employees: 91 per cent of employers we surveyed stated that their organisation offered at least one form of flexible working arrangement. This rises to 94 per cent in firms with more than 250 employees.

Employers are offering more forms of flexible working than ever before. The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and partners including ACAS ran the Workplace Employment Relations Survey (WERS) in 1998 and 2004 to understand management–employee relations. Comparing our polling results to the WERS we find a large growth in the provision of several types of flexible working arrangements over time (table 2).

We asked employers their reasons for offering flexible working in order to identify the key drivers of this expansion (table 3).

The most popular reason employers gave for offering employees the possibility of flexible working was 'retaining staff', but very few saw it as a wider tool that could be used for

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Table 2 **Types of flexible working arrangements offered by managers: Workplace Employment Relations Survey polls in 1998 and 2004 and Demos survey in 2011**

	WERS survey, 1998	WERS survey, 2004	Demos survey, 2011
Part-time working	46%	64%	76%
Flexible hours	19%	26%	55%
Home working	16%	28%	47%
Job sharing	31%	41%	46%
Term-time working	14%	28%	30%
Annualised hours	8%	13%	19%

Source: WERS survey⁹⁶ and Demos poll, 2011

recruitment. As table 3 shows, a number of employers also stated that it helped meet employees' needs and had a positive impact on employee engagement. Particularly important for policy makers is that 'complying with legislation' was one of the most important factors driving the offering of flexible working. Although the right to request is a 'soft right' in the sense it is only provides employees with the legal right to request, not have, our research suggests it is a significant driver of flexible working.

Our interviews and focus groups were able to investigate in greater depth, among some of the vanguards of flexible working, the reasons for offering it. Speaking of their experience of what drove the implementation of flexible working policies in their firm, a senior manager in a large firm told us:

Clearly the driver of the change was the legal aspect and its application to employment law. I don't think that's a surprise to anyone. It was passed and we had to implement it.

Yet among the employers we interviewed, legislation was seen as a nudge to go further than the statutory minimum of 'reasonable' consideration of a request and forced employers

Table 3 **The most important reasons for employers in the UK offering flexible working, 2011**

Reason for offering flexible working	
To retain staff	23%
To meet employees' needs	22%
To comply with legislation	21%
To have a positive impact on employee engagement	16%
To support the organisation's needs	9%
To meet customer needs	5%
To recruit staff	3%
To support the employer brand	1%

Source: Demos poll, 2011

seriously to consider how best to meet employees' needs. We interviewed a senior personnel partner in John Lewis head office who had been on the steering group for the firm's flexibly working policy. She said:

I was on the working group for the Partnership's flexible working policy. My memory is that there was a piece of legislation and so we had to look at how we were going to implement that and how it was going to work – rights to appeals and timing and things like that. So it was about taking that legislation and putting it into a policy. My recollection about extending it to all employees is that it is not something that was discussed with all employees, but I think it was part of the working group which decided 'you know what, I know this is what we need to do in terms of the legal right but I feel what is right to do is to extend that to everyone'. There would never be any push back on that because employees would be delighted.

She believed that the legal changes were important in forcing John Lewis to engage with the flexible working agenda, but that this combined with John Lewis' focus on partner wellbeing, and led the company to go further than the statutory minimum. A branch manager we spoke to at a John Lewis store echoed this view:

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There was a government policy at the time, I think around parental leave, that was about to be ahead of where we were at that point and so it was decided by the person in charge that, because greater flexible working would be the direction of travel, it should be something that is supported more widely. It got us in the right place earlier and showed partners that we were trying to do the best for them. It was win-win.

Yet as well as meeting legislative needs, employers we spoke to explained that it was an important tool to maintain skilled staff. A human resources manager at a large firm told us that being able to offer flexible working was central to retaining skilled staff and therefore made good business sense:

There was also a clear business case for flexible working, in regards of retention, which drove our policies. I think what we're saying is that 'if we've got these staff, we've trained them, they're happy here and we're happy with them' then if they make a request, why wouldn't we try to accommodate them if we can? We want the best people to be here.

Although using flexible working as a recruitment tool was not cited as very significant in our survey, our qualitative research of the small employer Women Like Us has shown that it can be important for some businesses. Women Like Us is a recruitment consultancy that helps employers match their needs with women who need flexibility. Women Like Us has a highly flexible workforce – 25 of its 29 members of staff work part-time and all work flexibly, for example working from home. The head of recruitment at Women Like Us told us:

By offering such flexibility I think we've been able to get some really talented, skilled staff that we wouldn't have been able to get otherwise. So it's kind of an imperative for us really. There are so few employers who offer the kind of flexibility that we can offer, that we find it really widens out the candidate pool.

She also argued that the benefits of allowing flexible working are particularly important for the small businesses for which Women Like Us provides a recruitment service:

We don't ask employers to feel sorry for someone they haven't met yet and we don't ask them to be accommodating to someone because that individual candidate needs flexibility. We ask instead for them to think about the business benefits of getting a £40k marketing manager for £20k because they're only working half time in the week. And that kind of messaging is quite strong, I think particularly for small businesses, particularly in the current climate. It's very appealing to think that you can get a high level of skills into the business and access a new pool of candidates, and particularly at the moment candidates are often drawn towards bigger firms where there seems to be more job security. And that's a key selling point to employers: you have one member of the team who is an ex-lawyer, another one from a research background, and so on, and that does actually really work for employers.

Our research also showed that flexible working can be used to increase productivity and has been used to reduce business costs. More than one in five (21 per cent) of employers we surveyed admitted that flexible working had been introduced in recent years to 'cut costs or avoid redundancies'. This was most common in manufacturing and pharmaceuticals (39 per cent), public administration (31 per cent) and education (30 per cent). Of the employers who admitted to introducing flexible working to cut costs or avoid redundancies, 16 per cent said it was made compulsory.

Our focus groups also showed that offering more flexibility can help improve commitment and productivity levels. Our research found that when a business is more responsive to the needs of employees, employees are more willing to be responsive to the needs of the business. A partner who had worked in the menswear section of a John Lewis branch and had been with the partnership for 21 years said:

You feel very committed if you work flexibly. I know it means I have to complete my work in certain hours now I work flexibly. It's partly because the Partnership's been good to me so I'd like to be good to them.

A culture of flexible working can therefore help build a relationship of reciprocity that serves business and employee

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needs. We found a similar response in the small business we spoke to. The head of recruitment at Women Like Us argued that flexibility led to higher commitment and engagement:

I think we get a strong level of commitment because of our flexible working arrangements. I really do. And I think that's partly because of – which is obviously something we're trying to address – the limited availability of part-time, high skilled, interesting jobs out there. So I think when someone finds a job that uses their skills, in an environment that's interesting and engaging, and they manage to get a pattern of hours that works for them, so they can have that balance in their life, I think you get a really high level of engagement. It's a fabulous moment that's not standard in the workplace, I would say. So I think you certainly, in terms of the kind of a psychological contract, you get a lot of commitment because the business is more attractive to be in.

However, this can mean that employees take on greater workloads and this can lead to increased work pressure. Research on a cohort of professional workers found that although those working flexible hours had greater levels of job satisfaction they also experienced greater work intensification.⁹⁷ For instance, those who worked from home were more likely to work longer hours. As a middle level manager in a large organisation stated, it requires the worker to try and balance the demands of their work in a smaller time period:

If you are volunteering to reduce your hours, in reality you work harder to make up your lost hours. I work compressed hours and I have to work faster and harder. I think that there are a minimum number of hours I need to do my job.

However, despite the growth in the amount of flexible working being offered, our polling of employers indicates that this expansion in flexible working may stall: 81 per cent of employers stated that they did not expect that their organisation would extend flexible working in the next two years. This figure rises to 91 per cent among firms with less than 50 employees. The most common reasons employers gave for not offering more

flexible working were ‘operational pressures’ and ‘customer service requirements’ (both in excess of 50 per cent), followed by ‘financial constraints’ at 28 per cent.

As table 2 illustrates, the most common form of flexible working arrangement that employers offer is part-time working. The UK has offered employees the opportunity to work part-time far more frequently than its peer nations, though a distinction exists between ‘voluntary’ and ‘involuntary’ part-time working. ‘Voluntary’ part-time workers are those who choose to work part-time out of preference, while ‘involuntary’ part-time workers are those currently working part-time who would prefer to work full-time. In our poll we looked at voluntary part-time working, which makes up over 80 per cent of part-time working, in order to understand preferences for flexible working (figure 5).

The statistics show that voluntary part-time working has increased steadily if not dramatically. This has been one of the factors that has enabled women to have a greater presence in the labour market as they can balance work with childcare demands. Our results show that 28 per cent of women work part-time compared with just 7 per cent of men.

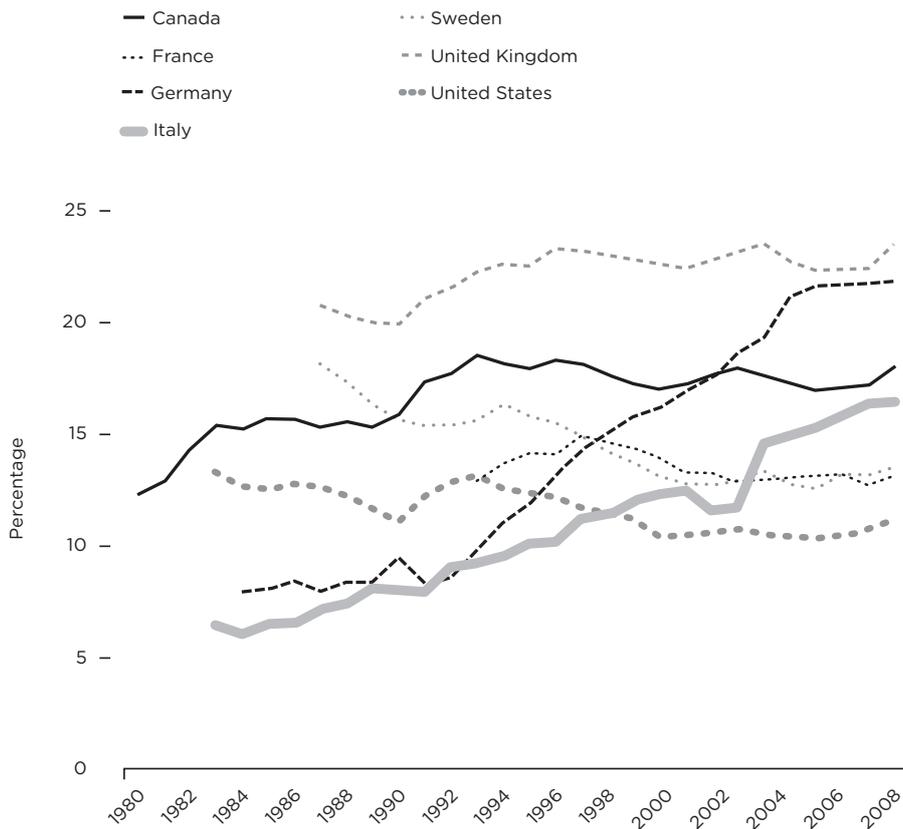
However, while the data indicate that the provision of flexible working arrangements has substantially expanded over time, there has been considerable variation in provision depending on the size of the firm and industry. For instance, while 52 per cent of large firms offer career breaks, only 8 per cent of small firms do. Similarly, while 76 per cent of employers in healthcare and social work offer flexible working to all employees, only 25 per cent of manufacturers do.

Knowledge of flexible working arrangements

Our quantitative research suggests that levels of awareness of flexible working among employees has increased but there are still large gaps in their knowledge about what the legal right to request flexible working covers and what their workplace offers. More than two-thirds (71 per cent) of employers stated that their employees’ awareness of their rights to request flexible working

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Figure 5 **Voluntary part-time working as proportion of total employment**



Source: OECD data⁹⁸

had increased over the past five years. However, almost 60 per cent of employees surveyed did not know who was covered in the legal right to request flexible working. Most believed it was far more extensive than it is, supposing that it covers all employees.

Our results show there is a severe lack of knowledge among employees about what flexible working arrangements their employer offered. As the employers we surveyed did not directly correspond to employees surveyed there is no direct correlation

between our results, despite being a weighted survey. However, employees significantly underestimated the availability of every form of flexible working arrangement, suggesting there is a substantial lack of knowledge about workplace flexible working arrangements on offer (table 4).

Use of flexible working arrangements

Employees are more likely to be allowed to work flexibly than in the past and they are increasingly taking up the opportunity. In our survey 56 per cent of employees said they worked flexibly, and this figure rises to 62 per cent for women. Certain forms of flexible working arrangement are used far more than others (table 4).

Table 4 **The flexible working arrangements employers in the UK offer and what employees think employers offer**

	Employers stating organisation offers flexible working arrangement	Employees stating organisation offers flexible working arrangement	Difference
Part-time working	76%	52%	-24
Varying start and finish times	68%	43%	-25
Flexible hours	55%	34%	-21
Working from home	47%	26%	-21
Compressed hours (eg 4 day week)	41%	21%	-20
Career breaks	35%	21%	-14
Term-time working	30%	12%	-18
Annualised hours	19%	7%	-12
Time banking	15%	7%	-8
Working a 'nine-day fortnight'	14%	6%	-8
Job-sharing	46%	24%	-22
None of these - no flexible working offered	8%	15%	+7
Don't know	1%	10%	+9

Source: Demos poll, 2011

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Part-time working is the most widely offered form of flexible working arrangement, but only the third most popular. Although it is not the most widely offered, the most frequently used type of flexible working arrangement was ‘varying start and finish times’. Over 25 per cent of the respondents who worked flexibly used this form of flexible working. The four most popular forms of flexible working arrangements – varying start and finish times, flexible hours, part-time working and working from home – make up over 80 per cent of flexible arrangements used. Despite the wide range of possible arrangements and the fact that employers increasingly offer them, other forms of flexible working, such as compressed hours and time banking, are rarely used. Their use also varies by level of seniority in the firm; more senior employees are more likely to work from home while lower level employees engage more in part-time working.

We asked employees which forms of flexible working they believed would help their work–life balance. Flexible hours was identified as the most useful flexible working arrangement to aid work–life balance, followed by varying start and finish times. Working from home was identified as the next most useful. This was by far the most popular among parents with young children.

Our survey also asked employees who worked flexibly why they did so, and employees who do not work flexibly why they did not. Respondents could select a number of reasons. Of those who worked flexibly, nearly half (49 per cent) said that they used flexible working ‘to make life easier’, 37 per cent wanted ‘to have more free time’ and 25 per cent wanted ‘to spend more time with children or family’. Women were twice as likely to want ‘to spend more time with children or family’ than men – 33 per cent of women gave this reason compared with just 16 per cent of men. Only 9 per cent of respondents said they worked flexibly because of the cost of childcare, but this figure rose to 14 per cent for women compared with 3 per cent for men.

Of those who did not work flexibly, 33 per cent said ‘it’s not a priority for me’, 31 per cent said it was ‘impractical given the nature of the job’ and 30 per cent said it was not available from

their current employer. Those working in banking, finance and insurance were the most likely to say that it was not available from the current employer (39 per cent), followed by transport, information and communication (35 per cent). Similarly, the most common response by those working flexibly for why they were not working more flexibly was that it is 'impractical given the nature of the job' (29 per cent).

Our survey shows that 79 per cent of requests to work flexible hours were made informally, for example in a conversation with a manager. This figure rises to 89 per cent among small firms with fewer than 50 employees, and 83 per cent of all applications were approved. The most commonly rejected request was for flexible hours (37 per cent) followed by varying start and finish times (17 per cent).

Risk factors

Although flexibility has become a reality for most, the ability to work flexibly is not equally distributed across individuals and workplaces. There are barriers to flexibility, or 'risk factors', for certain employees. The 'risk factors' fall into two main groups: organisational and personal. Organisational risk factors are those that are dependent on the firm, including the sector and size of the firm. Generally the larger the firm and the more high-end service the industry, the greater the flexibility that the employee can access. Personal risk is concerned with the characteristics of the individual, which makes them more likely to work flexibly. These factors include job role, gender and age. Plotting the levels of risk we find that there are significant disparities in flexibility between individuals and workplaces.

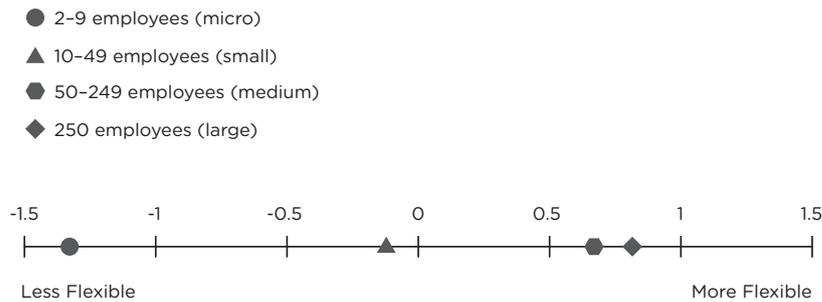
Organisational risk factors

Firm size

The size of a firm correlates with the degree to which flexible working arrangements are available (figure 6). The smaller the firm the greater the likelihood that the employer does not offer any forms of flexible working arrangements (table 5).

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Figure 6 Degree of flexibility in working hours for different sized firms



Note: Scale based on standard deviations from mean
 Source: Demos poll, 2011

Micro firms (with fewer than ten employees) are over three times more likely not to offer any form of flexible working arrangement than medium-sized firms (with 50–249 employees) and large firms (with 250 or more employees). However, the picture is more complicated than this finding would suggest. Although over 16 per cent of micro firms do not offer any form of flexible working arrangement, employees working in micro firms are among the most flexible employees – they are more likely to be engaged in a flexible working arrangement than a firm of any other size.

As these results show, employees working in micro firms are about 20 percentage points more likely to be working flexibly than employees in a small or medium-sized firm and almost 15 percentage points more likely than those in a large firm.

We also asked employers about their estimated rate of acceptance of flexible working requests. Smaller firms were more likely to accept a request: 86 per cent of flexible working requests in small firms with fewer than 50 employees were accepted compared with 70 per cent in large firms with more than 250 employees. Therefore, and seemingly paradoxically, while micro firms give some of the lowest levels of access to flexible working arrangements, they simultaneously have the highest proportion of employees working flexibly.

Table 5 **Proportion of employees in the UK with a flexible working arrangement in different-sized firms**

Number of employees in firm	Proportion of employees with a flexible working arrangement
2-9 (micro)	67.4%
10-49 (small)	49.1%
50-249 (medium)	49.4%
250+	55.9%

Source: Demos poll, 2011

Some employer groups have argued that the statutory right to request flexible working is particularly burdensome for small businesses that do not have a dedicated human resources function. Yet there are small business flexible-working vanguards who argue that their scale actually allows them to be more flexible. Speaking to the small employer Women Like Us about how the company found its scale affected its ability to offer flexible working hours, the head of recruitment stated:

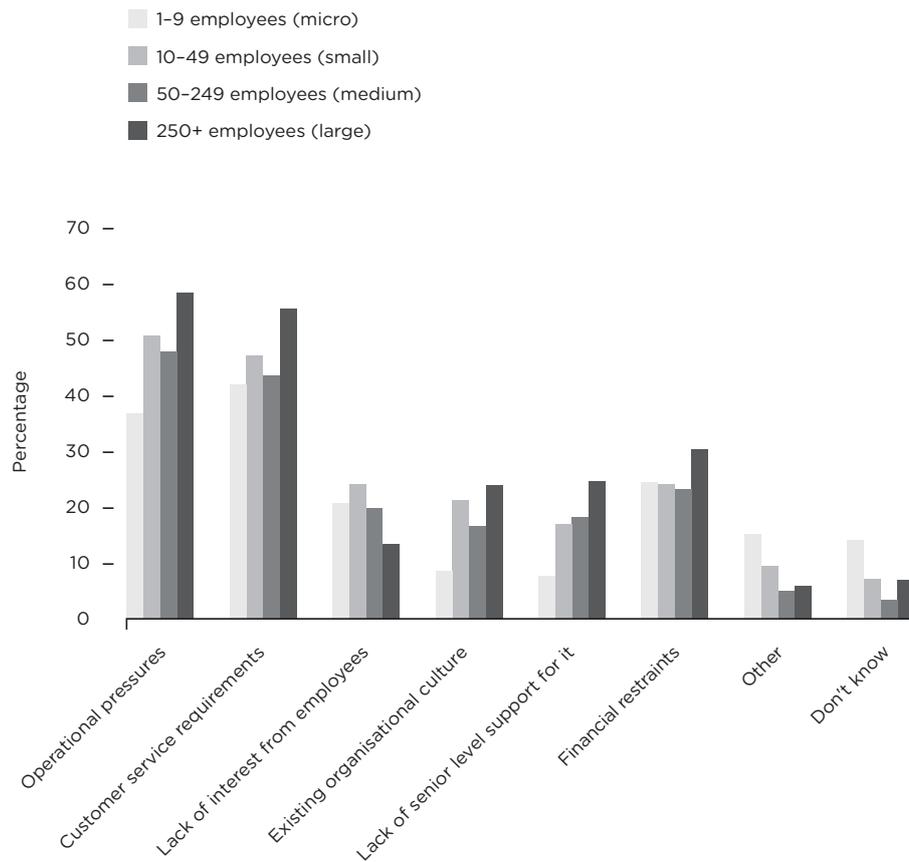
I actually think in some ways it's a bit easier for small businesses because, particularly growing ones, we're so dynamic and evolving that it's not like there's a massive human resources policy framework to fit into, that kind of overarching set of precedents that people come into. We really take things case by case and work out what's right for the business and the individual at this moment in time. So I think in some ways having less structure and policy in place makes it a bit easier to implement. Although having said that, in bigger businesses you have a lot more support available for the individual and the manager, so I'm guessing it cuts both ways.

In our survey we asked employers what they believed the constraints were on their firm offering more flexible working (figure 7).

The overall distribution of reasons employers gave for not offering more flexible working was broadly similar for all sizes of firms. This suggests that scale is not in itself a major barrier to

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Figure 7 **Reasons given by employers for not offering more flexible working**



Source: Demos poll, 2011

the expansion of flexible working. However, indirect factors associated with scale may be a barrier. They may include lack of knowledge of flexible working arrangements and lack of a dedicated human resources function for micro firms. The results clearly show that while respondents in larger firms cited more ‘conventional’ reasons for not offering more flexible working, such as ‘operational pressures’, those in micro firms were more

likely to say either that they did not know why they didn't offer more or said there was an 'other reason'. For small and micro firms the person answering the questionnaire was more likely to be the business owner and therefore their lack of knowledge about why they do not offer more flexibility is significant. In larger firms someone in human resources is more likely to have answered the survey.

We asked respondents whether their requests for flexible working were rejected. Our results show that medium-sized firms – firms with between 50 and 249 employees – were the most likely to reject a flexible working request (figure 8).

Our results show that medium firms were twice as likely as a small firm and about one and a half times more likely than a large firm to reject a flexible working request.

As stated earlier, flexible working requests are predominantly agreed informally: 79 per cent of those who had made a request had done so informally, for instance through a discussion with their manager, not involving human resources staff. This is even more likely to be the case in smaller firms, where 89 per cent of requests for flexible working in firms with fewer than 50 employees are made informally compared with 75 per cent among firms with more than 250 employees.

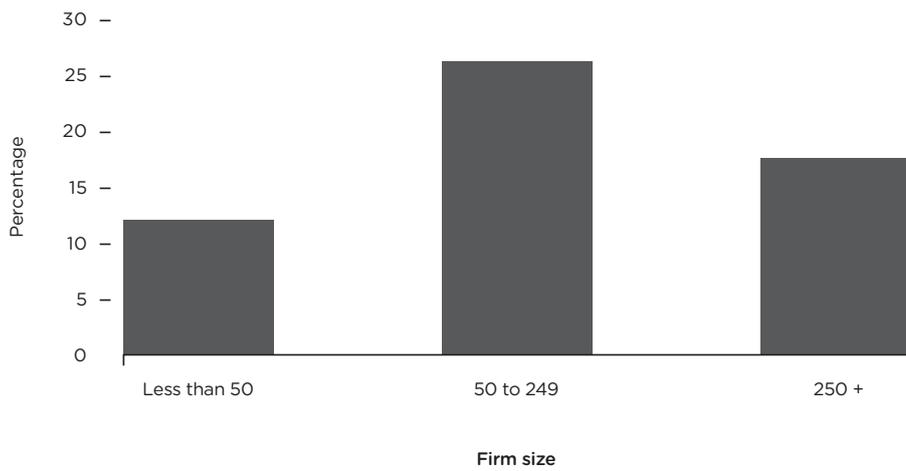
Further, employers in small firms were far more likely to encourage informal requests for flexible working than employers in large firms: 66 per cent of employers in firms with fewer than 50 employees stated that they encourage the handling of requests for flexible working without the need for a formal process, compared with 38 per cent among employers in firms with between 50 and 249 employees, and 22 per cent among firms with more than 250 employees.

A human resources manager at a large firm said:

We do try to discourage it [informal flexible working arrangements], for the partner. Because if anything happens to them we don't know what's agreed. All we've got to go on is their contractual arrangement and often if changing working patterns are not formalised then you get in a mess with all sorts of things. Therefore we far prefer a thing put into a formal request because then the partner's protected.

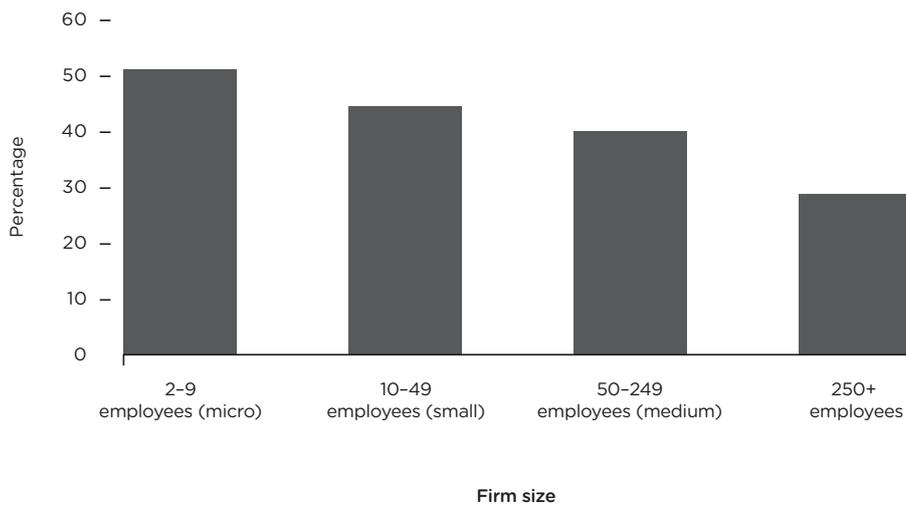
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Figure 8 **Proportion of employees in the UK who had flexible working requests rejected, by size of employer**



Source: Demos poll, 2011

Figure 9 **Proportion of employees who say they have 'a lot' of control over how their working time is allocated**



Source: Demos poll, 2011

This illustrates that in a large firm there are fears that a request is not addressed properly if it is not made formally. In contrast, the human resources manager in the small firm we spoke to said that it was the norm to promote and arrange flexible working informally:

A lot of the requests are informal conversations between a member of staff and their manager rather than a formal flexible working request in line with the right to request kind of thing... We tend to have quite an informal approach.

The size of a firm also correlates strongly with employees' subjective control over how their working time is allocated. The smaller the firm the more likely the employee is to state they have 'a lot' of control over how their working time is allocated (figure 9).

Figure 10 illustrates the negative correlation between the size and subjective control an employee has over their working time. As the earlier analysis of employees' conceptions of 'good work' showed, 'control over working time' is an important aspect of what people value in their working life. Therefore we may expect that the larger the firm, the greater difficulty there is for employees to be satisfied with this dimension of their working life. Yet, as our qualitative research shows, this often depends on the structure of the firm. Our focus groups at John Lewis probed employees about their experience of working in a partnership. The participants described the higher level of control they had, through democratic channels, over wide aspects of their work. This included, to an extent, store opening hours. Several argued that this made employees feel more empowered over their work and working times. A new partner in one of our focus groups at John Lewis Kingston told us:

I used to work for a small PR company. You knew everyone in the office. You knew when people were in and when they were out. And being small meant that we had more control, to some extent, over when we were in the office. There was so much flexibility. John Lewis, in contrast, is a

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massive company. But by being a partnership it makes you feel like you're working for a small company even though you're working for a big company.

Our research also shows, therefore, that the organisation of the firm is an important aspect of the flexible working debate.⁹⁹ In order to 'reinvent the workplace' ownership structures must be looked at.

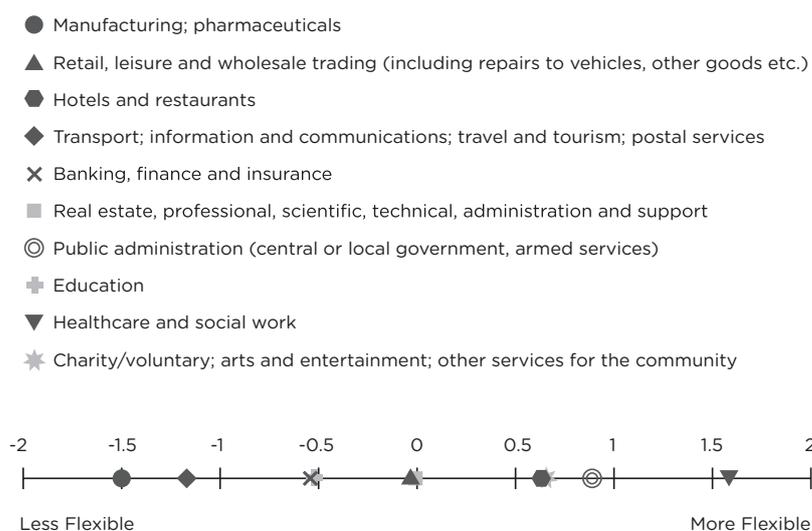
Sector

The availability of flexible working arrangements differs between sectors. Our survey focused on employers and employees in various parts of the service and manufacturing sectors. We focused particularly on the service sector, partly because it predominates in Britain, but also because it includes a large spectrum of industries and lends itself well to flexible working. We included manufacturing to compare how well the service sector does in comparison. Our results show that employers in manufacturing and transport are five times less likely to offer any form of flexible working arrangement than those in public administration. Overall the firms in the higher-end service sector are more likely to offer access to flexible working arrangements and employees are more likely to use them (figure 10).

The differences in degree of availability of flexible working arrangements provided by different employers may reflect differing business environments and needs. We asked employers in different sectors the reasons why they do not offer more flexible working and the types of flexible working arrangements they do offer. 'Operational pressures' was the most frequently cited reason for not offering more flexible working arrangements, given by 53 per cent of employers overall, but by 72 per cent among transport employers and 73 per cent among public administration employers. In contrast only 17 per cent of employers in the banking, finance and insurance sector gave it as a reason. For banks, customer service was the most common reason (given by 46 per cent of bank, finance and insurance employers) for not offering more flexible working arrangements. This figure rose to 74 per cent among hotel and restaurant

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Figure 10 **Degree of access employees have to flexible working arrangements in different sectors**



Scale based on standard deviations from the mean
Source: Demos poll, 2011

employers. The most common reason for not offering more flexible working in manufacturing was ‘lack of senior level support for it’, almost three times higher than in any other sector. Financial restraints were only cited as a reason by 28 per cent of employers.¹⁰⁰

Our qualitative research found that market pressures were one of the key factors shaping what flexibility was offered in the retail market. One senior partner at John Lewis Partnership who had worked in many different parts of the business told us about how the expansion of trading hours led to the increased prevalence, and then dominance, of part-time working:

I joined 21 years ago – Waitrose, I think in those days had one late night a week and I don’t think we traded Sundays. Then we started trading Sundays, and then depending where you worked the late nights became more frequent. I worked in some of the London branches where there were more

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late nights. Now there are even more late nights and the suburbs have started doing the late nights as well. When I started at John Lewis it was Tuesday to Saturday for the vast majority of branches and I think they did one late night. Most employees were full-timers who did Tuesday to Saturdays. So the only part-timers you had would be to supplement some Saturday staff and the late night on Thursday. You didn't have loads of part-timers. Whereas now most [of] John Lewis' [staff work] 7 days a week, most of them will have 2-3 late nights a week. One or two of them will have far more late nights. I think now, actually, that they also realise the benefits in terms of cost savings of having part-timers just doing hours when they need them. So they will do it branch by branch according to their peak trading time. Whilst in the old days at Waitrose you had people on checkouts doing 10-2 which you know were the mature ladies doing the nice hours – well I think you've got a lot less of that now. If you're a London branch then most of your trade is early evening when people are coming out of work.

This dominance of part-time working is not found on such a scale anywhere else in the service sector and illustrates how flexible working can be used to meet the needs of the sector.

Not only do certain sectors offer fewer flexible working arrangements than others, but the types of flexible working arrangements employers offer also differ between sectors. Part-time working is over twice as frequently offered to staff working in hotels and restaurants as to those working in public administration and banking, finance and insurance. Similarly, and unsurprisingly, retail, hotels and restaurants are 75 per cent less likely to offer working from home as part of their flexible working arrangements as banking, finance and insurance, and administrative and support services, because it is not feasible in those sectors. Hotels and restaurant employers are two and a half times more likely to offer varying start and finish times than they are to offer flexible hours. This illustrates how some types of flexible working arrangements are more suited to certain sectors than others.

Some sectors offer a far broader set of flexible working arrangements than others. For instance, part-time working and varying start and finish times make up in excess of 55 per cent of all forms of flexible working arrangements that hotels and

restaurants offer, whereas employers in public administration, healthcare and social work offer a far more comprehensive set of flexible working arrangements. The three most popular forms of flexible working offered by public administration employers (part-time working, varying start and finish times and flexible hours) make up just 42 per cent of the total forms of flexible working arrangements available and 42 per cent of those in healthcare and social work.¹⁰¹

Finally, certain sectors are far more likely to reject a request for flexible working than others according to our polling (table 6).

Table 6 **Proportion of employees in the UK who had requests to work flexible hours rejected, by sector**

Sector	Proportion of requests to work flexible hours rejected
Real estate, professional, scientific, technical, administration and support	23%
Hotels and restaurants	21%
Public administration (central or local government, armed services)	18%
Education	18%
Healthcare and social work	17%
Average	17%
Manufacturing; pharmaceuticals	17%
Retail, leisure and wholesale trading (including repairs to vehicles, other goods etc.)	15%
Transport; information and communications; travel & tourism; postal services	14
Banking, finance and insurance	11
Charity and voluntary; arts and entertainment; other services for the community	6

Source: Demos poll, 2011

Almost 25 per cent of employees who work in administrative support and 22 per cent of employees who work in hotels and restaurants had their request to work flexibly rejected. This rate of rejection was over four times more than for

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those working in the charity sector. This is likely to be barrier for those with caring needs.

There are also sectoral differences in the levels of autonomy employees have. In our survey we asked respondents about their perception of how much control they have over their working time and their level of satisfaction about their control. There were large differences in response according to sector. Employees working in charities were almost twice as likely to say that they had ‘a lot’ of control over their working times as employees working in retail (figure 11).

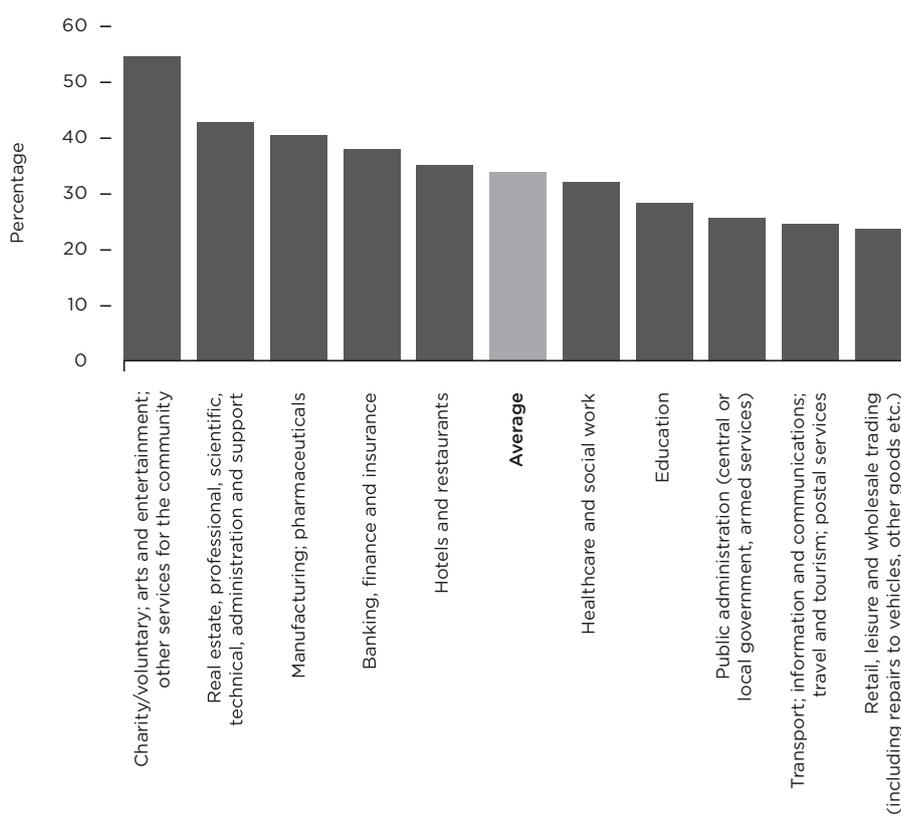
However, some results were surprising, particularly the high score for those working in manufacturing. It may reflect differing perceptions of ‘control’.

When we analyse differences between sectors it is also important to address the issue of ‘self-selection’. People often choose or ‘select’ the sector they are employed in, in the knowledge of the sort of lifestyle involved. For instance, those working in banking came fourth of the sectors looked at in their rating of how much control they felt they had over their working time, but came top when we asked them about their satisfaction over the amount of choice they have in how their working time is allocated. Those working in banking were among the most likely to state that their ‘salary’ was very important to their working life, and flexible working was less important. This illustrates that some employees relinquish a degree of control in order to enter the industry they want to work in, and maintain their satisfaction in this industry.

This is more likely to be the case for individuals who can work in high-end service sector jobs. Those working in retail reported the lowest level of control over their working time and also the lowest level of satisfaction over it. Similarly those working in transport, another lower-end service sector, reported the second lowest level of control over their working times and the second lowest level of satisfaction in their control over how their working time is allocated. However, this finding is not true for all industries, for instance those working in manufacturing cited a high level of control in how their working time is allocated but were less likely to be satisfied about the level of

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Figure 11 **Proportion of employees stating that they have 'a lot' of control over their working time, by sector**



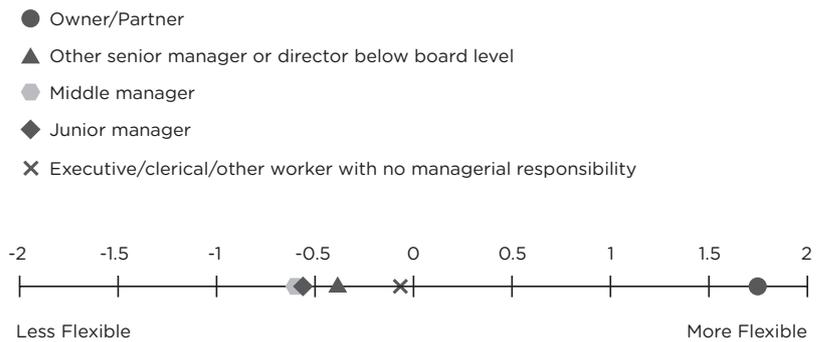
Source: Demos poll, 2011

choice they had in how their working time was allocated.

Further, the impact of self-selection is illustrated in the reasons employees gave for not working flexibly. More than one-third (36 per cent) of those working in manufacturing, a sector where employees have only limited access to flexible working arrangements, said that flexible working 'is not a priority' for them, compared with 23 per cent of those who work in public administration, which is a far more flexible industry.¹⁰²

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Figure 12 **Scale of flexibility over working hours in UK, by level of seniority of employee**



Based on standard deviations from mean
Source: Demos poll, 2011

There are promising signs in some traditionally high-risk sectors that flexible working will be expanded: 19 per cent of employers overall stated they believed that their organisation would extend the level of flexible working in the next two years, and this rises to 35 per cent among manufacturers and 23 per cent among retailers.

Individual risk factors

There is variation in the amount of flexibility given to individuals as certain characteristics are more likely to determine whether an employer is allowed to work flexible hours than others. Being female and having a more senior position within a firm is positively associated with working flexibly. However, these risk factors are again complex as our research suggests that individual risk factors may draw on three bases: self-selection, as some groups of individuals choose more or less flexibility; societal factors, including pressure on mothers to take on childcare responsibilities; and intrinsic factors, including those in more senior positions being required to work flexibly to balance all work duties.

Job role

An employee's position in a firm can have an impact on their flexibility. A more senior position within a firm correlates with greater flexibility over working hours (figure 12).

Business owners are around 15 percentage points more likely to be working flexibly than any of the staff in more junior positions, but our results show that below this management level there is less difference in use of flexible working arrangements by different levels of seniority (figure 13). This is in large part explained by the higher level of control and autonomy more employees in more senior positions have over their work.

Yet employers perceive that they are among the least flexible. We asked employers who they thought worked flexibly. Employers are more likely to say that lower levels of employee work flexibly despite this being the opposite of reality (figure 14).

With the exception of manual workers, this suggests that employers believe a more senior position correlates with less flexibility. They think that lower level staff may act as a barrier to offering flexible working because they believe flexible working is far more common than it really is.

Although the owner of a company is more likely to work flexibly than other employees, their form of flexible work arrangement is likely to differ from that of other employees. For instance the more senior the employee the more likely they are to work from home. The more junior the employee, the more likely they are to work part-time (although the owner is also likely to work part-time).

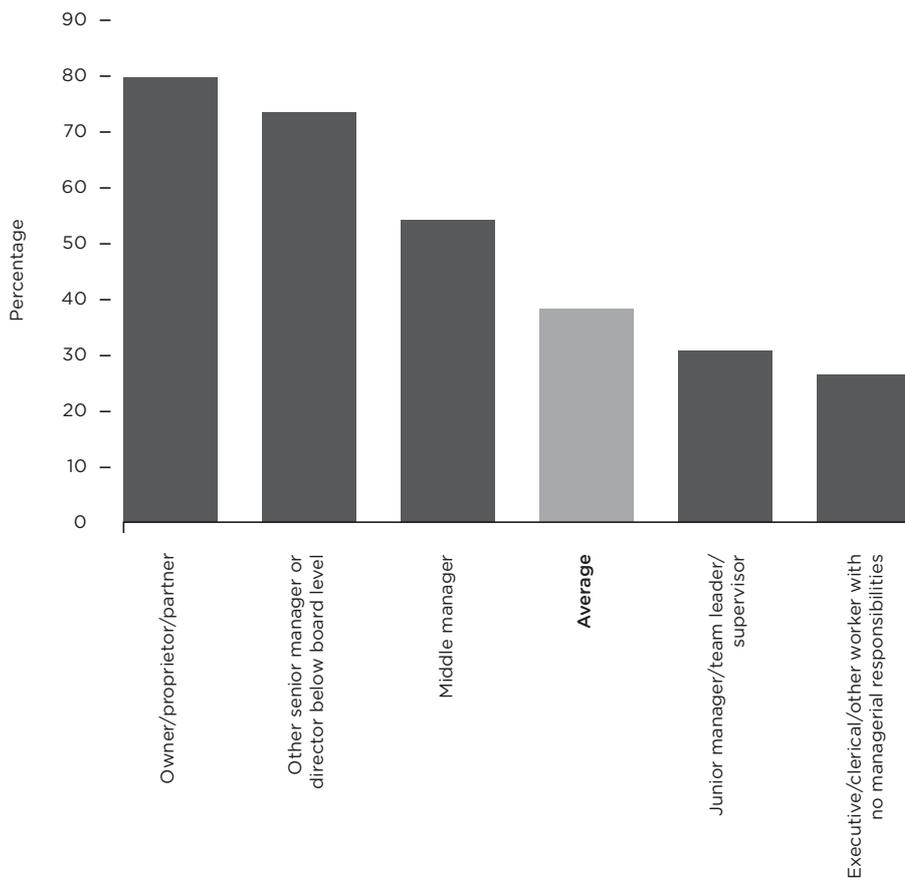
As figure 15 shows, other flexible working arrangements such as working from home and varying start and finish times are most common among higher levels of management.

As part of our qualitative research we asked employees and employers in different sized firms about who they believed had access to and benefitted from flexible working arrangements. One of the frontline middle level managers in a large company we spoke to said: 'I think that there is definitely a view that for managers, it [working flexibly] is frowned on more.'

What came out in our focus groups was that there was a fear among managers that working flexibly would create

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Figure 13 **Proportion of employees stating that they have 'a lot' of control over their working time, by level of seniority**

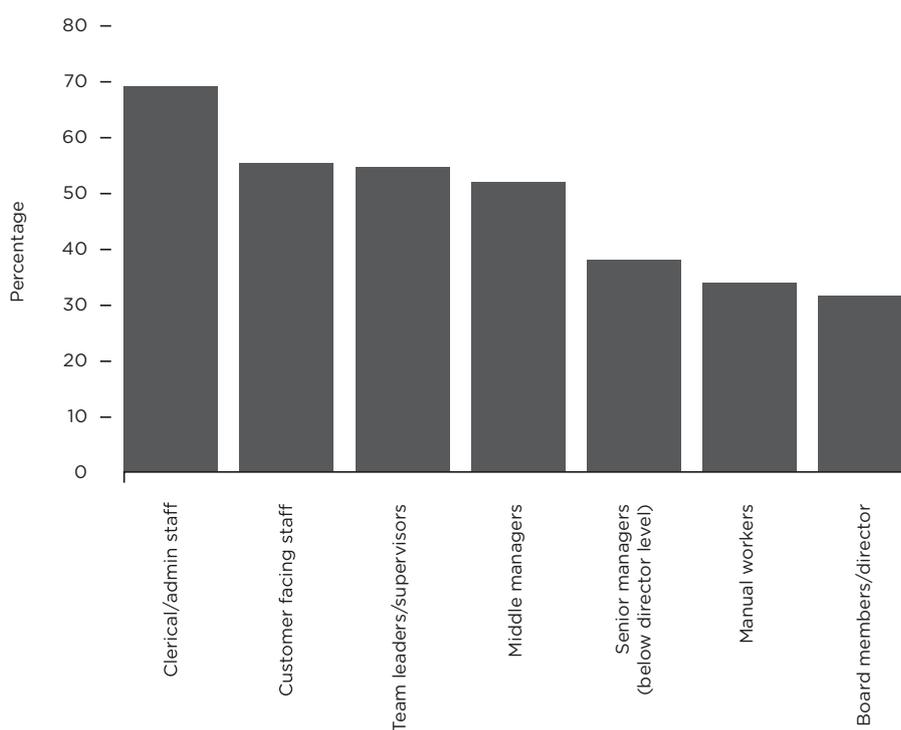


Source: Demos poll, 2011

resentment among employees below them who did not work flexibly. Sometimes we found that this led to managers keeping their flexible working arrangements secret. There was also evidence among employees that working flexibly would harm the prospects of career advancement. A senior male employee at a large employer said: 'People who work flexibly often understand that it is likely to mean that they are putting their career advancement on hold.'

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Figure 14 **Proportion of employers who state that employees work flexibly, by position within firm**



Source: Demos poll, 2011

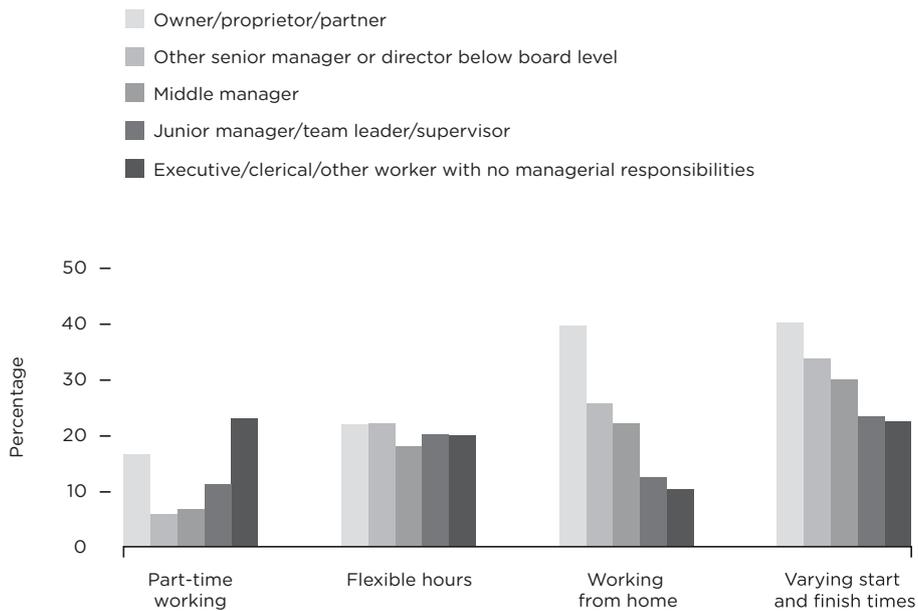
This seemed to be most true for middle management. Speaking to employees in a large retail store we found that, because of their need to be in the store to organise and support a team, middle managers felt less able to work flexibly. One employee commented on flexible working for middle managers, ‘I guess it’s the painful bit you need to do to get to the next level.’

Gender

Women are far more likely to request and take up a flexible working arrangement than men: 77 per cent of employers said

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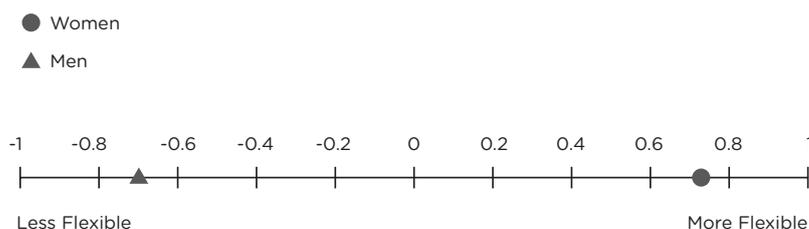
Figure 15 **Proportion of employees who use flexible working arrangements, by position within firm**



Source: Demos poll, 2011

that less than 1 in 4 flexible working requests came from men (figure 16). Furthermore, women were slightly more likely to be successful in their flexible working requests: 81 per cent of women had their request accepted compared with 77 per cent of men. The flexible working arrangements women take up and their reasons for doing so also differ from men.

Our survey showed that 50 per cent of men and 38 per cent of women said they did ‘not work flexibly’. The flexible working arrangements that women used more than men include ‘part-time working’, ‘flexible hours’ and ‘compressed hours’. In contrast, men are more likely than women to work from home, to use varying start and finish times and to use time banking (table 7).

Figure 16 **Scale of who is working flexibly, by gender**

Based on standard deviations from mean
Source: Demos poll, 2011

Table 7 **Proportion of employees in the UK who use different forms of flexible working arrangement, men and women**

	Men	Women
Do not work flexibly	49.9%	37.5%
Part-time working	7.3%	27.8%
Flexible hours	17.5%	20.4%
Compressed hours	2.5%	5.4%
Working from home	15.6%	12.2%
Varying start and finish	24.6%	22.8%
Time bank	2.3%	2.0%

Source: Demos poll, 2011

Part of the reasons for these differences in types of flexible working was the differing motivations women had for working flexibly compared with men. Women were twice as likely as men to state they wanted to work flexibly in order to spend more time with children or family (table 8). The fact that the child caring burden falls most heavily on women is what drives the high proportion of part-time working among women. In contrast, as men dominate the more senior positions in firms there is a higher level of men working from home.

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Table 8 **Reasons given by employees in the UK for wanting to work flexible hours, men and women**

	Men	Women
Personal health issues	5.3%	9.0%
To make life easier	52.4%	45.6%
To spend more time with children	16.3%	32.7%
More free time	35.6%	38.2%
Take part in part-time education or training	5.9%	8.5%
Lack of available childcare	4.3%	7.6%
Cost of childcare	3.5%	13.8%
Volunteer	3.7%	4.1%
Care for a disabled adult at home	2.9%	4.4%
Other	24.2%	18.9%

Source: Demos poll, 2011

When considering why an employee doesn't work flexibly, men are far more likely to say that it is 'not a priority' for them (table 9). They are also more concerned about loss of earnings, primarily because men are more likely to be the household breadwinner. Linked to this is the fact that they are more concerned about the impact flexible working would have on their career promotion. In contrast, women are over twice as likely as men to cite childcare reasons for wanting to work flexibly.

We spoke to a personnel manager in a distribution centre and a distribution centre manager. Both found that in their predominantly male environments there were few requests and little interest in flexible working. The personnel manager in the distribution centre said: 'It's [the distribution centre] definitely a more male environment. In my experience we don't get the requests from partners in the distribution centre', and the distribution centre manager said: 'I think you're assuming it's more of a subject in people's minds than it really is. Here, at least, I just don't think it's that much of an issue.'

These results help explain why men will not be encouraged to take up flexible working and address gender inequality in the

Table 9 **Reasons given by employees in the UK for not working flexibly, men and women**

	Men	Women
Impractical given the nature of the job	33.8%	27.5%
Concerned about impact on career or promotion prospects	6.0%	5.3%
Not available from current employer	29.6%	30.5%
Not aware of specific rights to request flexible working	4.8%	7.9%
Not a priority for me	36.0%	29.7%
Concerned request would be rejected	5.8%	5.3%
Concerned about reaction from colleagues	4.0%	3.0%
Concerned about loss of earnings	11.6%	8.6%
Concerned about negative response from managers	7.5%	5.3%
Don't want to work to work flexibly	19.1%	18.5%

Source: Demos poll, 2011

workplace without challenging the motivations for working flexibly. Although flexible working enables women to work more than they would if this form of work was not possible, in itself it does not help address wider imbalances between men and women such as those in childcare duties and pay rates.

We found in our focus groups that when women were working flexibly it was primarily to balance childcare demands. Illustrating how women balance childcare demands, one frontline female employee said at one of our focus groups: 'Having part-time work means I can work late nights. And I love late nights – it means I can take my girls to school in the morning.'

Our survey also included a question asking male respondents whether they were likely to use a longer period of paternity leave. The majority (86 per cent) said they would not use longer paternity leave if offered. There was little difference between social groups. Those in groups C2, D and E were only marginally less likely to use a longer period of flexible parental leave. However, male employees who worked in banking, finance

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and insurance were the most likely to say they would use it, with 28 per cent of male employees in banking agreeing. This result is likely to be related to the greater financial security that men in this sector have.

Part of the solution to this is offering a more generous form of paternity leave. In a focus group in John Lewis, a frontline partner told us of his experience of paternity leave at the organisation:

Everyone I know will take paternity leave now. Part of the reason for that is that the first week is full pay. Then it falls down to about £150 for the second week. Some fathers I know use their paid holiday for paternity leave instead.

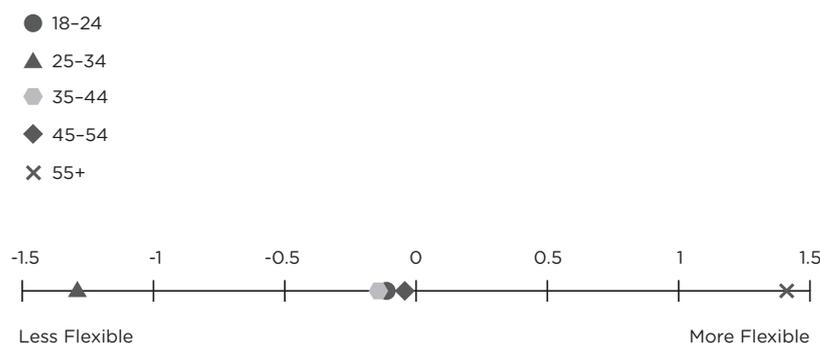
This experience was shared by a more senior male partner working in the offices of the same store: ‘I’ve had six children and being there makes a big difference. Being paid for that is very important I think.’

Age

During the life-cycle an individual’s needs and priorities change. Younger men are often keen to maximise their career prospects and so do not work flexibly, while women in their 30s may take time off for childcare. Those in their 40s often need flexibility to care for an older relative. Those in their 50s often reduce their hours leading up to retirement. As part of Demos’ research into the factors affecting flexibility, we used multinomial logistic regression analysis to test what was related to people’s working flexibly, and age remained one of the most statistically significant factors. However, simply looking at who works flexibly in different age groups hides the differences.

Figure 17 shows a reasonably large amount of deviation in flexible working for different age groups, but the actual differences in proportion are not so great. The two age groups that have flexible working arrangements the most are the over 55s (63 per cent) and 18–24-year-olds (54 per cent). The group with the lowest number of employees working flexibly is the 25–34 age group (49 per cent). These results do not show overall

Figure 17 **Scale of who is working flexibly, by age group**



Based on standard deviations from mean
Source: Demos poll, 2011

a substantial different in use of flexible working, but looking more deeply, differences arise in the types of flexible working arrangements that are used.

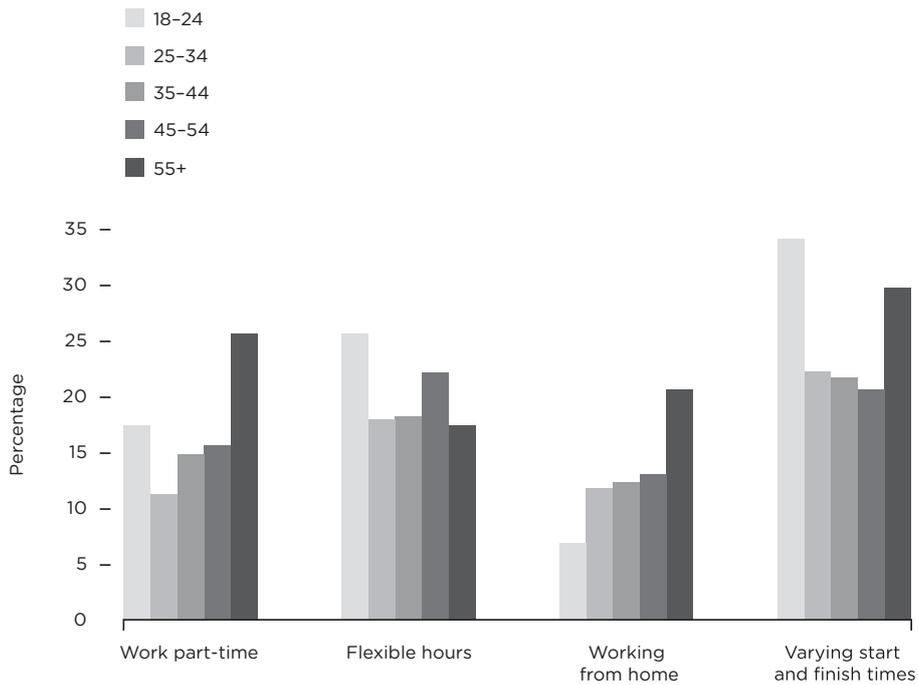
Our research shows that the youngest and oldest age groups were the most likely to work part-time and to vary start and finish times. The proportion of employees working from home was positively associated with age (figure 18).

The type of flexible working arrangement used corresponded with the reason given for working flexibly: 60 per cent of over 55s were the most likely to say that they worked flexibly 'to make life easier'. Those in the 35-44 age group were the most likely to work flexible hours to spend more time with children and because of childcare costs. The 25-34 age group is the most likely to say that their salary was 'very important' to their working life whereas the 35-44 age group was the most likely to say that flexibility was very important to their working life.

As part of our qualitative research we asked large employers from which groups they had seen increases in requests to work flexible hours over the past ten years. One of the most common responses was that there had increasingly been an expectation by young people of a right to flexible working. We

How brittle are British workplaces?

Figure 18 Proportion of employees with flexible working arrangements, by age group



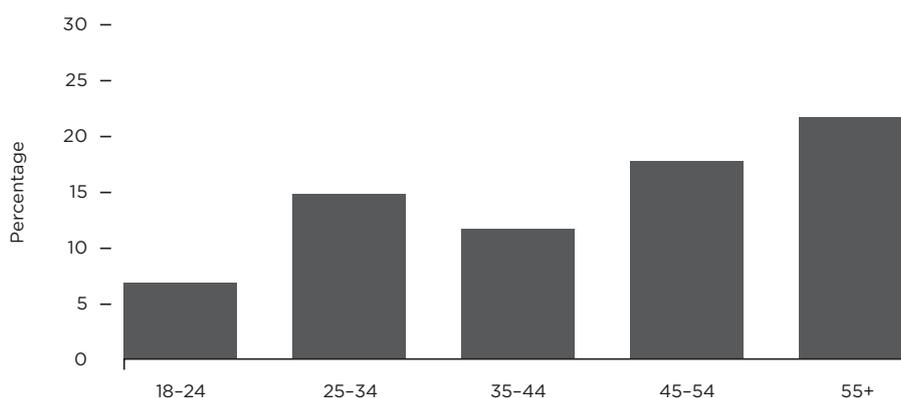
Source: Demos poll, 2011

spoke to a former graduate recruiter at a large company about their experience, who said:

One of the best examples I can give to illustrate [this is that] I used to interview graduates and I started noticing that more and more graduates were talking to me about what were our arrangements for flexible working and that they wanted a work-life balance. When I was a graduate I would have said I'll work any hours you want. So the mindset actually of youngsters is that it's alright. They are not prepared necessarily to come in and sell their time.

83

Figure 19 **Proportion of employees whose request to work flexible hours was rejected, by age group**



Source: Demos poll, 2011

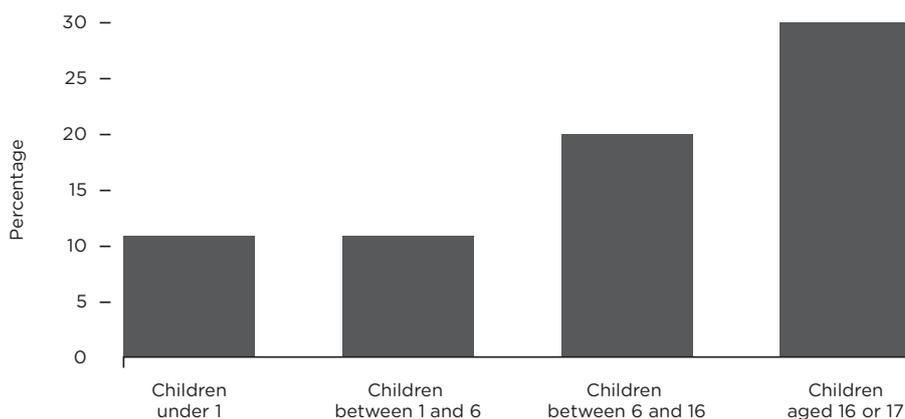
This changing expectation about working flexible hours is likely to be a pressure on employers to expand their flexible working arrangements further. However, it will also mean that in a first-come-first-served system of being able to work flexible hours, instead of one based on the prioritisation of needs, young people are more likely to request and be allowed to work flexibly than those with more acute need.

Age is also a significant factor when considering whose requests to work flexible hours are rejected. Over 55s were almost five times more likely to have their flexible working request rejected than 18–24 year olds (figure 19).

The reasons for this variation in rates of acceptance for the different age groups are hard to identify. Taking into account the reasons employers gave for allowing flexible working (retaining staff, meeting employees' needs and complying with legislation were the most frequently cited), this variation may be because young people have a higher level of turnover, so in order to retain younger staff employers must offer them flexible working. It may also be partly related to the belief among employers that younger people have more need for flexible work.

How brittle are British workplaces?

Figure 20 **Proportion of employees whose request to work flexible hours was rejected, by age of child**



Source: Demos poll, 2011

As stated, needs for flexible working vary across the life-cycle. People between the ages of 25 and 34 are the most likely to have young children. We therefore looked at the rate of rejection of flexible working requests for parents with children of different ages (figure 20).

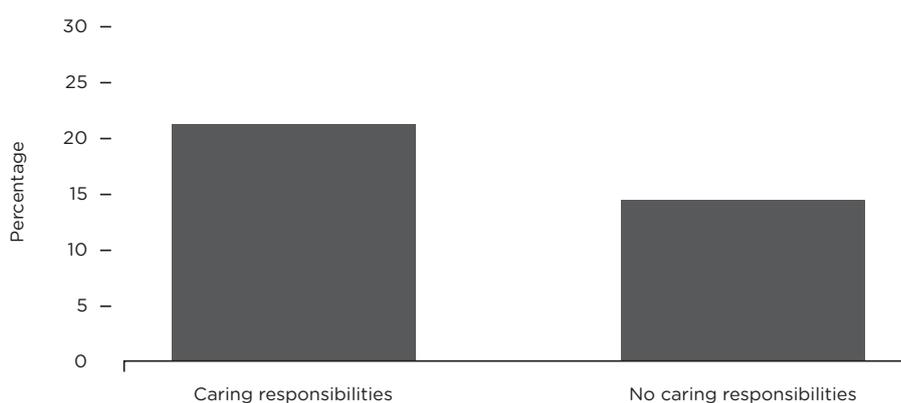
The greater frequency of rejection of requests for flexible working by parents with older children indicates that employers do prioritise those who have a right to request flexible working in law. This probably reflects the fact that employers stated that ‘meeting employee needs’ was one of the key reasons why flexible working is offered.

But there is a very different result for those with caring needs. People in their 40s often have to engage in caring responsibilities for parents. We asked respondents with caring responsibilities whether their requests were accepted and found employers were less responsive to need (figure 21).

Our results show that those with ‘caring responsibilities’ were more likely to have their request for flexible working rejected. There is a substantial risk therefore that those with caring duties are being rejected when they ask to work flexible

85

Figure 21 **Proportion of employees in the UK who had a request to work flexible hours rejected, by caring responsibilities**



Source: Demos poll, 2011

hours, worsening the care burden for society more generally, given that carers save the economy on average £18,473 each.¹⁰³

Summary

Our research has shown that flexibility is an important component of employees' conceptions of 'good work'. Yet despite the increase in use of flexible working arrangements over the past three decades, considerable barriers to flexibility remain. The flexibility an employee may be granted depends on a set of organisational and individual risk factors, which affect how much flexibility employers offer, the rate of acceptance and the level of use.

The size of a firm and its sector influences who is allowed to work flexible hours, but the effect of these factors is not straightforward. Micro firms – those with fewer than ten employees – are over three times more likely not to offer any form of flexible working arrangement as large firms (with over 250 employees). Yet paradoxically, our research has also shown that small and micro firms are among the most likely to accept a

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flexible working request. Micro firms also have some of the most flexible employees – almost 70 per cent of employees in micro firms engage in flexible working with the second highest proportion of flexible workers being in large firms (just over 55 per cent). This suggests that flexibility can work for the smallest firms, but there is reluctance and fear among employers to offer it. Larger firms clearly state that operational pressure is the most likely reason for restricting greater flexibility, yet small firms are less likely to know why they don't allow staff to work flexible hours more often.

Flexibility also varies between sectors. A more service-based economy lends itself well to greater flexibility, yet not in low-end services such as transport and retail. These were the sectors where employees were most likely to be dissatisfied with the level of control they had over their working hours. Our survey also showed that the acceptance rate of flexible working requests differed significantly between sectors. Those working in the administrative and support sector were almost five times more likely to have their request for flexible working rejected than those working in the charity sector. The pressures on different sectors can help explain this. Almost twice as many employers in the hotel and restaurant sector were likely to say that 'customer service requirements' were a restriction on offering more flexibility than employers in the charity sector.

Employees also face risk factors based on their characteristics. Age, gender and position within the firm impact on the rate of acceptance of a request, the use of flexible working, and the type of flexible working used. A substantial number of these individual risk factors are based on socio-cultural factors, such as a presumption that women take the burden of childcare duties.

Women were considerably more likely to work flexibly than men. Yet the type of flexible working and the reason for working flexible hours differed for women and men. The most common reason women gave for working flexibly was in order 'to spend time with children' whereas for men it was 'to have more free time'. This finding is supported by the form of flexible working used. Women dominate the part-time workforce while men are

more likely to work from home. These different motivations for working flexibly and the different forms of flexible working used are likely to act as a barrier to gender equality in the workplace. Combined with our finding that 86 per cent of men state they would not use a longer period of paternity leave if offered, it is unlikely that current flexible working arrangements will close the gender pay gap.

We also looked at the impact of age on flexibility given that caring demands differ across individuals' lifetimes. The rate of rejection of flexible working requests rose with age. Those over 55 were almost five times more likely to have their request for flexible working rejected as an 18–24 year old. A particularly troubling result is the greater level of rejection of flexible working requests by those with caring responsibilities, which particularly hits those aged over 45. Those with caring responsibilities are 50 per cent more likely to have their request for flexible working rejected than someone with no caring responsibilities.

Finally, beyond these organisational and individual risk factors, substantial knowledge gaps remain around flexible working. Most people do not know who is covered by the legal right to request flexible working. Employees are also unlikely to know what their firm offers. Our results showed that they underestimated the extent of flexible working arrangements, and within the firm there is a major difference between the number of employees who have flexible working arrangements and the number who employers think work flexible hours. Employers believe that employees in less senior positions are the most likely to be working flexibly. In fact the opposite is true and the most senior employees engage in the most flexible working. This misconception among employers is likely to be a barrier to them offering more flexible working.

4 Conclusions and recommendations

Flexibility as an embedded organisational value

Legislation, consumer demand, employee retention and enlightened leadership all play a role in putting flexible working on the organisational agenda, but regardless of why flexible working becomes an organisational priority, making it work in practice ultimately requires an ethos of reciprocity between employees and employers and among employees themselves. The obligation of employers to meet employees' needs must be counterbalanced with a responsibility from employees to consider how their request will affect the needs of the business and the workloads of their fellow employees. The process needs to be underpinned by a two-way dialogue rather than a one-way demand or unconsidered refusal. While the outcomes of such a dialogue should be specific to organisational circumstances, the need for the dialogue to take place can and should be underpinned by government legislation.

It is clear that legislation has acted as an initial trigger for employers in creating more flexible workplaces. This comes out strongly in research findings from our qualitative and quantitative data. Yet it is equally clear that while legislation may be necessary it will never be sufficient. In our qualitative research the drive to move beyond statutory compliance came from leaders seeing not only the economic benefits but also that flexible working would work more effectively if it was open to all employees rather than those just those covered by legislation.

The practical reality of a workplace in which all employees have the right to request flexible working was not without challenges but none of them have proved insurmountable. While the leadership of organisations may be instrumental in turning flexibility into a key principle, effective practice depends on relationships between managers and employees, and among

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employees themselves. In the case of the John Lewis Partnership, managers commonly feared that the extension of the right to request flexible working would lead to a deluge of requests. Yet as managers developed greater experience such occurrences become easier to manage, especially when those making requests were given ownership of the need to balance their demands with those of the business.

Flexibility works best when there is trust on either side of the employment relationship. Where employers do their best to accommodate the needs of employees, employees consistently go the extra mile to accommodate the needs of employers when required. As one senior manager from John Lewis Partnership put it:

It is a double win because for some people when you let them have flexible working they are more willing to help the business in other areas. So if I agreed to somebody that [she] can go home whenever, then that group of people are more willing to work when employers need them. A huge proportion of that group think 'I have been treated well so I will go back and treat the business well.'

This sentiment was echoed in focus groups with branch floor staff:

You feel very committed if you work flexibly. I know that it means I have to complete the work in certain hours now I work flexibly. It's partly because the partnership's been good to me so I'd like to be good to them.

A reciprocal relationship

Reciprocity is the key not only to making flexible workplaces function well but to charting a course through conflicting perspectives between employer associations and the advocates of entrenching and increasing flexible working entitlements. While the business case for flexibility is often compelling it is not always self-evident or equally compelling across different sectors and scale of an organisation. The justification for flexible working cannot be reduced to either the business case or indeed family

friendly policies. Crucial as both of these factors are, the case for flexibility stems from a wider need to balance the distribution of people's time between different obligations, needs and desires.

The key question is not whether businesses can afford flexible working arrangements but whether twenty-first-century societies like Britain can afford to forgo them. Flexible working is the means to a plurality of vital and positive social outcomes, that if unrealised will end up disproportionately burdening the state and middle-income households that feel the impact of increased taxation hardest. We know that more involved parenting improves the life chances of children, better work–life balance increases individual happiness, a more flexible workforce is more able to bear the burden of an ageing population, and that the Big Society will require people to have more time to be active citizens.

While it would be unreasonable to place sole responsibility for the social harms indirectly created by the way people work on employers, it would be equally unreasonable to claim they have no responsibility at all. Corporate social responsibility is best judged according to the extent organisations attempt to mitigate the 'negative externalities' they may generate in the process of pursuing core business goals. Flexible working arrangements need therefore to be seen as a defining element of a socially responsible organisation rather than something they should accommodate solely at their own discretion. And where employers refuse to meet employees halfway, there is an important role for government in legislating to enforce a basic framework in which employees can be empowered to start a dialogue with their employers.

The Coalition Government is to be commended for its proposals to extend flexible working and parental leave. It must be resolute in pushing for maximal rather than minimal versions of the proposals currently out for consultation in the modern workplace review. But it must also be much bolder on parental leave in particular if it is to have the courage of its convictions. There is only so far that government can go by itself. The type of cultural and institutional change needed to spread co-parenting and caring obligations more evenly between men and women

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requires employees and employers themselves to be at the leading edge of change. Vanguard employers such as John Lewis Partnership and BT, and many others covered in this pamphlet report, will ultimately be the key agents in driving forward this agenda.

The recommendations below aim to advance a maximal agenda of workplace flexibility, to make flexible working practices a more prominent indicator of corporate social responsibility and to enable men and women to share more equally in their caring and social obligations. Specifically they will:

- extend and normalise flexible working to all employees by making the right to request universal
- enhance shared responsibility between employers and employees through a code of practice
- give recognition to vanguard employers, target support to those struggling to implement flexible working practices and monitor progress to ‘name and shame’ recalcitrant employers
- make shared parental leave affordable for both partners and employers through contributory ‘carers’ accounts’
- extending and formalise carers’ leave
- enable all workers regardless of status, role or sector to take up volunteering.

Our recommendations are set out below:

1 A statutory right to request flexible working for all employees

A legal right to request flexible working ensures that employers take their duty to look after the needs of employees seriously. The Government’s commitment to a universal right to request flexible working is commendable. This legal right should cover all employees including temporary workers.

Our research showed that enshrining the right to request in law was a key driver in the wider provision of flexible working arrangements by employers. ‘Complying with legislation’ was one of the three most cited reasons employers gave for offering

flexible working according to our polling. Even among flexible working vanguards, like John Lewis Partnership, the legislation was an important push.

There was nervousness from Government and employers over the effect of putting the right to request into law. The Employment Rights Act 2002 gave the right to request flexible working to parents with children under the age of six or disabled children under the age of 18. This compelled employers to seriously evaluate the individual's case. In chapter 3, our case studies and stakeholder interviews illustrate the fears employers had that this would open the floodgates to requests and overburden business. This did not happen. In the first year after the right to request flexible working was made law only 2 per cent of calls to the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, which is charged with offering advice on employment rights issues, were concerned with flexible working.¹⁰⁴ Our research also showed that employers had feared being taken to an employment tribunal if they said 'no' to a request. This did not happen. In the five years following the legal right to request flexible working, Acas registered just over 1,500 claims that involved flexible working as a primary or secondary issue. This is less than 0.2 per cent of all claims to employment tribunals during that period.¹⁰⁵ Our survey illustrated that a healthy number of employers are happy to say 'no' when they needed to.

As the Government's own impact assessment has shown, if the right to request flexible working is extended to all employees through a non-statutory mechanism, such as a code of practice, instead of a legal one, its impact on increasing requests would be substantially diminished. The Government's assessment predicted that there would be 119,000 new requests under a legislative extension compared with 59,000 under a non-statutory code of practice.¹⁰⁶

The Government announced a three-year moratorium on new regulation for micro businesses (those with fewer than ten employees) in March 2011, but micro firms should not be excluded from the proposed statutory reforms. Our quantitative research shows micro firms already work 'flexibly' – over 80 per cent of micro firms said they considered flexible working

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requests from all employees – flexible working is not disproportionately burdensome for them. Excluding micro firms from this legal extension would produce a two-tier system of employment rights – with those in micro firms being less protected.

The Government should be more honest in its relationship with micro business. The moratorium did not lead to an exemption for micro firms in the changes to the default retirement age, the extension of paternity leave and pay and the tier 1 and 2 migration changes which came in around the same time as the moratorium began. Furthermore, the moratorium does not include regulations that originate from the EU or internationally; they have to be of domestic origin. Therefore micro firms are not as well protected as the Government's messaging would suggest. This mixed messaging reduces the confidence of managers of small and medium-sized enterprises in government policy and will make it more difficult to win their support for a legal extension to flexible working.

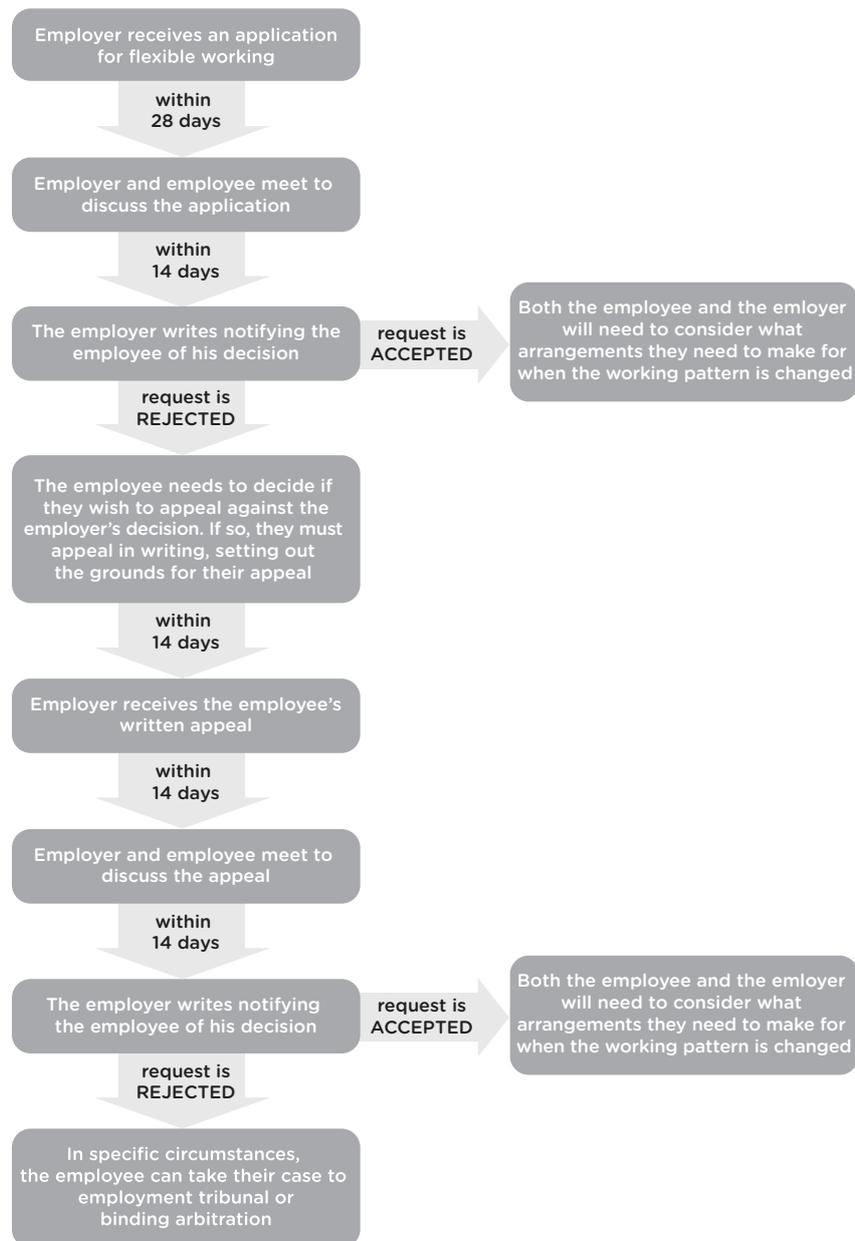
2 A code of practice to support the legislation

Although placing the right to request into law was a significant achievement by the Labour Government, it failed to help manage expectations – there was too little guidance for business and employees. A code of practice can serve an important role, as a guide to employers and employees about how flexible working can be optimally managed. It can go further in this respect than legislation. Figure 22 shows the current legal code of practice process for granting flexible working arrangements.

In its consultation document, the Coalition Government announced that it wanted to move the process for consideration of requests from legislation to a code of practice.

Allowing businesses to decide for themselves how they will construct their flexible working request process is important. Varying sector and scale pressures means that a one-size-fits-all system burdens some businesses more than others. However, it is already the case that businesses have considerable discretion over their flexible working request process, provided the business follows a reasonable timetable.

Figure 22 **Current UK legal code of practice process for granting flexible working arrangements**



Source: BIS¹⁰⁷

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The majority (79 per cent of employees in our survey) of flexible working requests are made informally. This was particularly the case in small businesses. Employers in micro and small firms (with fewer than 50 employees) were three times more likely to encourage informal flexible working requests than those in large firms (more than 250 employees). A code of practice, which helps business construct a process for consideration, would be helpful, and legislation should not introduce a rigid process for employers to obey. But legislation should put in place a maximum timeframe and minimum necessary steps to ensure business does not exploit this freedom to restrict flexible working. The consultation document states that a statute will require employers merely to consider requests ‘reasonably’. This is too weak a requirement and puts at risk the potential benefits of the extension of the statutory right to flexible working. The coverage of ‘reasonable’ is unclear, which leads to more rather than less confusion for business.

Although legal requirements can set the minimum conditions to enable flexible working, softer measures to guide and nudge the provision of flexible working should also be used. A non-statutory code of practice can help improve understanding of flexible working, including by clearly defining different flexible working arrangements. This is an important mechanism to improve knowledge about flexible working and empower employees and employers to use it.

Our quantitative research illustrated the disparity between what employees believed they have a right to in law and what they can access in reality. Almost 60 per cent of employees surveyed did not know whom the ‘right to request’ covered. A code of practice can help inform employees about what is a reasonable case for request, the forms of flexible working that are available and which flexible working arrangements most suit their need while not burdening business. It could also help guide employers to understand when it is most reasonable to say ‘no’ – more than the eight reasons currently in the law. Our research showed that small firms with no dedicated human resources function are substantially less likely to know the forms of flexible

working that are available. This in turn means that they are less likely to offer it and benefit from it.

One of the chief benefits of extending the right to request to all employees is that it creates a culture in which all employees feel empowered to request flexible working. It would help remove the presumption that ‘only women work flexibly’, and reach towards wider social goals such as closing the gender pay gap.

3 Changing the minimum qualifying period and removing the 12-month cap

Without opening up the right to request from day one of employment we risk preventing those with substantial caring needs benefiting from flexible working, negatively impacting both employee and employer and acting as a disincentive for those with such responsibilities from entering the workforce. Employers would benefit from having an open and frank discussion pre-appointment with the employee about what flexible working arrangements they might need in order to plan long-term how to manage their employees. There is a risk that this will put at a disadvantage those with caring needs, but as part of a wider shift to acceptability of flexible working, it could help enable a longer-term change in the expectations of employers.

Further, employees’ needs are constantly changing; a limit on one request every 12 months, as is currently the case, overlooks this fact. The legal cap should be halved and employers should be encouraged to reduce the cap even further.

4 Improving the support of JobcentrePlus and considering the flexibility of roles

JobcentrePlus is an underused tool in helping employers understand the benefits of employees working flexibly, and on implementing flexible working arrangements and on deciding which job roles can be advertised as ‘flexible’. This is particularly

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important for small businesses with no dedicated human resources function.

The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) has worked with JobcentrePlus to develop a hotline service for smaller businesses that provide recruitment help tailored to their needs. The Small Business Recruitment Service (SBRS) offers a free, professional recruitment service with advice and support throughout the recruitment process.¹⁰⁸ The helpline aids businesses design part-time and flexible jobs that suit their needs with advisers trained to be able to deliver advice on flexible working, but knowledge of this service is limited. Promoting it may help small businesses understand how flexible working can benefit their business.

The Government should require businesses to consider whether any job openings employers wish to advertise through JobcentrePlus can be made flexibly. If there is a possibility of flexibility this should be included in a firm's advert for the position through JobcentrePlus.

5 Supporting vanguards

Despite varying severity of risk factors, there are flexible working vanguards in all sectors of the economy. We would do well from showcasing these examples. An accreditation system for those employers who achieve a high standard of workplace flexibility and family-friendliness could help drive employers to improve their flexible working arrangements. It would act as an incentive for employers to improve their flexibility in order to improve their brand image and quality of recruitment. This will become more significant as the economy continues to improve and competition for labour becomes more severe.

An accreditation system can be based on the UK Commission for Employment and Skills' 'Investors in People' model. The Investors in People system gives a gold, silver and bronze level of accreditation according to the performance of firms across a number of benchmarks. For flexible working the accreditation system should award companies that have implemented flexible working well according to the risk factors identified in this report: sector, size, age, gender and job role.

6 The carer's account: a contributory principle to make parental leave more equal and affordable

The Government should be commended in its aim to increase the role of fathers in caring for children in their early years. Its primary proposals to achieve this are to reclassify the later phases of maternity leave as shared parental leave. This will increase the amount of leave men can take and enable greater flexibility in how it is used. However, the proposal fails to address one of the key factors preventing men from using the leave they are already entitled to. In the UK only half of men take the two weeks' paternity leave at statutory rates they are entitled to.¹⁰⁹ A significant factor in this is that the statutory pay covers less than 25 per cent of their salary. In contrast, in Nordic countries such as Iceland, 88.5 per cent of fathers in Iceland take some portion of their leave.¹¹⁰

Evidence from Nordic countries shows that three key considerations make men more likely to take up parental leave:

- generous paid leave, which allows a father, as a family's highest wage earner, to take time off without forfeiting the family's largest source of income
- non-transferable leave, which counteracts social and economic pressure for leave to be transferred from father to mother
- scheduling flexibility.

So there is no need to cut relations with employers. This allows professional parents, who are more likely to be fathers, to take leave without jeopardising their job prospects.

Extending the length of leave and flexibility in use of that leave is welcome but without addressing inequities in pay while on leave men lack the capability actually to use such rights. The Coalition Government's proposals for shared parental leave therefore lack a vital component for making it a practical reality rather than a formal but unrealisable right.

Box 4 summarises the Icelandic model of parental leave.

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Box 4

The Icelandic model of parental leave

The Icelandic model provides a statutory right to nine months of paid parental leave in three instalments of three months. Two of these instalments are ‘non-transferable’; the mother and the father must take one each. The parents can choose which of them takes the third instalment. Special arrangements exist if there are complications such as health issues. The timing of parental leave is at parents’ discretion – it can be taken uninterrupted or interrupted as well as part-time coupled with part-time work. Through a social insurance system, parental leave is paid at 75–80 per cent of earnings with a ceiling for earnings over €1,890 per week and a floor, so no one working full-time receives less than €575 per week. Separate rates apply for people working part-time. Same sex couples with children and couples adopting a child under the age of eight are eligible for leave on the same basis. In the Icelandic model, mothers are obliged to take two weeks of leave following the birth of a child.

Adapting the approach taken to pay and flexibility in how leave is taken in Nordic countries is more likely to enable the cultural shift in parenting the Government is rightly seeking to achieve. As it currently stands parental leave is expensive for employee, employer and the state. Financial pressures act as a disincentive for parents to take their full entitlement to parental leave and there is evidence it acts as a disincentive on employing women of childbearing age. Low take-up by fathers therefore helps perpetuate the gender pay gap in addition to preventing men spending more time with their children in their early years.

If a father in the UK on an average wage takes up his full two weeks’ ordinary paternity leave and then takes up his new right for additional paternity leave from the mother, after the 26th week he effectively loses 88 per cent of his potential earnings – which can be over £13,000 (see appendix 4). Not only is this a disincentive for fathers, but it also makes it financially impossible in many cases for fathers to take up parental leave.

A mother on an average wage who takes her full maternity leave will be 72 per cent worse off in that year alone through lost

earnings.¹¹¹ This can be equivalent to a loss of £16,336. This is particularly a disincentive for low-income families to take full parental leave. Low-income mothers return to work substantially earlier than mothers on an average wage. Employers are worse off too as they have to cover the cost of this parental leave. Small employers have the right to have the cost of statutory parental pay reimbursed by HM Revenue & Customs, but this misses many indirect costs, according to the FSB, such as finding a replacement worker.¹¹² This also places a cost on the state, having to subsidise parents taking parental leave.

Learning from Demos' report *Of Mutual Benefit*,¹¹³ and the Nordic countries, which pool their costs, there are ways to improve the pay of employees while not excessively burdening the state or employer. Introducing a contributory principle through a care account would be an important step along this route.

Countries with the highest levels of co-parenting, such as Iceland, Finland and Norway, all have a far more generous system of parental leave than the UK. The systems are funded from contribution schemes, which involve varying degrees of reciprocity between employers, employees and government. In Iceland there are parental leave fund-based national insurance contributions; 1.08 per cent of all national insurance contributions go towards this fund, which covers 80 per cent of the average worker's salary during parental leave.¹¹⁴ This is particularly important for fathers, who are most commonly the head household earner.

An opt-out care account contribution system that can be used to replace at least two-thirds of lost earnings will help support take-up of parental leave. Under such a system an employee contributes a portion of their salary tax-free to an account, with the amount matched by the employer. When an individual needs to take parental leave they will therefore be able to draw on this fund to cover the difference between their statutory paternity pay in the 39 weeks it is available for and at least two-thirds of their wage, to ensure a reasonable standard of living. However, not every employee will want or be able to have children. If the contributions are not used it should be possible to put the funds into the individual's pension pot. This would

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cover the varying needs of employees and ensure they are financially secure when they need to dedicate their time to a new child.

7 Right to extraordinary leave for care reasons and better systems of carers leave

There are almost 6 million carers in the UK and half of them balance this responsibility with work. Employment is most productive for carers when they have greater choice in how to balance their caring and work demands.¹¹⁵ Carers should be one of the groups given priority to work flexible hours in a code of practice. Our changing demography means that in the next 25 years the number of carers is expected to increase by 50 per cent.¹¹⁶ Flexible working can help alleviate the pressures on carers, their families and employers, and the state.

Care demands can fall on employees when they don't expect them. These pressures occur most frequently among mothers with young children who fall ill and need a short time off work to care for them. But these events hit other groups as well, including those who have older relations who occasionally depend on them. This can create stigma and resentment. Many firms give five days of unpaid leave for such 'emergency care' needs. This should be formalised and allowed in all firms – going beyond what is already enshrined as 'compassionate leave'. Only when an employee goes beyond this basic leave should employers have the right to require proof of need, such as a doctor's note, and penalise the employee if needed.

Further, a code of practice should promote all firms having policies in place in case employees need to be off work for a prolonged period because of caring responsibilities. Then employers will be more prepared and more able to agree to such requests in cases where employees request a break from work, on similar terms to requests for a career break. During this time the carer will be able to access direct payments for carers, and should be able to subsidise this with payments from their care account to ensure that their earnings are sufficiently replaced. This will help ease the burden of demographic change.

8 Use it or lose it right to volunteering days

The scope of benefit of flexible working does not fall just on the employee, who can improve their work–life balance, nor their employer, who can boost productivity. It can also serve wider social ends through the Big Society. A flexible workforce is also a workforce more able to be more engaged in civic action.

Our polling shows that only 4 per cent of employees currently use flexible working in order to volunteer. In changing the nature of flexible working, making it more acceptable in the workplace, we have the opportunity to make voluntary action more the norm. The recent white paper on giving shows that the Government shares such a vision.¹¹⁷ It requires ministers to give at least a day a year to a good cause.

The right to a paid day a year to volunteer is an important step to promoting the Big Society agenda and should be available to all employees. In itself it will not produce the civic engagement needed for a Big Society, but it will be an important way to nudge individuals and business to be more aware of their civic duty alongside the wider Big Society agenda. The recommendations presented in this report outline a direction of travel – for government and for business – to make the flexible vanguard the norm rather than the exception. There are huge lessons to be learned by employers – on the benefits of flexible working and on the importance of ensuring that their workforce works in a way that fits with wider social norms and expectations. Examples can be seen in the places where flexibility already works and works well for both employer and employee.

It is key that Government recognises that flexibility is crucial to its wider, social agenda. A nation that cares for its older people, volunteers more readily and spends time and energy raising young people well is a nation that works flexibly. This is achievable – albeit to different levels and in different ways – in all sectors of industry: many of the sectoral problems cited to avoid cross-cutting flexibility are more issues of poor imagination than they are of actual capacity. How can it be the case that ‘retail can’t do flexibility’ if John Lewis and Waitrose can? How can it be true that ‘small business can’t afford flexibility’ when so many micro businesses not only afford it but flourish as a result?

Conclusions and recommendations

Government must premise its interventions in this complicated but important aspect of all our lives on the idea of reciprocity, a shared responsibility between state, employer and employee. So too must employers and employees – engaging in a discussion of how more autonomy would work rather than a dispute over ‘entitlements’. These recommendations are the starting point for that dialogue.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Employers' reasons for not offering more flexible working

Table 10 **Reasons given by employers in the UK for not offering more flexible working, by sector**

	Manufac- turing; pharma ceuticals	Retail, leisure and wholesale trading	Hotels and restaur- ants	Transport; information and com- munications; travel & tourism; postal services	Banking, finance and insurance
Operational pressures	58%	51%	68%	72%	17%
Customer or service requirements	47%	51%	74%	51%	46%
Financial restraints	27%	36%	36%	28%	5%
Lack of senior level support for it	62%	19%	10%	4%	24%
Existing organisational culture	33%	16%	15%	11%	5%
Lack of interest from employees	27%	19%	17%	13%	13%
Line managers' ability to manage flexible workers	31%	16%	2%	18%	21%
Technological constraints	29%	5%	10%	17%	20%

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Real estate, professional, scientific, technical, administration and support	Public administration (central or local government, armed services)	Education	Healthcare and social work	Charity and voluntary; arts and entertainment; other services for the community
34%	73%	44%	61%	58%
47%	59%	40%	59%	40%
29%	22%	18%	35%	19%
19%	16%	19%	14%	11%
18%	22%	40%	18%	16%
27%	10%	12%	6%	14%
1%	31%	23%	16%	13%
11%	20%	6%	8%	2%

Appendices

Appendix 2 Types of flexible working arrangements offered

Table 11 **Types of flexible working arrangements offered by different sectors in**

	Manufac- turing; pharma ceuticals	Retail, leisure and wholesale trading (including repairs to vehicles other goods etc.)	Hotels and restaur- ants	Transport; information and com- munications; travel & tourism; postal services	Banking, finance and insurance
Part-time working	58%	79%	77%	66%	75%
Varying start and finish times	43%	74%	63%	63%	56%
Flexible hours or flexitime	39%	56%	24%	53%	45%
Working from home	46%	13%	13%	58%	67%
Compressed hours (eg 4 day week)	18%	38%	28%	41%	45%
Career breaks	14%	41%	0%	43%	22%
Term-time working	17%	15%	30%	4%	26%
Annualised hours	24%	12%	10%	24%	20%
Time banking	10%	14%	0%	16%	3%
Working a nine-day fortnight	15%	0%	10%	8%	0%
None of these - no flexible working offered	14 %	8%	5%	13%	10%

the UK, by sector

Real estate, professional, scientific, technical, administration and support	Public administration (central or local government, armed services)	Education	Healthcare and social work	Charity and voluntary; arts and entertainment; other services for the community
72%	86%	75%	89%	84%
63%	83%	57%	86%	77%
52%	88%	40%	74%	76%
66%	67%	42%	51%	74%
33%	69%	36%	65%	42%
21%	79%	23%	59%	46%
25%	53%	62%	54%	13%
8%	36%	17%	40%	10%
14%	14%	4%	35%	17%
14%	43%	4%	36%	15%
8%	4%	10%	1%	4%

Appendices

Appendix 3 Employees' reasons for not working more flexibly

Table 12 **Reasons employees in the UK give for not working more flexibly, by sector**

	Manufacturing; pharmaceuticals	Retail, leisure and wholesale trading (including repairs to vehicles other goods etc.)	Hotels and restaurants	Transport; information and communications; travel & tourism; postal services	Banking, finance and insurance
Not a priority for me	33%	36%	50%	32%	32%
Impractical given the nature of the job	35%	24%	45%	32%	34%
Not available from current employer	35%	32%	30%	35%	39%
Don't want to work to work flexibly	20%	17%	12%	17%	13%
Concerned about loss of earnings	6%	13%	20%	8%	13%
Concerned about negative response from managers	4%	10%	4%	5%	10%
Not aware of specific rights to request flexible working	6%	10%	-	5%	10%
Concerned request would be rejected	3%	7%	11%	3%	6%
Concerned about impact on career / promotion prospects	4%	5%	10%	3%	10%
Concerned about reaction from colleagues	1%	2%	8%	2%	10%

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Sector

Real estate, professional, scientific, technical, administration and support	Public administration (central or local government, armed services)	Education	Healthcare and social work	Charity and voluntary; arts and entertainment; other services for the community
33%	23%	27%	33%	38%
28%	52%	39%	28%	18%
31%	18%	28%	18%	30%
27%	14%	13%	21%	25%
14%	9%	10%	5%	3%
7%	5%	6%	7%	3%
4%	2%	7%	7%	7%
4%	7%	8%	7%	-
8%	-	7%	6%	3%
4%	2%	6%	5%	3%

Appendices

Appendix 4 Parental pay replacement rates

The level of pay a person receives when taking parental leave is highly important in determining whether a parent takes their full parental leave. Demos analysed the amount a parent on an average wage can expect to lose if they take parental leave.¹¹⁸ The ‘parental pay replacement rate’ is the proportion of a parent’s earnings that they would receive if they took parental leave and were paid at the rate specified in law. We calculate this rate under the current system and under the Icelandic model.

Under current rules, a mother has a right to 52 weeks of maternity leave. Six weeks must be paid at least at 90 per cent of the mother’s previous wage, and the following 33 weeks must be paid at the statutory rate of £124.88 per week (or 90 per cent of the average wage if that is lower). The remaining time is unpaid. Fathers currently have a right to 2 weeks of ordinary paternity leave paid at £124.88 a week. For children born after 3 April 2011, fathers have also been able to access ‘additional paternity leave’ if the mother returns to work. This allows the father up to 26 weeks’ paternity leave from the 20th week of birth (if the mother returns to work) and any outstanding payments the mother has a statutory right to.

Table 13 **Situation 1: mother takes parental leave for 39 weeks and then returns to work; father takes 2 weeks of paternity leave**

Mother	6 weeks at 90% of wage	£2,370.6
	33 weeks at SMP rate (£124.88)	£4,121.04
	Total maternity pay for 39 weeks	£6,491.64
	Total wages for 39 weeks employment	£17,121
	Parental pay replacement rate	38%
	Lost earnings	£10,629.36
Father	2 weeks at ordinary paternity pay	£249.76
	Total paternity leave pay	£249.76
	Total wages for 2 weeks	£1,076
	Parental pay replacement rate	23%
	Lost earnings	£826.24

Table 14 **Situation 2: mother takes parental leave for 52 weeks and returns to work; father takes 2 weeks of paternity leave**

Mother	6 weeks at 90% of wage	2,370.6
	33 weeks at SMP rate (124.88)	£4,121.04
	13 weeks unpaid	0
	Total maternity pay for 52 weeks	£6,491.64
	Total wages for 52 weeks employment	£22,828
	Parental pay replacement rate	28%
	Lost earnings	£16,336.36
<hr/>		
Father	2 weeks at ordinary paternity pay	£249.76
	Total paternity leave pay	£249.76
	Total wages for 2 weeks	£1,076
	Parental pay replacement rate	23%
	Lost earnings	£826.24

Table 15 **Situation 3: mother takes parental leave for 26 weeks and returns to work; father takes 2 weeks of paternity leave and the caring responsibilities from week 27 to 39 and then returns to work**

Mother	6 weeks' pay at 90% of wage	£2,370.6
	20 weeks at SMP rate (124.88)	£2,497.6
	Total maternity pay for 26 weeks	£4,868.2
	Total wages for 26 weeks' employment	£11,414
	Parental pay replacement rate	43%
	Lost earnings	£6,545.8
<hr/>		
Father	2 weeks at statutory rate	£249.76
	13 weeks at OPP rate (124.88)	£1,623.44
	Total paternity pay for 15 weeks	£1,873.2
	Total wages for 15 weeks employment	£8,070
	Parental pay replacement rate	23%
	Lost earnings	£6,196.8

Appendices

Table 16 **Situation 4: mother takes childcare benefit for 26 weeks and returns to work; father takes 2 weeks of paternity leave and the caring responsibilities from week 27 to 52 and then returns to work**

Mother	6 weeks' pay at 90% of wage	£2,370.6
	20 weeks at SMP rate (124.88)	£2,497.6
	Total maternity pay for 26 weeks	£4,868.2
	Total wages for 26 weeks employment	£11,414
	Parental pay replacement rate	43%
	Lost earnings	£6,545.8
Father	2 weeks at ordinary paternity pay	£249.76
	13 weeks at OPP rate (124.88)	£1,623.44
	13 weeks unpaid	
	Total paternity pay for 28 weeks	£1,873.2
	Total wages for 28 weeks employment	£15,064
	Parental pay replacement rate	12%
	Lost earnings	£13,190.8

Table 17 **Situation 5: Icelandic model - mother takes non-transferable 3 months, father takes non-transferable 3 months, mother taking 3 months shared leave**

Mother	13 weeks at 80% of wage	£4,565.6
	Total maternity pay	£9,131.2
	Wages for 26 weeks	11,414
	Parental pay replacement rate	80%
	Lost earnings	£2,282.8
Father	13 weeks at 80% of wage	£5,595.2
	Wages for 13 weeks	£6,994
	Parental pay replacement rate	80%
	Lost earnings	£1,398.8

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This project was supported by:

John Lewis Partnership

Over the last ten years, flexible working practices have become integrated into the economy – almost 60 per cent of employees currently use a form of flexible working. This Government has pledged to go even further – the right to flexible working for all was enshrined in the Coalition agreement – but it has vacillated in the face of pressure from the business lobby.

Reinventing the Workplace argues that it would be both economically short-sighted and socially irresponsible to roll back the progress made over the past decade, due to pressures in a time of economic uncertainty. The recession will not go on forever, whereas the need for flexible work has been a long time coming, as the care responsibilities of those in employment have increased with the growth of shared parenting, more mothers returning to work and an ageing population.

There is a business case for flexible work – employers benefit by lowering estate costs, retaining staff, increasing productivity and reducing absenteeism. It proved its worth at the height of the financial crisis, when cooperation between employers and employees minimised job losses. But flexible work also has clear, positive social outcomes. More involved parenting improves the life chances of children, a better work–life balance increases individual happiness, a more flexible workforce is more able to bear the burden of care, and the Big Society requires people to have more time to be active citizens.

Dan Leighton is Head of the Public Interest programme at Demos. Thomas Gregory is a Junior Associate at Demos.

ISBN 978-1-906693-74-9 £10

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CIPD Flexible working paper May 2012



Survey report
May 2012

Flexible working provision and uptake

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Summary of key findings

Background to the survey

This report is based on survey responses from more than 1,000 employers and 2,000 employees. The employer survey is weighted to be representative of industry in the UK in relation to size, sector and type of business. The employee survey is weighted to be representative of the UK workforce in relation to sector and size (private, public, voluntary), industry type and full-time/part-time working by gender. Both surveys were conducted in early January 2012.

Flexible working provision – employers’ policies and practices

The vast majority of employers (96%) offer some form of flexible working. All large employers offer flexible working to some employees, as do 95% of medium-sized organisations. There is also widespread provision of flexible working among small businesses (91%) and micro-sized companies (85%).

A wide range of flexible working arrangements are offered by employers, with part-time working (88%) the most commonly offered type of flexibility. Nearly two-thirds of employers provide a right to request flexible working for all employees (63%).

Working from home on a regular basis (54%) is the next most commonly offered flexible working option. On the flipside, arrangements such as time off to work in the community (21%) and annual hours (22%) are offered by less than a quarter of employers.

Large organisations are more likely to offer a wider range of flexible working options than small organisations. In all, 96% of large organisations provide part-time working for some employees compared with 58% of micro businesses. Just over half of large organisations provide flexitime as an option, in contrast to four in ten micro, small and medium-sized businesses.

Among employers that provide flexible working, small employers are much more likely to have informal arrangements. For example, among micro-sized

employers that provide flexitime, 80% will manage this informally compared with just 12% of large employers.

Flexible working and the law

Only a very small proportion (4%) of employers have encountered any problems in complying with the right to request legislation in the last two years, while 85% had no problems and 11% do not know. Small employers are less likely to report problems than larger organisations. Nine out of ten micro, small and medium-sized employers have not reported any problems compared with eight out of ten large employers.

Access to and uptake of flexible working among employees

Three-quarters of employees make use of some form of flexible working, with a third (32%) reporting they work part-time – the most commonly used flexible working option. A quarter of employees use some sort of flexitime and 20% work from home on a regular basis. Remote working is also a frequently used option, with 14% of employees benefiting from this way of working.

However, take-up of other forms of flexibility is low. Only 5% of employees have some form of compressed hours, for example spreading a five-day week over four days. Just 3% of respondents use annual hours (staff are contracted to work a set number of hours each year, with flexibility over when hours are worked). Just 1% of respondents job-share.

Women are more likely than men to use flexible working, with 77% working flexibly in some way, compared with 70% of men. Women are most likely to work part-time (49%), use flexitime (21%) and work from home on a regular basis (15%). Among men, flexitime (30%), working from home on a regular basis (25%) and mobile working (22%) are the most commonly used practices.

Employees working for micro and small businesses are more likely to work flexibly than those working in medium-sized or large organisations.

Employees with no managerial responsibility who don't have access to flexible working are most likely to say they would take up flexible working if they had the opportunity to do so, with 61% saying yes this is the case.

A large majority of employees (83%) say they have never had a flexible working request turned down, with little difference between men or women. There is also little difference in the responses of employees in terms of sector or size of organisation worked for.

Benefits of flexible working

Employers report that the provision of flexible working arrangements can have a positive impact on a number of areas of organisational performance. Nearly three-quarters of employers feel that implementing flexible working practices has a positive impact on staff retention, with just 3% identifying a negative effect. A further 73% report there is a positive impact on employee motivation, with 3% citing a negative effect. In all, 72% report that flexible working positively affects levels of employee engagement, with 4% saying there is a negative effect.

From an employee perspective, more than half report that flexible working helps them achieve better work-life balance generally. Almost a quarter report flexible working helps them manage caring responsibilities for children, while nearly one in ten say it helps them to manage caring responsibilities for parents or grandparents.

More than a third of respondents believe flexible working makes them more productive.

About a fifth of employees say flexible working helps them stay healthy by allowing more time for them to exercise or make sensible choices over lifestyle. A similar proportion think flexible working reduces the amount of time they take off work sick.

Satisfaction with work-life balance and employee engagement

There is a strong association between employees who agree they achieve the right balance between their work and home lives and respondents who are engaged at work, according to the CIPD's employee

engagement index, which is tracked in the Institute's quarterly *Employee Outlook* survey.

In all, 79% of engaged employees agree or strongly agree that they achieve the right balance between their work and home lives, compared with 50% of employees who are neutral (neither engaged nor disengaged) and 17% among those that are disengaged.

Barriers to flexible working

The main barrier to improving flexible working appears to be operational pressures, which was mentioned by 52% of employers. Other barriers that feature highly are maintaining customer/service requirements (40% of employers) and line managers' ability to effectively manage flexible workers (35%). Existing organisational culture and the attitudes of senior managers are identified as barriers by 36% and 34% of employers respectively.

There are some important differences between the attitudes of employers of different sizes, with micro and small businesses less likely to cite as wide a range of obstacles as medium-sized or larger employers.

In all, 56% of large employers and 54% of medium-sized organisations cite operational pressures as obstacles to flexible working, compared with 47% of small organisations and 32% of micro businesses.

From the perspective of employees, the biggest obstacle to flexible working is the nature of the work they do, with 34% citing this as an issue. The next most commonly mentioned obstacles are that flexible working is of limited relevance to the sector they work in, the attitudes of senior managers and the attitudes of line managers or supervisors.

In general, the smaller the organisation worked for, the least likely employees are to identify obstacles to flexible working.

Flexible working provision – employers’ policies and practices

The vast majority of employers (96%) offer some form of flexible working. All large employers offer some flexible working to some employees, as do 95% of medium-sized organisations. There is also widespread provision of flexible working among small businesses (91%) and micro-sized companies (85%).

A wide range of flexible working arrangements are offered by employers, with part-time working (88%) the most commonly offered type of flexibility. Nearly two-thirds of employers provide a right to request flexible working for all employees (63%).

Working from home on a regular basis (54%) is the next most commonly offered flexible working option. On the flipside, arrangements such as time off to work in the community (21%) and annual hours (22%) are offered by less than a quarter of LMO employers.

Perhaps not surprisingly large organisations are more likely to offer a wider range of flexible working options than small organisations. In all, 96% of large organisations provide part-time working for some employees compared with 58% of micro businesses. Just over half of large organisations provide flexitime as an option, in contrast to four out of ten micro, small and medium-sized businesses.

Seven in ten large organisations provide the right to request flexible working to all employees, as do 59% of medium-sized businesses, 51% of small companies and 40% of micro employers.

Nearly two-thirds (61%) of large employers allow homeworking on a regular basis, compared with just 36% of small employers. Aside from part-time working, working from home is the most commonly provided flexible working option among micro businesses.

Figure 1: Types of flexible working arrangements offered by employers (%)
Base: All organisations (818)

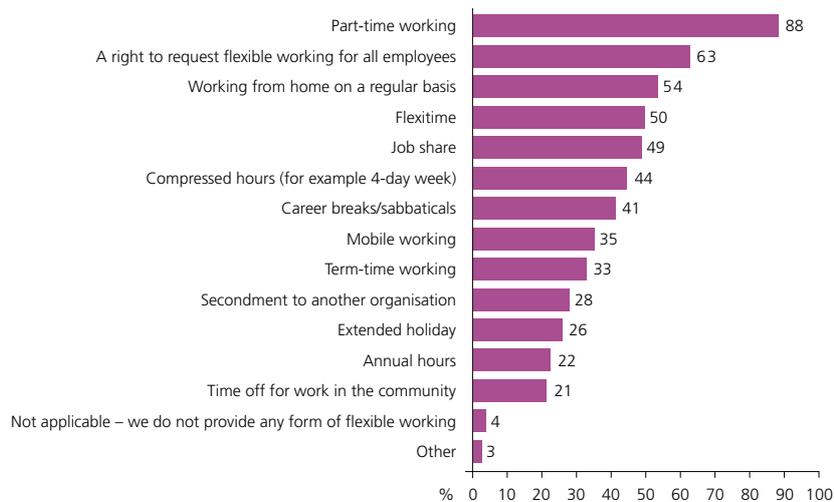


Table 1: HR professionals whose organisations offer flexible working, by size of organisation (%)
Base 790: All organisations that offer flexible working

	Micro	Small	Medium	Large
Part-time working	58	86	87	96
Term-time working	9	16	18	45
Job share	9	23	28	67
Flexitime	43	42	41	55
A right to request flexible working for all employees	40	51	59	70
Compressed hours (spreading a five-day week over four days for example)	20	26	32	56
Annual hours (staff are contracted to work a set number of hours each year with flexibility over when hours are worked)	7	4	8	32
Working from home on a regular basis	46	36	53	61
Mobile working (eg using laptop to work from another location)	28	16	26	56
Career breaks, sabbaticals	8	14	26	56
Secondment to another organisation	4	8	14	40
Time off for work in the community	13	8	12	28
Extended holiday	12	12	20	32
Other	6	2	2	2
Not applicable – we do not provide any kind of flexible working	15	9	5	0
Net offer flexible working	85	91	95	100

The provision of a wider range of flexible working arrangements is more prominent from employers in the public sector. Public sector employers are significantly more likely to offer term-time working (59% compared with 20% of private sector employers), job-shares (72% compared with 37%), compressed hours (62% compared with 35%) and career breaks/sabbaticals (65% compared with 30%). It is also the case that large employers are significantly more likely than SME employers to offer each of the flexible working arrangements listed in Table 1.

The provision of flexible working arrangements also appears to be an area where employers plan to make little change to their current offer. Nearly three-quarters of employers (72%) are not planning to introduce any of the arrangements listed in Figure 1 while the vast majority (92%) is not planning to withdraw any of the arrangements they currently offer.

Case study: Accenture

What types of flexible working do you currently offer?

Accenture offers the following flexible working provisions:

- flexible hours: reconfiguration of existing hours over contractual number of days
- part-time working
- job-sharing
- home-enabled working
- leave of absence policy: allowing employees to take unpaid leave to pursue activities outside of the working environment.

The company also allows the use of multiple flexible working arrangements simultaneously, and any type of flexible working is available to each level of employees, from the most junior to the most senior.

Why do you offer flexible working?

Internal and external Accenture research points to a changing workforce that is demanding a greater voice and more choice in how, when and where they do their work.

What do you see as the main benefit(s) of offering flexible working?

Accenture has seven business reasons to create a more flexible, supportive work environment:

- to attract and retain a broad range of talented people
- to raise morale and increase job satisfaction
- to increase productivity and improve business results
- to enhance commitment and engagement
- to cut health care costs
- to attract investors
- to be a good corporate citizen.

More than 80% of Accenture employees say that achieving work-life balance is important. Fifty-two per cent of Accenture UK employees also said they are already working flexibly at Accenture and these 52% show increased levels of engagement.

Accenture has seen that work-life balance has often been a reason why people, women in particular, have left the company. Working flexibly is central to their well-being programmes and can also form part of a phased return to work, allowing people more control over their workload or avoid the stress of commuting at peak times.

What would you highlight as the most innovative element of your flexible working provision?

Collaboration – one of Accenture's core values is 'One Global Network'. This means connection. The Knowledge Exchange is an intranet portal that allows employees to connect with others, share ideas, respond quickly to questions and cultivate their relationships. This allows employees to contribute in just the same way, whether they are in the office or working from home.

Latest technical software – homeworkers have full access to a wealth of ways to keep in touch virtually with colleagues and clients. Office Communicator is software that allows secure instant messaging (IM), integrated presence, OC-to-OC audio and videoconference calling and desktop sharing.

Comprehensive online provision around flexible working – Accenture has a dedicated portal called Accent on Flexibility that provides information on flexible working. It provides case studies from employees on their arrangements and various links, tools and tips.

Case study: Accenture (continued)

Flexleave – this is the voluntary sabbatical programme which the company offers only where there is a recognised business need. This is typically a 6–18-month partially paid opportunity for employees to pursue their interests (for example travel, charity work, non-company-sponsored study, work in a different field). It is not a continuous programme but can be rolled out for appropriate periods and employee groups.

If you did not offer flexible working, what effect would this have on your organisation?

- increased attrition – particularly with women
- appearing unattractive to prospective employees
- decreased employee engagement
- reduction in employee well-being.

Sam Clark, Head of Employee Relations, Accenture

Formal/informal flexible working arrangements

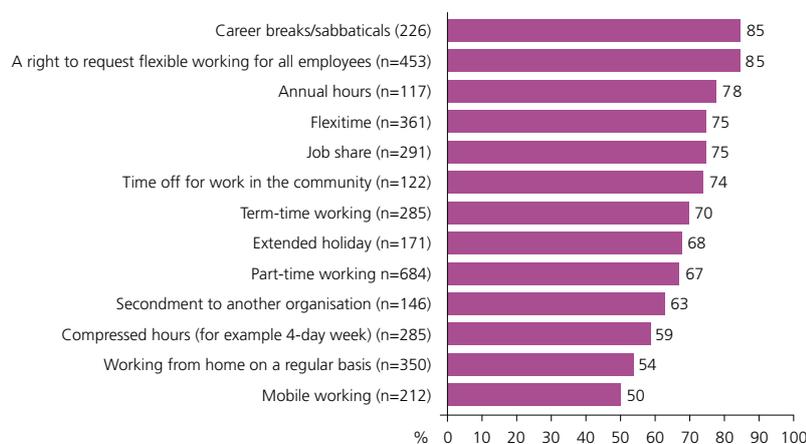
The provision of flexible working arrangements by employers is more likely to be governed by a formal policy rather than just being ‘informal arrangements’. As Figure 2 shows, a formal policy is in place for the majority of the different types of working arrangements, with career breaks and a right to request flexible working having a formal policy in 85% of all LMO employers.

The types of flexible working arrangements that are more likely to be informal arrangements are mobile working and working from home, with 45% and 46% of employers respectively reporting that there is no formal policy for these arrangements.

Among employers that provide flexible working, small employers are much more likely to have informal arrangements. For example, among micro-sized employers that provide flexitime, 80% will manage this informally compared with just 12% of large employers. About a third of micro firms have informal arrangements allowing all employees a right to request flexible working, with two-thirds having a formal policy in place. In contrast, more than nine in ten large employers will have a formal policy in place, with just 6% relying on an informal policy or arrangements. See Table 2.

Just 20% of micro firms have a formal policy on compressed hours in contrast to four out of ten small

Figure 2: Proportion of LMO employers having a formal policy in place, by type of flexible working arrangements offered (%)
Base: All organisations that offer some form of flexible working



and medium-sized organisations and two-thirds of large employers.

Working from home is a practice where there is less contrast in approach between large and small employers, with a significant proportion of large

employers relying on informal arrangements. In all, 41% of large employers use informal arrangements to allow employees to work from home on a regular basis, compared with 59% that rely on a formal policy. A third of micro businesses have a formal homeworking policy in place and two-thirds have informal arrangements.

Table 2: Proportion of LMO employers having a formal policy or informal policy or arrangement in place, by type of flexible working arrangements offered (%)
Base: All organisations that offer some form of flexible working

	All	Micro	Small	Medium	Large
Part-time working					
Formal policy	67	27	45	50	78
Informal policy/arrangements	33	73	55	49	21
Term-time working					
Formal policy	70	6	38	40	78
Informal policy/arrangements	29	94	62	55	22
Job share					
Formal policy	75	22	57	49	81
Informal policy/arrangements	23	78	43	43	18
Flexitime					
Formal policy	75	20	52	68	88
Informal policy/arrangements	25	80	48	31	12
A right to request flexible working for all employees					
Formal policy	85	36	68	83	93
Informal policy/arrangements	14	64	32	17	6
Compressed hours					
Formal policy	59	20	43	41	66
Informal policy/arrangements	37	80	57	57	29
Annual hours					
Formal policy	78	46	44	70	80
Informal policy/arrangements	22	54	56	30	20
Working from home on a regular basis					
Formal policy	54	32	54	50	59
Informal policy/arrangements	45	68	46	50	41
Mobile working					
Formal policy	50	20	44	37	57
Informal policy/arrangements	46	80	56	63	38
Career breaks/sabbaticals					
Formal policy	85	23	43	73	89
Informal policy/arrangements	14	77	57	27	9
Secondment to another organisation					
Formal policy	63	36	63	46	65
Informal policy/arrangements	35	64	37	54	33
Time off for work in the community					
Formal policy	74	31	50	80	78
Informal policy/arrangements	26	69	50	20	22
Extended holiday					
Formal policy	68	18	42	58	76
Informal policy/arrangements	30	82	58	42	22

Flexible working and the law

A number of flexible working arrangements are governed by statutory legislation on the minimum requirements for employers to adhere to. In the case of paid maternity leave, 46% of employers reported that they operate a policy or practice that goes beyond the statutory minimum. Paid parental leave is an area where employers are least likely to go beyond what is the statutory minimum, with only a fifth (21%) of employers reporting this. Almost half of organisations operate a policy that goes beyond the minimum statutory requirement on the right to request flexible working.

Employers in the public sector are significantly more likely than private sector employers to offer policies or practice that go beyond the statutory minimum in all areas. See Figure 3.

Larger employers are in general more likely to provide policies on flexible working that go beyond the statutory minimum. Almost six in ten provide more generous maternity leave than the legal minimum, compared with just 13% of micro businesses. In all, 44% of larger employers provide over the legal minimum on paternity pay, compared with 9% of small employers. See Table 3.

There is little difference, however, on the right to request flexible working, with four in ten large and micro businesses operating a policy or practice beyond the statutory minimum, as do 30% of small employers and 33% of medium-sized organisations.

Interestingly, it appears that a significant number of employers are unsure of what the statutory minimum is or if their own arrangements go beyond this. Overall,

Figure 3: Areas of statutory provision where employers operate a policy or practice that goes beyond the statutory minimum (%)
Base: All organisations (818)

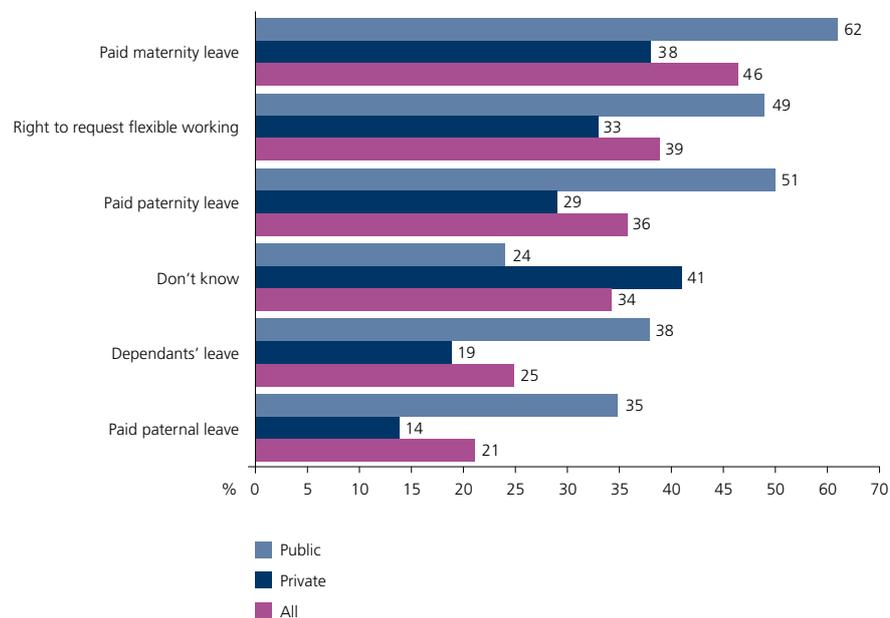


Table 3: Areas of statutory provision where employers operate a policy or practice that goes beyond the statutory minimum, by size of organisation (%)
Base: All organisations (818)

	All	Micro	Small	Medium	Large
Right to request flexible working	39	40	30	33	41
Paid maternity leave	46	13	28	37	59
Paid paternity leave	36	9	25	32	44
Paid parental leave	21	9	13	13	27
Dependants' leave	25	12	16	21	30
Don't know	34	53	47	35	28

34% of employers reported that they do not know if they operate a policy or practice that goes beyond the statutory minimum. A significantly higher proportion of private sector employers (41%) were more likely to say they do not know than public sector employers (24%). Almost half of micro businesses do not know if they operate a practice that goes beyond the minimum, falling to 28% of large employers.

Of those employers who do not have a formal policy to give all workers a right to request flexible working, the main reason given for not having a policy is that it would be too hard to manage competing requests (44%). See Figure 4. This is more of an issue for larger employers, with a significantly higher proportion (52%) reporting this than in SMEs (33%).

The statutory right to request flexible working

Anyone can ask their employer for flexible work arrangements, but the law provides some employees with the statutory right to request a flexible working pattern.

The statutory right to request covers:

- employees who have or expect to have parental responsibility of a child aged under 17 or a disabled child under 18
- employees who are carers for a spouse, partner, civil partner or relative, or someone, who although not related to them, lives at the same address as them.

Under the law employers must seriously consider an application to work flexibly and only reject it if there are good business reasons for doing so. Employees have the right to ask for flexible working – not the right to have it. Employers can reasonably decline applications where there is a legitimate business ground.

For further details of the statutory right to request flexible working, see www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/Employees/Flexibleworking/DG_10029491

Case study: Women's Pioneer Housing

Women's Pioneer Housing introduced the right to request flexible working for all employees when the statutory right to request flexible working came into force in 2003.

Janet Davies, Chief Executive of the housing association, which employs 38 people, said that while the organisation's flexible working policy was driven by the legislation, it was decided the statutory right to request did not go far enough.

'We have a flexi-time system that allows staff to accumulate time off. However, our main policy is a right to request flexible working for everybody.

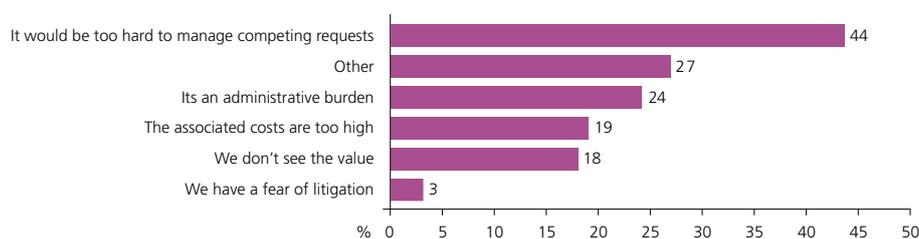
'There are a disproportionately high number of women and older people in our organisation. The employee profile does not fit with the legislation stereotype (parents with young children). The legislation as it stands does not seem very sensible when one considers the removal of the Default Retirement Age and the increase in pension ages. We became aware that it wasn't right just to give the right to request to parents, because two or three people were regularly having to take time off for other types of caring responsibilities.'

The organisation also uses its flexible working policies to enable older workers to downshift and reduce their hours to suit their changing working preferences or health.

Davies explained: 'We have older staff who are committing more time to voluntary work, or cutting down on long commutes by working fewer or condensed hours and would be sympathetic to anyone who makes a request for any reason. It's a false assumption that only younger workers with children need or could benefit from flexibility.'

Davies supports the Government's plans to extend the statutory right to request flexible working to all employees. 'Our policy on flexible working was driven by the legislation – we wouldn't have thought of it otherwise. It has also been helpful from the staff members' point of view, as it gives them a clear idea of their rights. Without the legislation it would have taken longer.'

Figure 4: Reasons for not having a formal right to request flexible working policy (%)
 Base: All organisations which do not have a right to request flexible working (273)



Among employers that don't provide a right to request flexible working to all employees, a quarter of both large and micro businesses are likely to cite difficulty managing competing requests as a reason. A third of small employers say that the associated costs of extending flexible working to all employees are too high, as do 28% of medium-sized organisations and 26% of micro firms. See Table 4.

Large employers are more likely than smaller employers to report the administrative burden as a key reason for not extending the right to request to all employees.

The threat of litigation does not feature highly as a reason, with just 8% of micro firms citing this as a factor and just 1% of large employers.

Only a very small proportion (4%) of employers have encountered any problems in complying with the right to request legislation in the last two years, 85% have had no problems and 11% do not know. Small employers are less likely to report problems than larger organisations. Nine out of ten micro, small and medium-sized employers have not reported any problems compared with eight out of ten large employers. See Table 5.

Of those employers who have encountered problems with the right to request legislation, 64% have experienced disruption caused by introducing new working arrangements and 52% practical problems in assessing and/or discussing alternative working arrangements.

Figure 5 shows the proportion of requests from employees taking advantage of their statutory right that employers have agreed to unmodified, agreed to in a modified form and refused. The majority of requests are agreed to unmodified, with 18% of employers reporting that more than 75% of the requests they receive are agreed to and 41% who reported that no requests had been refused.

In those cases where employers have been unable to grant flexible working requests, the main reasons given are that it would have had a detrimental effect on the ability to meet customer demand (39%) and that they had the inability to reorganise work among existing staff (30%). However, 39% of employers did report that they have never turned down a request, with the private sector 45% significantly more likely to have not refused a request than public sector employers (26%). See Figure 6.

Table 4: Reasons for not having a formal right to request flexible working for all employees, by size of organisation (%)
Base: Organisations that don't provide a right to request flexible working for all employees (229)

	Micro	Small	Medium	Large
It would be too hard to manage competing requests.	26	13	22	26
It's an administrative burden.	16	37	43	52
The associated costs are too high.	26	35	28	10
We don't see the value.	15	12	18	21
We have a fear of litigation.	8	5	7	1
Other	51	34	24	21

Table 5: Organisations that have reported problems in complying with the right to request legislation (%)
Base: All organisations (790)

	All	Micro	Small	Medium	Large
Yes	4	3	3	4	5
No	85	91	93	90	81
Don't know	11	6	4	6	14

Public sector employers are significantly more likely than private sector employers to refuse requests because of a detrimental effect on the ability to meet customer demand (48%) and because they had the inability to reorganise work among existing staff (41%) compared with 34% and 24% of private sector employers respectively.

Employers in the public sector are also significantly more likely to refuse requests on the grounds that they have the inability to recruit additional staff (22% compared with 11% of private sector employers) and because of planned structural changes (17% compared with 7%).

Large employers are more likely to cite a variety of reasons for turning down requests to work flexibly than small employers.

In all, 79% of micro businesses report they have never turned down a request, as do 65% of small businesses, 47% of medium-sized businesses and 25% of large businesses.

Figure 5: Proportion of requests for flexible working that have been agreed to unmodified, in a modified form and refused (%)

Base: All organisations (818)

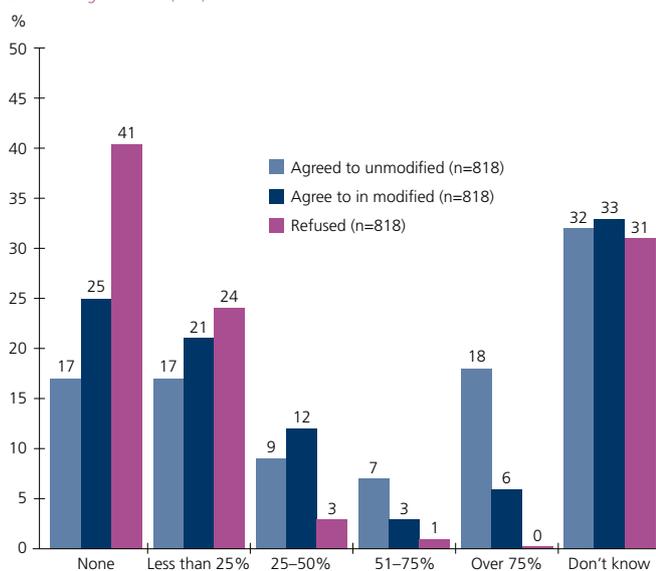


Figure 6: Main grounds on which employers have turned down flexible working requests (%)

Base: All organisations (818)



Flexible working regulations and tribunal claims

Information provided by HM Courts and Tribunals Service, as a result of a Freedom of Information request by the CIPD, reveals how few employment tribunal claims are generated as a result of the statutory right to request flexible working.

The figures show that out of a total 218,100 employment tribunal claims in 2010–11, just 277 alleged that employers had failed to observe the flexible working regulations. The majority of these claims (229) were successfully conciliated by Acas or settled out of court and, of the 48 that actually reached tribunal, just 10 were successful.

During the five years covered by the statistics, the year in which there were most claims under the flexible working regulations was in 2009–10, when there were a total of 344 claims. Of these, 284 were conciliated by Acas, withdrawn or settled out of court. A total of 60 claims were heard at tribunal, with 15 being successful. See Table 6.

The data supports the findings from the survey of employers highlighted in this report that the vast majority (85%) of employers say that the flexible working regulations have caused no problems, rising to 90% or above among micro, small and medium-sized businesses.

Table 6: Statistical information on the number of claims where employers allegedly failed to follow flexible working regulations between the financial years 2006 and 2010

Financial year	Outcome	Acas conciliated settlement	Withdrawn or private settlement	Successful at hearing	Unsuccessful at hearing	Dismissed at hearing – out of scope	Disposed of/other	Default judgment
2006–07	Singles	83	82	3	11	4	10	1
	Multiples	19	9	1	2	1	2	0
	Total	102	91	4	13	5	12	1
2007–08	Singles	109	80	8	23	7	9	1
	Multiples	14	11	2	4	2	2	0
	Total	123	91	10	27	9	11	1
2008–09	Singles	131	48	9	15	3	8	1
	Multiples	23	19	1	4	2	1	0
	Total	154	67	10	19	5	9	1
2009–10	Singles	139	105	11	22	5	15	1
	Multiples	19	21	3	3	0	0	0
	Total	158	126	14	25	5	15	1
2010–11	Singles	100	90	9	21	5	10	0
	Multiples	35	4	1	2	0	0	0
	Total	135	94	10	23	5	10	0

(Source: HM Courts and Tribunals Service)

Table 7: Number of claimants alleging their employers failed to follow the flexible working regulations and who were successful at hearing

Year	Number of claimants who were successful at hearing
2006–07	5
2007–08	11
2008–09	11
2009–10	15
2010–11	10

Access to and uptake of flexible working among employees

Employee perceptions of the flexible working arrangements provided by employers

In total, almost three quarters of employees report their employer provides access to some form of flexible working, with about a fifth saying their organisation does not provide flexible working and just under 10% not knowing either way. Part-time working is the most commonly provided flexible working arrangement with about half (51%) of employees saying their organisation provides this. The next most commonly provided flexible working practises are flexitime (31%), working from home and mobile working (24% for both) and career breaks or sabbaticals (22%). See Table 8.

The survey shows there is a gap between what flexible working employees believe employers offer and what employers actually provide. For example, Figure 1 in this report finds that more than 90% of employers say they provide flexible working of some kind, while 88% report they provide part-time working, 54% that they offer working from home on a regular basis for some staff, and 50% cite flexi-time. This suggests employers could do more to communicate their flexible working arrangements to staff and that certain flexible working arrangements are only available to some employees.

Table 8: The flexible working options that employees' report their organisation provides
Base: All employees, excluding sole traders (1,782)

	All	Micro	Small	Medium	Large
Part-time working	51	35	39	46	60
Term-time working	13	5	5	8	18
Job share	16	4	8	9	23
Flexitime	31	29	23	19	34
Compressed hours (spreading a five-day week over four days for example)	16	9	13	8	21
Annual hours (staff are contracted to work a set number of hours each year with flexibility over when hours are worked)	9	6	5	4	11
Working from home on a regular basis	24	29	21	17	25
Mobile working (eg using laptop to work from another location)	24	20	17	23	
Career breaks, sabbaticals	22	6	7	8	33
Secondment to another organisation	10	3	4	2	16
Time off for work in the community	11	5	6	5	16
Other	3	6	1	3	3
My organisation does not provide flexible working	19	28	35	23	13
Don't know	8	7	6	7	7

Uptake of flexible working

Among employees whose organisations provide some form of flexible working, part-time working is the most commonly used arrangement, with a third (32%) reporting they work part-time. A quarter of employees use some sort of flexitime and 20% work from home on a regular basis. Remote working is also a fairly frequently used option, with 14% of employees benefiting from this way of working.

However, take-up of other forms of flexibility is low. Only 5% of employees have some form of compressed hours, for example spreading a five-day week over four days. Just 3% of respondents use annual hours (staff are contracted to work a set number of hours each year, with flexibility over when hours are worked). Just 1% of respondents job-share.

Women are more likely than men to use flexible working, with 77% working flexibly in some way, compared with 70% of men. Women are most likely to work part-time (49%), use flexitime (21%) and work from home on a regular basis (15%). Among men, flexitime (30%), working from home on a regular basis (25%) and mobile working (22%) are the most commonly used practices.

In terms of sector, there is little difference in the overall uptake of flexible working, however public sector employees are most likely to use flexitime, non-profit employees most commonly work part-time and private sector staff are most likely to benefit from mobile working. See Table 9.

Table 9: The uptake of flexible working arrangement among employees (%)
 Base: All employees, excluding sole traders whose organisations provide some form of flexible working (1,298)

	All	Men	Women	Private	Public	Voluntary
Part-time working	32	13	49	32	31	38
Term-time working	2	1	4	1	7	2
Job share	1	1	1	1	1	1
Flexitime	25	30	21	20	38	29
Compressed hours (spreading a five-day week over four days for example)	5	5	4	5	5	4
Annual hours (staff are contracted to work a set number of hours each year with flexibility over when hours are worked)	3	2	4	3	4	5
Working from home on a regular basis	20	25	15	21	13	24
Mobile working (eg using laptop to work from another location)	14	22	8	16	12	7
Career breaks, sabbaticals	2	2	2	2	2	3
Secondment to another organisation	1	1	1	1	1	0
Time off for work in the community	3	3	2	3	1	0
Other	3	3	3	3	2	4
I do not make use of any flexible working options	26	30	23	27	26	24

Case study: British Gas

What types of flexible working do you offer?

At British Gas, flexible working is well established and a key element of our business strategy. By offering many different types of flexible working, we can create total flexibility for our employees and enable the business to provide our customers with 24/7 service. Our engineers, for example, have flexible working patterns and are available as late as 8pm, seven days a week, in addition to our 24-hour emergency service.

We support our employees' requests for flexible working whenever possible, while considering the needs of the business. Our flexible working provisions include allowing our university students to study, letting people work longer or shorter hours, part-time and full-time roles, flexible hours to allow for childcare, and remote working. Where viable, we also support homeworking.

Why do you offer flexible working?

Our people and their skills are fundamental to the great service we give our customers – and the overall success of British Gas. We offer flexible working because we want to attract and retain the best talent, regardless of background and responsibilities. And we want a diverse workforce that reflects our community and customer base.

Offering flexible working increases employee loyalty to our brand and provides a great environment to work in. British Gas was ranked in the top quartile for levels of engagement in a recent employee engagement survey conducted by Aon Hewitt, which also highlighted the low turnover rates amongst our staff. In our UK call centres, for instance, we have one of the lowest turnover rates in the industry, good attendance levels and strong commitment to customers.

What do you see as the benefits of offering flexible working?

We believe that happy, committed employees lead to a successful, flourishing organisation. Offering benefits such as flexible working builds mutual trust between employer and employee. In return, our people reward us with great service and commitment to the business and our customers.

What do you think would happen if you did not offer flexible working?

Without a totally flexible workforce we wouldn't be able to give our customers the same great service and respond to their individual needs. Our organisation would totally grind to a halt.

Additional points

The diversity agenda is the key piece – we're offering flexible working because there are so many business benefits to doing so and it makes business sense.

Angela Williams, HR Director, British Gas

Flexible working uptake, by size of organisation worked for

Employees working for micro and small businesses are more likely to work flexibly than those working in medium-sized or large organisations. Nine out of ten employees working in micro businesses employing between two and nine people benefit from some sort of flexible working, as do 78% of those working for small employers with between 10 and 49 members of staff. Among medium-sized organisations (employing between 50 and 249 people) 67% of employees work flexibly in some way, as do 71% of employees in large organisations with 250 or more employees. See Table 10 for a detailed breakdown of flexible working uptake by size of organisation worked for.

Flexible working uptake, by seniority of employees

Board directors, senior and middle managers are marginally more likely to use some form of flexible working, than line managers and employees with no managerial responsibility. See Table 11. However there is significant difference between the type of flexible working used by employees of different levels of seniority. There is much greater uptake of home working and mobile working among board directors, other senior managers and middle managers. Just 14% of line

managers and a similar proportion of employees with no managerial responsibility work from home regularly. While only about one in ten of line managers and employees with no managerial responsibility benefit from mobile working. Conversely line managers and employees with no managerial responsibility are more likely to use flexi-time and to work part-time compared to more senior members of staff.

Employees that would like to work flexibly if given the opportunity

Among the quarter of employees that don't make use of any flexible working options, nearly half (46%) would take up flexible working if they had the opportunity. Of this sample, women are marginally more likely than men to indicate they would like to work flexibly if there was the opportunity to do so (see Table 12). In all, 69% of those working in medium-sized organisations who don't make use of flexible working report they would like to work flexibly if there was the opportunity to do so, as would 55% of those working in large organisations who don't currently work flexibly. Nearly half (47%) of those working in small organisations who don't work flexibly would also like to work flexibly; however, only 23% of those working for micro businesses say that they would like to work flexibly given the opportunity (see Table 13).

Table 10: What type of flexible working do you make use of? (by size of organisation worked for) (% employees)
Base: All employees who have access to flexible working (1,298)

	Micro	Small	Medium	Large
Part-time working	39	33	27	31
Term-time working	2	1	3	3
Job share	2	1	3	3
Flexitime	28	28	17	26
Compressed hours (spreading a five-day week over four days for example)	8	9	4	3
Annual hours (staff are contracted to work a set number of hours each year with flexibility over when hours are worked)	5	0	2	4
Working from home on a regular basis	37	25	17	16
Mobile working (eg using laptop to work from another location)	21	15	13	14
Career breaks, sabbaticals	3	2	0	2
Secondment to another organisation	2	1	1	1
Time off for work in the community	4	5	4	2
Other	10	2	4	2
I do not make use of any flexible working options	10	22	33	29

Table 11: What type of flexible working do you make use of? (by category of employee)
Base: All employees who have access to flexible working (1,298)

	Board director	Senior manager below board level	Middle manager	Line manager	Employees with no managerial responsibility
Part-time working	21	13	18	24	39
Term-time working	0	0	2	2	2
Job share	0	1	0	1	1
Flexitime	22	21	24	30	28
Compressed hours (spreading a five-day week over four days for example)	10	2	6	5	2
Annual hours (staff are contracted to work a set number of hours each year with flexibility over when hours are worked)	0	1	2	4	3
Working from home on a regular basis	30	42	26	14	14
Mobile working (eg using laptop to work from another location)	30	32	26	11	10
Career breaks, sabbaticals	8	6	2	1	1
Secondment to another organisation	4	5	2	1	0
Time off for work in the community	0	3	3	4	2
Other	0	1	2	3	3
I do not make use of any flexible working options	20	24	24	30	28

Table 12: Given the opportunity, would you take up flexible working? (%)
Base: All employees (excluding the self employed) whose organisation does not provide flexible working (347)

	All	Men	Women	Private	Public	Voluntary
Yes	46	44	51	47	44	65
No	33	38	25	35	36	0
Don't know	20	18	23	19	20	35

Table 13: Given the opportunity, would you take up flexible working? (by size of organisation) (%)
Base: All employees (excluding the self employed) whose organisation does not provide flexible working (347)

	Micro	Small	Medium	Large
Yes	23	47	69	55
No	58	35	14	23
Don't know	19	18	17	22

Junior staff with no managerial responsibility who don't have access to flexible working are most likely to say they would take up flexible working if they had the opportunity to do so, with 61% saying yes this is the case. More than five out of ten line and middle managers who are unable to work flexibly would like to do so. In contrast just 24% of board levels directors and 33% of senior managers below board level say this is the case. See Table 14.

A large majority of employees (83%) say they have never had a flexible working request turned down, with little difference between men or women. There is also little difference in the responses of employees in terms of sector or size of organisation worked for. Employees

working for public sector organisations are slightly more likely to have had a flexible working request turned down than those working in the private sector. Those working in medium and micro businesses are marginally more likely to have a flexible working request turned down than those working in small and large organisations. See tables 15 and 16.

The most common response by employees to having a request for flexible working turned down would be to talk to their line manager (56%). Only 11% say they would appeal against the decision and 8% say they would talk to HR. Women would be more likely to appeal the decision than men (see Table 14).

Table 14: Given the opportunity, would you take up flexible working? (by seniority of employee)
Base: All employees (excluding the self employed) whose organisation does not provide flexible working (347)

	Board director	Senior manager below board level	Middle manager	Line manager	Employees with no managerial responsibility
Yes	24	33	58	56	61
No	44	60	29	24	19
Don't know	32	7	13	20	20

Table 15: Have you ever had a flexible working request turned down? (%)
Base: All employees who have to request to work flexibly (533)

	All	Men	Women	Private	Public	Voluntary
Yes	13	12	13	11	15	14
No	83	83	82	84	78	84
Can't remember	5	5	5	5	7	2

Table 16: Have you ever had a flexible working request turned down? (by size of organisation worked for) (%)
Base: All employees who have to request to work flexibly (533)

	Micro	Small	Medium	Large
Yes	14	10	14	12
No	84	86	84	82
Don't know	2	4	2	5

Table 17: How would you respond if your request for flexible working was turned down? (%)
Base: All employees who have to request to work flexibly (533)

	All	Men	Women	Private	Public	Voluntary
I would appeal the decision.	11	7	14	10	11	15
I would submit another request.	5	4	5	5	5	3
I would talk to my line manager.	56	58	56	54	62	62
I would talk to HR.	8	6	10	9	7	0
I would do something else.	5	6	4	5	3	5
I would do nothing.	15	20	12	17	11	15

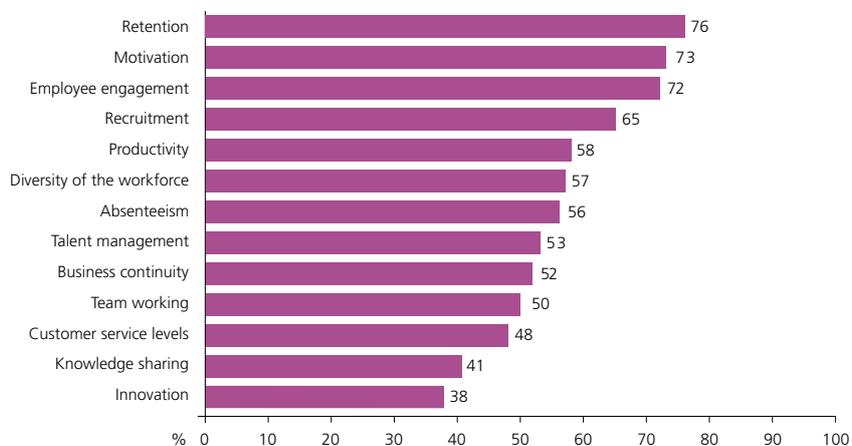
Benefits of flexible working

Employers report that the provision of flexible working arrangements can have a positive impact on a number of areas of organisational performance. The results show employers feel that implementing flexible working has significant direct benefits for the business.

Nearly three-quarters (76%) of employers feel that implementing flexible working practices has a positive

impact on staff retention, with just 3% identifying a negative effect (net positive impact 73%). A further 73% report there is a positive impact on employee motivation, with 3% citing a negative effect (net positive impact 70%). In all, 72% report that flexible working positively affects levels of employee engagement, with 4% saying there is a negative effect (net positive impact 68%). See Figure 7.

Figure 7: Positive impact of flexible working practices on areas of organisational performance (%)
 Base: All organisations which offer flexible working (754)



The views of employers on which areas flexible working has the highest impact vary by size and sector. Employers of all sizes are very positive about the impact of flexible working on retention, motivation and engagement. Micro employers are most likely to report flexible working has a positive impact on productivity and on customer service. Medium-sized organisations are most likely to report a positive impact on absence levels. Large organisations are most likely to agree that flexible working supports diversity (see Table 18).

In the public sector employers are more likely to feel that flexible working has a positive impact upon knowledge-sharing, the diversity of the workforce and business continuity than private sector employers (50%, 67% and 59% in the public sector compared with 36%, 51% and 48% respectively in the private sector).

Benefits of flexible working: employees

From an employee perspective, more than half report that flexible working helps them achieve better work-life balance generally. Almost a quarter report flexible working helps them manage caring responsibilities for children, while nearly one in ten say it helps them to

manage caring responsibilities for parents or grandparents. More than a third of respondents believe flexible working makes them more productive. A third of respondents report that flexible working has helped reduce the amount of stress they feel under and a similar proportion say it has been a factor with them staying with their current employer. See Table 19.

About a fifth of employees say flexible working helps them stay healthy by allowing more time for them to exercise or make sensible choices over lifestyle. A similar proportion think flexible working reduces the amount of time they take off work sick.

Women are more likely than men to say that flexible working helps them to manage caring responsibilities for children, parents and grandchildren. Women are also more likely than men to identify flexible working as a reason they have stayed with their current employer. Men are more likely to believe flexible working helps them be more productive, to reduce the time and cost of commuting and to reduce stress.

Table 18: Net positive impact of flexible working* (% employers)
Base: All organisations (base 760)

	All	Micro	Small	Medium	Large
Retention	73	74	64	72	74
Motivation	70	75	66	70	69
Recruitment	62	59	53	63	63
Engagement	68	71	56	69	69
Productivity	47	65	51	45	48
Absence	49	53	47	54	48
Customer service	37	39	27	33	26
Teamworking	32	55	36	33	39
Knowledge-sharing	30	34	17	34	27
Diversity	54	41	39	48	60
Business continuity	44	50	33	48	43
Innovation	32	47	32	29	30

*Net positive impact of flexible working: the proportion of respondents saying flexible working has a positive impact on any of the above measures of organisational performance minus those saying their impact is negative.

Table 19: The benefits of flexible working (employees %)
Base: All employees making use of flexible working opportunities (960)

	All	Men	Women
It helps me achieve better work–life balance generally.	54	56	52
It helps me manage caring responsibilities (children).	23	18	28
It helps me manage caring responsibilities (parents/grandparents).	9	7	12
It helps me manage caring responsibilities (spouse).	7	7	6
It helps me manage caring responsibilities (friend/neighbour).	2	2	2
It helps reduce the amount of pressure/stress I feel under.	33	36	31
It helps me pursue hobbies/personal interests outside work.	26	27	25
It helps me invest more time in my family/friends.	30	28	31
It helps reduce the amount of time I have to take off work to look after dependants.	11	9	13
It helps me stay on top of my financial affairs.	11	14	8
It helps me stay healthy by allowing more time to exercise/make healthy choices over lifestyle.	17	20	14
It helps reduce the cost of commuting.	24	32	17
It helps reduce the amount of time I spend commuting.	27	38	18
It has helped me to return to work following ill health.	8	10	6
It has been a factor in my staying with my current employer.	33	30	35
It helps me be more productive at work.	35	46	27
It helps reduce the amount of time I take off sick.	17	17	18
Other	5	5	5
Don't know	8	5	10

Satisfaction with work–life balance and employee engagement

There is a strong association between employees who agree they achieve the right balance between their work and home lives and respondents who are engaged at work, according to the CIPD's employee engagement index (see box below), which is tracked in the Institute's quarterly Employee Outlook survey.

In all, 79% of engaged employees agree or strongly agree that they achieve the right balance between their work and home lives, compared with 50% of employees who are neutral (neither engaged nor disengaged) and 17% among those that are disengaged. See Table 20.

Table 20: Proportion of engaged/disengaged employees agreeing they achieve the right balance between their work and home lives (%)
Base: All employees (2047)

	All	Engaged	Neutral	Disengaged
Strongly agree	14	26	8	4
Agree	45	53	42	13
Neither agree nor disagree	17	9	22	17
Disagree	17	10	20	37
Strongly disagree	6	2	7	28
Not sure	1	0	1	1

Case study: Marks & Spencer

What types of flexible working do you currently offer?

We are committed to promoting an environment where employees can openly discuss their work-life balance needs with their line manager and propose flexible ways of working which may allow them to achieve a balance that is appropriate to them and to the business. The M&S Flexible Working Policy was revised in February 2010 to give greater emphasis to the requirement for line managers to give all formal flexible working requests due consideration, and agree those requests that are beneficial to both M&S and the employee.

M&S currently supports the following types of flexible working:

- part-time working
- job-sharing
- term-time working
- homeworking on a part-time basis, depending on the job
- time off for training, where an individual can request unpaid time off for relevant training or study
- flexible retirement options
- career leave of up to nine unpaid months to study, travel or perform caring duties.

Why do you offer flexible working?

Apart from the legislative requirement to consider flexible working requests, we recognise that when employees are able to achieve an appropriate balance between work and other aspects of their lives they have **improved morale, productivity and attendance and are more likely to remain with our company.**

What do you see as the main benefits of offering flexible working?

We are highly committed to employee engagement and believe that flexible working contributes to our levels of engagement. Other benefits include:

- attraction of the best talent
- retention of our existing talent
- productivity across the business
- motivation to give great service
- increased morale.

What would you highlight as the most innovative element of your flexible working provision?

- Many requests for flexible working can be handled and agreed informally. Encouraging employees to initially raise a request informally is likely to save the line manager time and to help encourage positive working relationships where the employee feels valued and committed, especially if the request is for a temporary change. The eligibility criteria do not apply to informal requests, that is, continuously employed for 26 weeks and who have not made a formal flexible working request in the preceding 12 months.

If you did not offer flexible working, what effect would this have on your organisation?

- lack of retained knowledge and talent across the business
- poor morale and motivation would mean a drop in levels of customer service
- increased recruitment costs/unable to recruit younger generation.

Tanith Dodge, Head of HR, M&S

The employee engagement index

These questions asked the extent to which an employee:

- takes on more work to help colleagues
- works more hours than is paid or contracted to
- feels under excessive pressure in their job
- has positive relationships with colleagues
- achieves what they feel to be the right work–life balance
- is satisfied with the content of their job role
- is satisfied with their job overall
- is satisfied with their relationship with their line manager or supervisor
- thinks their employer treats them fairly
- has a clear knowledge of the purpose of their organisation
- is motivated by that purpose
- feels their organisation gives them the opportunity to learn and grow
- has confidence in the directors/senior managers of their organisation
- trusts the directors/senior managers of their organisation
- is likely to recommend their organisation as an employer.

Methodology

The above variables were then compared with each other using factor analysis to compare the level of overlap that existed between them. In doing so, there emerged seven distinctive groups of variables which were contributing different elements to overall engagement.

All variables were then aggregated together to give an overall score. So as to not overweight any individual element in the calculation of the index, where more than one question added to the same indicator of engagement, each response was downweighted (if there were four questions in a category, for example, they were each given a weighting of 0.25 so the group as a whole totalled a value of one-seventh of the index).

The total score was then indexed between 1 and 100 using a coefficient.

Satisfaction with work–life balance support

Only a minority of employees agree their organisation or their direct manager provides them with support to help them manage their work–life balance. See Table 21.

Just over a third of employees agree or strongly agree their organisation provides them with work–life balance support, with women (42%) more likely to agree this is the case than men (32%). There is little difference in views from employees at different levels of seniority in organisations. In all, 32% of board-level managers or directors agree their organisation helps

them manage their work–life balance, as do 34% of middle managers, 38% of line managers and 39% of employees with no managerial responsibility.

Employees who believe their organisation supports their work–life balance have a more positive view of senior management. Respondents who agree their organisation provides support to help them manage their work–life balance are much more likely to also agree that they trust the senior management team and to agree that senior managers treat employees with respect.

Table 21: Proportion of employees agreeing their organisation provides them with support to help them manage their work–life balance (%)

Base: All employees, excluding self-employed, (1,782)

	All	Men	Women	Micro	Small	Medium	Large
Strongly agree	7	6	8	11	9	7	6
Agree	30	26	34	26	35	27	31
Neither agree nor disagree	24	26	21	22	24	26	23
Disagree	22	23	21	14	18	22	25
Strongly disagree	12	13	11	7	12	12	12
Not sure	1	1	1	0	0	2	2
Not applicable	5	6	4	19	3	4	2

Almost four in ten (39%) employees agree their manager provides support to help them manage their work-life balance. Public sector employees are most likely to agree this is the case (43%), with private sector staff least likely to (38%).

Employees working for micro organisations are least likely to agree their manager provides support to help them manage their work-life balance, with just 29% saying this is the case. There is little difference among

employees working for small, medium and large employers, with about four in ten agreeing their manager provides support in this area. See Table 22.

The survey highlights the importance of management support for employees' work-life balance as a way of preventing stress at work. Respondents who agree their manager provides support over their work-life balance are much less likely to say they are under excessive pressure every day than those who disagree.

Table 22: Proportion of employees agreeing their manager provides them with support to help them manage their work-life balance (%)
 Base: All employees, excluding self-employed, (1,782)

	All	Men	Women	Micro	Small	Medium	Large
Strongly agree	8	7	9	8	8	9	8
Agree	31	29	34	21	35	33	34
Neither agree nor disagree	23	23	23	23	21	20	23
Disagree	19	20	17	10	17	20	21
Strongly disagree	11	12	9	7	12	10	11
Not sure	0	0	0	1	1	2	0
Not applicable	8	9	7	31	6	6	2

Manufacturing firm Seacon Europe Ltd has seen absence levels fall since introducing flexitime for all staff. Production staff are allowed one and a half days' flexitime each month, while office staff have one day of flexitime per month.

HR Adviser Gary Cole said the organisation introduced its policy following the introduction of the statutory right to request flexible working in 2003 in response to demand from staff.

He said absence levels had reduced as employees could use flexitime to manage demands they face in their lives outside work.

'People know they can take flexi, so they turn up. Attendance has improved greatly. Whereas 5-10% of people would be on the absence report, now we just get 1 or 2%. People have a greater understanding because there is a greater consistency.'

'Many people use flexitime to leave at 4:45 to avoid the traffic. Others use it for the school run or for doctors' appointments,' he said.

The introduction of flexitime has generally been problem free, but the firm has to be able to manage competing requests for time off at the same time in a fair and consistent way.

Cole explained: *'Sometimes requests are made at short notice, and these are sometimes rejected. Our decisions are based on their degree of importance, especially when requests are made by several members of staff at the same time.'*

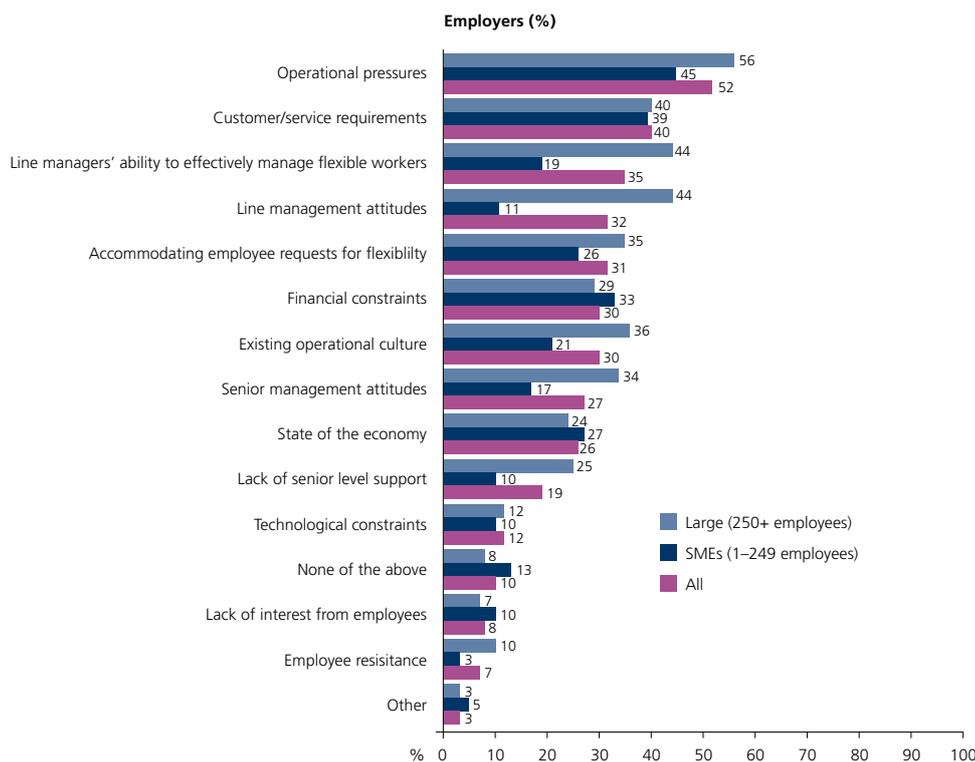
Cole added that flexitime is seen as a significant benefit to staff as the extra time means that in practice production staff receive another 18 days off a year, while office staff get an extra 12 days off on top of their annual leave entitlement.

Barriers to introducing flexible working

While it is the case that the vast majority of employers (94%) offer some form of flexible working, employers also reported that there are a number of barriers to them improving upon their current flexible working arrangements.

The main barrier to improving flexible working appears to be operational pressures, which was mentioned by 52% of employers. Other barriers that feature highly are maintaining customer/service requirements (40% of employers) and line managers' ability to effectively

Figure 8: Barriers to improving flexible working practices
Base: All organisations (818)



manage flexible workers (35%). Existing organisational culture and the attitudes of senior managers are identified as barriers 30% and 27% of employers respectively. See Table 23.

There are some important differences between the attitudes of employers of different sizes, with micro and small businesses less likely to cite as wide a range of obstacles as medium-sized or larger employers.

In all, 56% of large employers and 54% of medium-sized organisations cite operational pressures as obstacles to flexible working, compared with 47% of small organisations and 31% of micro businesses.

Large employers are by some way most likely to reference line management attitudes (44%) and line managers' ability to effectively manage flexible workers (44%). In contrast, just 6% of micro firms, 14% of small companies and 31% of medium-sized organisations cite line managers' ability to manage as a barrier to flexible working. Only 2% of micro firms identified line manager attitudes as a problem, as did 7% of small firms and 19% of medium-sized employers.

The biggest obstacle cited by micro firms is financial constraints, identified by 37% of these respondents in contrast to 29% of large employers. The issue of financial constraints is felt to be more of a barrier in the public sector than the private sector, with 39% of public sector employers mentioning this compared with 25% of private sector employees.

Table 23: Obstacles to flexible working, by size of organisation (%)
Base: All organisations (818)

	All	Micro	Small	Medium	Large
State of the economy	26	31	22	26	24
Operational pressures	52	32	47	54	56
Customer service requirements	40	34	34	46	40
Line managers' ability to effectively manage flexible workers	35	6	14	31	44
Line management attitudes	32	2	7	19	44
Senior management attitudes	27	4	14	28	34
Existing organisational culture	30	4	19	35	36
Lack of senior-level support	19	2	8	16	25
Financial constraints	30	37	31	31	29
Technological constraints	12	6	12	13	12
Lack of interest among employees	8	7	13	11	7
Employee resistance	7	3	4	3	10
Accommodating employee requests for flexibility	31	14	27	35	35
Other	3	7	6	2	2

Table 24: Employee views on obstacles to flexible working by size of organisation (%)
Base: All employees, excluding self employed (1,782)

	All	Micro	Small	Medium	Large
Attitudes among senior managers	17	6	15	19	21
Attitudes among line managers/supervisors	16	4	13	12	21
Attitudes among other members of staff	13	4	13	13	16
Poor communication of what flexibility is available	9	3	6	8	12
There is more pressure on people to be seen to be at work as a result of the economic downturn	11	4	8	12	15
A lack of available technology	7	5	7	10	7
A lack of access to the resources I need to do my job	9	6	10	10	9
The nature of the work I do	34	33	46	37	32
Flexible working is of limited relevance to the sector I work in	17	19	18	15	16
Other	3	5	2	3	3
There are no barriers to flexible working at my organisation	22	36	20	16	19
Don't know	12	9	7	12	12

From the perspective of employees, the biggest obstacle to flexible working is the nature of the work they do, with 34% citing this as an issue. The next most commonly mentioned obstacles are that flexible working is of limited relevance to the sector they work in, the attitudes of senior managers and the attitudes of line managers or supervisors. See Table 24.

In general, the smaller the organisation worked for, the least likely employees are to identify obstacles to flexible working. Employees working in micro-sized businesses are least likely to identify obstacles to flexible working at their organisation. Just 6% of respondents working in the smallest organisations cite attitudes among senior managers and only 4%

identify attitudes among line managers as obstacles to flexible working. In contrast, 21% of respondents working in large organisations identify both senior and line management attitudes as creating obstacles.

Those working for large employers are most likely to say the attitude of other employees is an obstacle to flexible working.

Flexible working trends

The provision of flexible working by employers has increased significantly over the past decade, according to the available evidence.

In terms of provision by employers, the Department for Trade and Industry's Work-Life Balance surveys in 2001, 2004 and 2006 and the 1998 and 2004 Workplace Employment Relations Surveys (WERS) provide useful benchmarks against the CIPD's new research.

The CIPD and WERS survey data show that the provision of a number of common flexible working practices by employers has increased steadily between 1998, 2004 and 2012. See Table 25.

The proportion of employers providing flexitime to some employees has increased from 27% in 1998 to 50% in 2012. Homeworking is the type of flexibility that has seen a particularly significant increase in uptake from 1998, when just 13% of employers provided homeworking to some employees, to 54% in 2012.

Nearly half (49%) of employers now provide job-sharing compared with just 31% in 2004 and 28% in 1998. The proportion of employers providing compressed

hours has doubled between 1998 (16%) and 2012 (33%). More than four in ten employers (44%) now provide compressed hours working compared with 16% in 2004 (question was not asked in 1998).

However, the extent to which the actual uptake of flexible working among employees has increased over the last ten years is not so conclusive.

According to the DTI's Work-Life Balance surveys there was little increase in the take-up in flexible working by employees between 2001 and 2007. The proportion of employees who said flexible working was available and they had taken up at least one flexible working practice in the previous year increased from 51% in 2004 to 56% in 2006. However, if you compare the take-up of some of the most common flexible working arrangements identified in the DTI survey, there was little significant increase in uptake between 2001 and 2007. See Table 26.

The DTI WLB survey data is not directly comparable to the CIPD *Employee Outlook* 2012 survey data because of differences in how the research was conducted.

Table 25: The provision of flexible working arrangements (% employers)

	CIPD 2012* Flexibility at work report	WERS 2004**	WERS 1998***
Flexitime	50	35	27
Job-sharing	49	31	28
Homeworking	54	26	13
Term-time working	33	20	16
Compressed work weeks	44	16	–

*Source: CIPD 2012. Online survey conducted for the CIPD by YouGov. Based on responses from 1,019 HR practitioners, weighted to be representative of industry in the UK in relation to size, sector and type of business.

**Source: WERS 2004. Management questionnaire. Base: all workplaces with ten or more employees. Figures are weighted percentages and based on responses from 2,059 managers.

***Source: WERS 1998. Management questionnaire (DTI 1999). Base: all workplaces with ten or more employees identified through the filter question (see DTI 1999 for details). Figures are weighted percentages.

Table 26: Trends in the take-up of flexible working arrangements amongst employees (%)

	WLB1 (2001)	WLB2 (2004)	WLB3 (2006)
Part-time working	24	28	27
Flexitime	24	26	27
Reduced hours for a limited period	NA	13	12
Regular homeworking*	(20)	11	9
Compressed working week	6	11	9
Annualised hours	2	6	8
Job-share	4	6	6
Term-time working	14	15	13
Not worked flexibly in the last 12 months	–	49	44
Currently working flexibly or has done so in the last 12 months	–	51	56

* In WLB1, this question was asked as part of a separate section from other flexible working arrangements and was very differently worded, making comparison particularly unreliable.

Source: Department for Trade and Industry, The Third Work-Life Balance Survey; Main findings (2007)

Differences in methodology between DTI work-life balance surveys and the CIPD *Employee Outlook* data

In the DTI's WLB2 and WLB3, only employees who said that a particular flexible working arrangement would be available if they needed it were asked if they currently worked or had worked in that way over the past year. In WLB1 all employees were asked whether they worked that way in their main job and there was no reference to the past 12 months. In order to make tentative comparisons over time, the researchers commissioned by the DTI to undertake WLB3 calculated take-up of flexible working as a proportion of all employees for both WLB2 and WLB3.

The CIPD survey used one question to gauge uptake, which was 'what type of flexible working do you currently make use of?' This is unlikely to capture as many positive responses as the DTI survey questions in WLB1 and WLB2, which ask whether employees currently work flexibly or have worked flexibly in the past year.

However, bearing the differences in the data sets in mind, it seems safe to conclude that the overall use of flexible working has increased since 2007. Just under three-quarters (74%) of employees in the CIPD 2012 flexible working survey are using some type of flexible working, compared with just 56% in 2006 and 51% in 2004.

The picture on trends is less clear if you look at the practices that employees typically use. The areas where there seem to have been a significant increase since 2006 are part-time working and the use of homeworking. In all, 32% of CIPD survey respondents say they work part-time compared with 27% of employees in 2006 and 28% in 2004. In all, 20% of CIPD survey respondents work from home on a regular basis compared with 10% of employees in 2006 and 11% in 2004. The CIPD survey also showed a significant uptake of mobile working (14%), something that was not covered by the DTI surveys. See Table 27.

However, on a range of other flexible working measures, there has been a reduction in take-up since 2006. These include compressed hours, flexitime, job-share and term-time working. The ambiguous picture provided by the data in the different surveys may be explained by the differences in methodology but even if you just look at the DTI survey data between 2001 and 2006, there is no clear increase in the take-up of flexible working. Further research is necessary to establish a clearer picture on the take-up of flexible working over time.

Table 27: The uptake of flexible working arrangement among employees (%)
 Base: All employees, excluding sole traders, whose organisations provide some form of flexible working (1,298)

	All	Men	Women	Private	Public	Voluntary
Part-time working	32	13	49	32	31	38
Term-time working	2	1	4	1	7	2
Job-share	1	1	1	1	1	1
Flexitime	25	30	21	20	38	29
Compressed hours (spreading a five-day week over four days for example)	5	5	4	5	5	4
Annual hours (staff are contracted to work a set number of hours each year with flexibility over when hours are worked)	3	2	4	3	4	5
Working from home on a regular basis	20	25	15	21	13	24
Mobile working (eg using laptop to work from another location)	14	22	8	16	12	7
Career breaks, sabbaticals	2	2	2	2	2	3
Secondment to another organisation	1	1	1	1	1	0
Time off for work in the community	3	3	2	3	1	0
Other	3	3	3	3	2	4
I do not make use of any flexible working options	26	30	23	27	26	24

Background to the report

This report is based on responses to two separate surveys from more than 1,000 employers (HR professionals) and more than 2,000 employees.

The employer perspective on flexibility at work was provided by the CIPD's winter 2011/12 *Labour Market Outlook* (LMO) survey of 1,019 HR professionals, many of whom are drawn from the CIPD's membership of more than 135,000 professionals. Fieldwork was carried out over January 2012 and is weighted to be representative of industry in the UK in relation to size, sector and type of business.

The survey was conducted online using the following sample sources:

- a sample from the CIPD membership database consisting of approximately 135,000 members
- YouGov panel of 1,500 senior HR professionals
- an open survey advertised through the CIPD weekly newsletter and magazine *People Management*.

The employee perspective was taken from a focus section on flexible working in the CIPD's winter 2011/12 *Employee Outlook* survey. The survey of 2,047 UK employees was conducted by YouGov for the CIPD from 18 December 2011 to 4 January 2012.

This survey was administered to members of the YouGov plc UK panel of more than 285,000 individuals who have agreed to take part in surveys. The sample was selected and weighted to be representative of the UK workforce in relation to sector and size (private, public, voluntary), industry type and full-time/part-time working by gender. The sample profile is normally derived from census data or, if not available from the census, from industry-accepted data.

Panellists who matched the sample profile (as explained above) were selected at random from the YouGov plc UK panel and were sent an email inviting them to take part in the survey.

Respondents were drawn from a mixture of public, private and voluntary organisations. Size of organisation was classified in the following way: sole trader (one-person business), micro business (2–9), small business (10–49), medium (50–249) and large (more than 250).

Net scores refer to the proportion of people agreeing with a statement minus those disagreeing.

Conclusions

The right to request flexible working was introduced in 2003 for parents of young children under six (or 18 in the case of a disabled child). Since then the right to request flexible working has been gradually extended to parents with older children (children aged under 17 or disabled children aged under 18) and certain employees with caring responsibilities. However, the CIPD has long argued that there is a strong and wide-ranging case for extending the right to request flexible working to all employees. A key reason for the extension is in order to respond to the needs of the UK's ageing workforce. Older employees will increasingly need and want to work in different ways and different hours as they move much more flexibly towards retirement. Extending the right to request flexible working will ensure that older workers who want to downshift in this way have the confidence to have a conversation with their employer. Most employers will welcome discussions initiated by older employees about how they can work differently in ways that suit them and the business. The modern workplace requires innovative resourcing solutions, for example, can employers pair older workers who are reducing their hours over time, with young people who are increasing their working hours over time as they study or learn on the job. This sort of progressive job share could enable effective mentoring, coaching and skills development and ensure that older workers' experience and knowledge are not lost to the business.

Another development which highlights the importance of more flexible workplaces is the forthcoming introduction of the universal credit which will enable people on unemployment and incapacity benefit to increase the hours they work incrementally as their benefits reduce to ensure that being in work always pays. Employers will have to become more comfortable at designing flexible jobs which cater for the needs of disadvantaged groups in the labour market if there is to be significant progress in helping those on long-term benefits into work.

The argument for extending the right to request to all employees is also based on a much broader business case. More than seven out of ten employers report that flexible working supports employee retention, motivation and engagement. Almost two thirds of employers believe flexible working supports their recruitment activities, while half believe it has a positive impact on reducing absence as well as on boosting productivity.

From the employee perspective, flexible working is linked to higher levels of employee engagement and well-being. Our report finds that employees satisfied with their work-life balance are more likely to be engaged and less likely to say they are under excessive pressure. About one third of employees say flexible working helps reduce the amount of stress they are under and 35% report it helps them to be more productive.

Flexible working also supports efforts to enable employees to balance their work and home lives, stay in touch with friends and family and manage caring responsibilities, whether children, grandchildren, parents, partner or friends and neighbours. About a quarter of respondents say that flexible working helps to reduce the cost of commuting, rising to a third among men.

Of course some argue that because the business case is so clear and because many employers have conversations about flexible working with their employees as a matter of course, extending the right to request flexible working is unnecessary.

However this report shows that a significant proportion of those employees who don't work flexibly would want to do so – particularly those below management level. Six in ten employees with no managerial responsibility whose organisation does

not provide flexible working would like to take-up flexible working. It also finds that many flexible working solutions are not widely used, for example job sharing or the use of annualised hours – or are only available to more senior staff. Managers are much more likely to be able to work from home or benefit from mobile working than other members of staff and while, this is partly likely to be because of differences in the nature of the work between managers and their employees, in some organisations, it is because of culture and engrained attitudes. For example, if work is organised properly there is no reason why most personal assistants and secretaries should not be able to work from home at least some of the time. Frontline customer service or production staff have more restrictions on the type of flexible working they can participate in but even for these types of jobs, there is scope for greater use of arrangements such as job sharing, flexitime and annualised hours.

The survey finds that employees working for larger organisations are less likely to benefit from flexible working. While larger employers are more likely to provide a wider range of flexible working arrangements than smaller employers, a higher proportion of employees working in smaller firms are likely to have access to flexible working of some form. More than half of employees in large organisations whose organisation does not provide flexible working would like the opportunity to take up flexible working compared to just 23% of those working in micro firms. This suggests that more needs to be done to encourage some larger employers to understand the potential benefits of flexible working for staff and the business.

In addition, the report shows that, while there is evidence that more employers are providing flexible working than they were ten years ago, many employees are not aware what is on offer, with a big gap between the amount of flexible working that employers say they provide and what employees believe is available. The extension of the right to request flexible working to all employees – and its promotion – can encourage improved communication by employers of what flexible working is available. It can continue to nudge employers to extend the

scope of the flexibility they offer either in terms of the type of arrangements that are available or the categories of staff that are able to benefit. It is a good example of light touch regulation that can help support the both the provision and uptake of flexible working which is increasingly important in the modern workplace.

This is a position which has cross party support, with all the three main political parties pledging in their election manifestos to extend the right to request flexible working to all employees in the run up to the election. The coalition government then committed to extend flexible working stating 'We will extend the right to request flexible working to all employees, consulting with business on how best to do so.'

However plans to extend the right to request of flexible working to all have been criticised by the Institute of Directors and the British Chambers of Commerce as being burdensome for businesses. The BCC expressed similar concerns in 2001 about the plans to introduce the statutory right to request flexible working for parents. Those fears have proved unfounded – regardless of size of organisation.

Our report finds that just 3% of micro businesses and small businesses, 4% of medium-sized businesses and 5% of large businesses have reported problems complying with the existing right to request flexible working, which has been extended gradually to cover parents of older children and some people with caring responsibility. Micro and small employers are more likely than larger organisations to manage flexible working informally rather than through formal policies and procedures, which appears to more than compensate for a lack of formal HR support.

Our report also shows that the right to request flexible working has not contributed in any significant way to an increase in employment tribunal claims. For example, out of a total 218,100 employment tribunal claims in 2010/11, just 277 alleged that employers had failed to observe flexible working regulations. The majority of these claims (229) were successfully conciliated by ACAS or settled out of court and, of the 48 that actually reached tribunal, just 10 were successful. Since 2006, the period for which we have

figures, the most number of tribunal claims generated by the flexible working regulations in any one year have been 344, with the vast majority of such claims in all years either resulting in an Acas conciliated settlement, withdrawn or settled privately between the parties.

The CIPD believes that the debate about employment regulation in the UK and the extent it is a burden to business needs to be based on evidence. The weight of available evidence finds that the existing right to request flexible working is functioning smoothly and that the business case for extending it is strong. Its extension can continue to help the UK become the most flexible labour market in the world, to maximise employment opportunities for all and support efforts to increase employee engagement and productivity.

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Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
151 The Broadway London SW19 1JQ
Tel: 020 8612 6200 Fax: 020 8612 6201
Email: cipd@cipd.co.uk Website: cipd.co.uk

Incorporated by Royal Charter Registered charity no.1079797

Issued: May 2012 Reference: 5790 © Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development 2012

REC flexible working report



REC Flexible Work Commission Report

Recruitment & Employment Confederation

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

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REC Flexible Work Commission Report

1. Forewords

1.1 Foreword by REC Chief Executive Kevin Green

The idea for the Flexible Work Commission came about as the UK was emerging from recession in 2009. It was clear from ONS data that employment had not dropped in the way that we've come to expect in recessions and our own labour market surveys backed this up.

We began to question what was behind the trend. Initial conversations with agencies and employers suggested that an increase in part-time working, contracting and other flexible solutions was a significant factor in keeping people in work during the crisis.

We looked to existing research to help explain this shift, but whilst there was a lot of good work, the vast majority of it was focused on the family-friendly elements of flexibility and had been written pre-recession. What many of these reports did have in common though was the idea that business scepticism was a real barrier to growth in flexibility – this was something that we thought had changed during the recession and needed to be looked at again.

The REC therefore decided to form the Flexible Work Commission at the beginning of 2012, with a view to bringing employers, recruiters, policy makers and labour market experts together to explore in detail the business case behind flexibility.

The Commission has thrown up some fascinating insights, not least of which was that many companies did turn to flexibility to survive and preserve jobs through the recession – not just part-time working, but with the increased use of freelancers, temporary workers and interim managers.

It also became clear that flexibility works best where informal arrangements are made, outside of any legislation or regulation. Whether through a companywide shift via negotiations with trade unions or a one-to-one conversation between a line manager and an employee, the Commission has spoken to employers that have been successful with this approach.

Clear business benefits emerged from the data gathered, including increased productivity, improved staff satisfaction and retention and, as a consequence, a positive impact on the bottom line. As businesses became more agile and responsive via flexible working they were better placed to respond to changes in demand.

The role of government was hotly debated by Commission members. The consensus view was that government has a role to play in championing flexibility, particularly by leveraging their purchasing power to encourage more flexibility in public sector supply chains. However the Commission also agreed that government must avoid excessive changes to regulation, if nothing else than for the perceived barriers such changes can throw up, especially amongst SME employers.

There is also a significant role for recruiters to play in promoting flexible working, be that through the strategic use of temporary workers, interim managers and contractors or by providing sound advice on how to review job design so that employers can tap into new sources of talent. Successful recruiters have a growing role to inform and guide employers, helping them understand that getting the right talent does not always require a full-time, permanent position.



REC Flexible Work Commission Report

Forewords (contd.)

This report, and the recommendations within it, are a call to action. The view of work in the UK is changing. Flexibility is growing in every sector, at businesses of all sizes. People are increasingly rejecting the five day, nine-to-five week in favour of work arrangements that fit their individual wants and needs. The UK has a competitive advantage in its flexible labour market and by enhancing and promoting the benefits of flexibility to all, we can leverage this advantage to create more, and better, jobs in the UK.

We would like to thank to David Frost for his drive and leadership of the Commission, and all the Commission members who, like David, have given up their time to contribute to this important piece of work. This report is based on the experiences of the many employers we have spoken to across the UK, so we must also extend our thanks to them. Two people at the REC have been responsible for drawing all of these strands together and creating this final report – Gillian Econopouly and Ben Farber – so a big thank you to them as well.

I hope you enjoy the report, and that it kick-starts the debate about the value of flexibility in our economy and promotes the benefits to your own organisation.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Green
REC Chief Executive

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

1.2 Foreword by Commission Chair, David Frost CBE

Whilst unemployment in this country stands at over 2.5m, it is still significantly below levels experienced during previous recessions.

A key reason for this is that business has adopted a range of flexible working practices that have enabled them not only to sustain their companies but also, and importantly, to hold onto their employees. This flexibility was not seen in previous downturns.

It is also clear that global competitive pressures are remorseless and for businesses to survive and grow they have to continually examine their operations. Labour market flexibility gives them the ability to have much greater control of costs.

What the Commission also found was a growing demand from individuals to have a much greater control over their own lives, to work flexibly outside the confines of a traditional 9-5 job. Again business is having to adapt to this, particularly where there is a demand for skilled employees. A clear message is that the more skills you have the greater control you have over your employment patterns.

Overall it was clear that business and individuals are remarkably adept in developing new flexibilities in the modern world of work. There was a concern that that Government by constantly tampering and adding to employment legislation, is simply getting in the way of the real changes that are already taking place in the workplace.

Finally, it has been a real pleasure to work with other members of the Commission and I would like to thank the team at the REC who have provide the much needed support that has enabled the production of this Report which should add to the current debate on the future of employment and the workplace.

I hope you find the report useful.

Yours sincerely

David Frost CBE
Commission Chair



REC Flexible Work Commission Report

2. Executive Summary

There can be no doubt that flexible work in all its forms is growing in the UK. We are seeing increased demand both from employers and employees in direct employment, as well as from individuals looking for flexible options outside of a standard contract of employment. Part-time work is on the rise, as is freelancing and temporary agency work, while 96% of all employers now offer some form of flexible working.

The REC's Flexible Work Commission has identified a multitude of drivers behind this shift towards increased flexibility, but the message that the Commission has heard from all quarters is that flexibility helps retain jobs, attract staff and boost business competitiveness.

If there was one lesson to draw from the recession of 2008, it is that the ability to respond quickly to fluctuations in demand is paramount to business survival. Employment rigidity is a significant barrier to such responsiveness and was a very real factor in the collapse of many organisations, and with them the loss of tens of thousands of jobs. Those companies that weathered the downturn best and are returning to growth the quickest are the ones where management and workers came together to develop new ways of operating that emphasised responsiveness and scalability, securing the future of the business and preserving jobs in the process.

The Commission found a diverse range of flexible options being deployed by organisations in a bid to achieve that scalability. From an entire call centre moving to a home-working arrangement to a manufacturing company shifting to a four-day week, companies up and down the UK are embracing the flexibility agenda.

But there is more to flexibility than business competitiveness. Where organisations have trialled and then implemented flexible working solutions, staff response has been unanimously positive. Businesses report significant gains in staff satisfaction and retention as well as productivity and output. They have seen declines in staff absence and disciplinary issues and improvements in the diversity of their workforces. Well-managed flexibility not only increases profitability and business agility, but enables organisations to better compete for, and retain, the best workers with the most in-demand skills.

At the top end of the labour market, highly skilled individuals are making a conscious choice to operate as freelancers or contractors. This was once the preserve of those who had already enjoyed successful careers in direct employment, but new entrants to certain sectors are recognising the benefits of freelancing earlier and, perhaps in response to the growing 'projectisation' of work in many areas, are increasingly looking to operate that way from the off.

Part-time work is growing throughout the labour market. At times this is being driven by financial constraints and the need for businesses to compete, but in the main it is by employees who are seeking to balance multiple or voluntary roles, study or caring responsibilities with their primary careers. Recruitment agencies are responding to these changes by building dedicated part-time candidate pools and helping employers design and recruit for flexible roles. Flexibility is also enabling older workers to phase their retirement, preserving their income for longer and helping businesses bridge skills and knowledge gaps within their workforces.

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

But there remain a number of challenges to the wider adoption of flexible working practices in the UK. Recent studies have found that negative perceptions of flexibility by both senior management and line managers are a significant barrier, particularly in larger organisations. Existing cultures of 'presenteeism' can be hard to break unless the drive for flexibility is led from the top. Many businesses still struggle to appreciate the full benefits that new ways of working can bring and don't think about the diversity of options on offer when they are looking to expand and grow. Perceptions about flexibility 'floodgates' – the view that approving one request will see future requests spiral out of control – remain entrenched in some organisations, as does the misguided notion that managing multiple flexible arrangements is inherently difficult and should be avoided.

From the individual's perspective, the view that working from home or on a reduced hours arrangement can hinder internal progression, reduce access to training and development opportunities, or create discord within a team or department persists and must be overcome. The onus is on line managers to effect that change in perception and businesses must better support their management in this regard.

Misconceptions about legislation and the legal ramifications of refusing requests for flexibility also act as a stumbling block for some organisations.

Most of the firms the Commission spoke to had a demonstrable interest in flexible working and well-established flexible working practices. Generally, the Commission found that a shift in workplace culture had taken place irrespective of the right to request legislation, for business reasons and to accommodate the changing needs of a more diverse workforce. Indeed, some managers saw right to request as a potential regulatory risk, despite a recent CIPD report noting that in reality, very few employment tribunals have been brought, successfully or otherwise, as a result of the legislation.

The Commission felt that fundamental cultural change in workplaces, founded on a comprehensive understanding of the business case for flexibility was central to expanding the scope and implementation of flexible working practices amongst UK businesses; such cultural change is impossible to legislate.

With the right to request set to be extended to all employees in 2013, the government must produce clear and robust guidance detailing employer obligations to ensure these misconceptions don't grow, stymieing the expansion of flexibility in the process.

The view from certain quarters that particular forms of flexibility – notably temporary or reduced hours contracts – represent a 'casualisation' of work and should be resisted at all costs, must be addressed head on by politicians as well as businesses and their representative organisations.

Job preservation and creation through improved business responsiveness and security is at the heart of flexibility in all its forms. Trade unions, business organisations and the government alike must recognise that in a period of continuing recession, anything that gets people working is better than no work at all, and this Commission has found time and again that flexibility does just that.

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

3. Summary of recommendations

3.1 To Government

- The government must move the debate beyond the current focus on family friendly working practices by encouraging far greater uptake of all forms of flexibility throughout the public sector.
- The government must ensure that the tax and welfare systems in the UK encourage increased flexibility in all its forms, including scrapping HMRC proposals to tax all contractors and freelancers working as 'controlling persons' as employees and ensuring that personal allowance thresholds and the universal credit policy always make work pay.
- Any new statutory code for the extension of the right to request to all employees must lay out the full extent of employer obligations in clear and concise language. It should allow for trial periods and should make clear that informal routes to flexibility outside of the right to request legislation are wholly valid and often enable far greater flexibility for both employers and employees.
- There should be a comprehensive and objective review of the right to request one year after any extension to assess how it has affected overall workforce flexibility and employer attitudes towards flexible work.
- The ONS must dramatically expand the range of data it collects on flexible working, bringing the level of detail collected on part-time workers, temporary agency workers, freelancers, limited company contractors and the self-employed in line with that collected on permanent, direct employees, and looking more closely at remote working, and the uptake of flexible and compressed hours.
- The government should assess the potential impact that new ways of working being championed in other, growing economies – such as the German 'mini-jobs' initiative – might have on the UK labour market, and look at ways of rapidly implementing such solutions if that potential impact is judged to be positive.

3.2 To Business

- Businesses must identify internal champions to promote flexibility throughout their organisations while larger companies should share knowledge and best practice with smaller businesses in their supply chains.
- Businesses must do more to proactively train leaders and managers, giving them the confidence, skills and tools to lead flexible teams effectively, and empowering them with robust performance management processes and defined metrics.
- Businesses must engage workers in designing flexible roles and reinforce to the whole workforce that flexibility it is not just for certain groups but for everyone.
- Employers must recognise the dangers of futures skills gaps in the workforce and take action now, using flexible arrangements to retain older workers and facilitate knowledge transfer to new entrants to the workforce.

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

3.3 For Trade and Professional Associations

- Trade associations and professional institutes should look to work cooperatively wherever possible with unions and employee organisations to advocate the benefits of flexibility for both businesses and workers and move the debate beyond talk of 'casualisation' and 'employer-imposed flexibility'.
- Professional bodies must do more to demystify the processes behind managing a flexible workforce and assist their members in addressing the practical aspects by providing advice and information on employment law, regulation, health and safety and insurance issues, while avoiding a cottage industry dedicated to 'flexibility' training.

3.4 To Recruiters

- Recruitment agencies must foster change in their own organisations by training and equipping consultants to advise clients on job design and flexible work options, challenge assumptions about flexibility, help clients improve job descriptions and advertisements to reflect flexible options available and devise creative and bespoke solutions in line with business need.

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

4.

Introduction: the current state of the UK flexible labour market

The world of work is changing. It isn't simply that handheld devices enable work on the move, or that people are staying in the workforce longer, or that more and more highly skilled professionals are striking out on their own rather than being tied to a permanent job. These trends are just a small sample of the multitude of changes occurring in virtually every sector, inching steadily towards a more flexible, dynamic UK labour market.

Workforce flexibility has long been a buzzword among labour market economists and government ministers but the evidence collected from companies around the country – and abroad – shows they see real value in flexibility beyond the political rhetoric. It is a trend happening in organisations across the UK because they see the business case for flexibility and the benefits it offers to their staff.

4.1 What does 'flexible work' mean?

In the past, 'flexible work' often described certain types of work patterns for permanent employees, such as working from home or using flexible hours, and was generally linked to certain groups, such as mothers with young children.

However, the scope of flexibility now being used across the economy is much more comprehensive; the Commission has identified two often interlinked strands of flexibility in the UK labour market:

Work flexibility encompasses the various models of supply available to employers, from fixed-term contracts and temporary work through to part-time work and open-ended, permanent roles. This intersects with macroeconomic labour market flexibility, i.e. how easy it is for companies to take on workers.

Employment flexibility addresses the relationship between employer and worker and includes some of the more traditional tools associated with flexible working, such as compressed hours, remote working and the statutory 'right to request'.

Increasingly there seems to be a convergence between the two strands, as employers that have most developed their workforce flexibility use the two branches concurrently.

'Finding the right person is the real challenge. Once we've identified our top candidates, we are then open to all different kinds of contractual arrangements to secure their services.'

Ann Rimmer, Director of Strategy, Clock Creative

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

4.2 How big is the flexible market?

It is difficult to assess the exact scope of the flexibility taking place in the UK jobs market, given that much of it happens informally, but all the indicators point to a growing tendency for companies to adopt flexible approaches.

CBI research shows that nearly all employers (96%) use at least one form of flexible working and nearly three-quarters (70%) offer three types or more. Historical datasets also show this type of cultural flexible work is rising: the number of firms using part-time, flexi-time, term-time, job sharing, career breaks and sabbaticals, annualised hours, compressed hours and remote or teleworking has risen steadily in surveys from 2006, 2008 and 2011.¹ Particular increases have been seen in remote or teleworking, which rose from being used by 13% of firms to 59% in just five years, and career breaks and sabbaticals, which were used by 29% of employers in 2006 and are now used by 46%, with a further 10% considering this for the future.

This trend is echoed in CIPD research which shows that virtually all large employers offer flexible working arrangements, as do 95% of medium-sized firms, 91% of small businesses and 85% of micro companies.²

Around 41% of British workers have spent some of their career as flexible workers.³ There are now 1.35 million people in the UK working primarily as freelancers, with a further 200,000 taking on freelance work as a second job. The number of people working freelance for their main job increased 11.9% between 2008 and 2011, while employment in the same period dropped 1.5% and unemployment rose markedly.⁴

Since 1997, the number of part-time workers has risen from 6.5 million to 7.85 million, with currently 82% of part-time workers actively choosing such roles to fit their life circumstances.⁵ Research from Women Like Us and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found that part-time job vacancies account for approximately 23% of the market, but only 3% of those part-time roles pay a full-time equivalent (FTE) of more than £20,000.⁶ The same research also found that more than a quarter of employers now always advertise full-time roles with 'the option of flexibility'.

The ONS does not gather more specific data on the use of more diverse flexible working options, and the data it collects on part-time working is sourced solely from Jobcentre Plus.

Recommendation

The government must dramatically expand the range of data it collects on the ways in which people now work, bringing the level of detail collected on temporary agency workers, freelancers, limited company contractors and the self-employed in line with that collected on permanent, direct employees. The ONS should also gather far more regular and detailed data on the use of flexible employment measures such as flexible, part-time or compressed hours and remote or home-working, particularly by sector.

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

Introduction: the current state of the UK flexible labour market (contd.)

In terms of assessing the level of worker demand for flexible arrangements, a 2008 TUC/YouGov survey found that 88% of part-time workers and 79% of full-time workers surveyed cited flexible working patterns as 'very' or 'fairly' important, yet only 18% of those same full-time workers and 40% of part-time workers felt they were attaining their desired level of flexibility. This suggests that flexibility can function as an additional way of attracting and retaining the best talent and sought-after skilled specialists, a notion borne out by many of the employers the Commission spoke to.

'Attracting the right talent to get the job done and to stimulate business growth is crucial. The number of hours it takes them or where they work from doesn't necessarily have a bearing on their ability or performance. Offering flexible solutions to those willing and able to contribute but who might otherwise not be able to should benefit all.'

Gary Franklin, Founder, The Forum for In-house Recruitment Managers and Group Head of Resourcing, FirstGroup plc

4.3 What's driving the change?

One of reasons unemployment has stayed low is flexibility

The Commission found that there isn't a single universal driver for flexible work; rather, it depends on a range of factors such as company size and sector, the type of job roles and functions, the age and expectations of the workforce, the brand profile of the company, the attitude of leadership and management, and the external economic environment. Some firms have a particular interest in reducing their carbon footprint, for reasons of both cost and brand image. Others are driven by client demand and expectations, while others still wish to improve the diversity of their workforce. Many companies will have more than one driver, with varying priority. Underpinning all these, however, is a common desire to improve performance, attract and retain talent, and reduce costs without compromising quality.

The recent recession has forced many companies to re-evaluate costs and profitability in new ways. While it has been fundamentally destructive in economic terms, one of the few positive legacies seems to be the willingness of companies to consider flexible approaches to retain jobs, staff and capacity, despite the challenging external environment.

The CBI found that some 83% of employers believe that the UK's flexible labour market helped stem job losses in the recession, and around 35% embraced flexible working to cope with tough market conditions.⁷ The OECD employment outlook also showed that UK employment fell much less than expected given the drop in GDP.⁸

Examples include using compressed hours in order to run plant operations on fewer days of the week while maintaining production levels, offering career breaks, sabbaticals or part-time working options, moving to remote working to save on property costs, and better managing peaks in demand through agency workers or contractors.

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

Even before the recession, particularly at the higher end of the labour market, highly skilled individuals were driving the flexibility agenda directly. In some cases, they prefer to work as self-employed contractors rather than employees, as they can command better pay rates and move confidently around the labour market in the knowledge that their skills are sought after by employers.

'On the product development side, we often bring in highly skilled contractors on a project basis where the headcount increase will be funded by the project budget. We pay a premium for those skills, but the contractor market is often the only place you can source them.'

Jaguar Land Rover

Employers in high-end manufacturing and engineering are noting an increased 'projectisation' of work and are adjusting the way they source and retain staff as a result, frequently bringing on board contractors with specific skills for very specialist jobs.

'We are very project driven and assemble teams with specific skill sets to deliver the projects. It is about bringing in the right people for a set period of time. We can get very good talent quickly, easily and cost-effectively through the contractor market.'

David Bullimore, NSG Group

Firms taking on graduates say a key driver is the demand of the 'Facebook generation' for more flexible working conditions. These newer entrants to the labour market, especially those who have sought-after skills, tend to have different expectations from work than their parents and grandparents. Many are seeking more flexible options and the ability to take time off to pursue their interests outside of work, and companies feel they must offer flexibility to attract the best talent.

'We are seeing a new generation of graduates who see it as a weakness in our company if we don't make work flexible. It's a way to bring in good talent and is definitely peer-group led and influenced.'

Mike Jackson, Hurst Accountants

The drivers for flexibility will differ from company to company, and even between different functions within an organisation. Understanding the drivers – and leveraging them to achieve the best flexible working solutions – is key to success.

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

Introduction: the current state of the UK flexible labour market (contd.)

4.4 International comparators

The Commission met with labour market experts from other European countries to understand more about how flexibility is being developed abroad. Overall, the news was positive for the UK. The trend towards increasing flexibility and using a variety of models to take on staff is not occurring to the same degree in most of our European competitors.

The exception is Denmark, which has probably the most liberal labour market of any EU economy and enjoys a political consensus to make the market as efficient as possible. However, the Danish labour market is underpinned by an extremely robust and well-financed social welfare system, meaning that workers feel confident about moving jobs and working under various types of contract given this reliable safety net.

Some countries with historically less-flexible labour markets have made steps towards freeing them up. The German 'mini-jobs' model has been gaining a lot of attention in the UK recently – employees can earn up to €400 a month free of tax and NI, while employers pay a simple, flat rate to cover wages, insurance and pension contributions. Whether the policy would have as dramatic an effect in the UK, where national insurance is far lower and workers earning under £10,000 are already exempt from income tax, remains to be seen. However, the German model has succeeded as it is complemented by a tapered welfare system that ensures it always pays more to work. We recognise that the UK government is taking action in this area through the introduction of Universal Credit; implementation must be closely monitored to ensure it delivers on its potential.

Regardless of the relative success of the German model, the consensus among employers and policy-makers across the EU is that the UK model remains less restrictive than most. In fact, 73% of MPs believe flexible working and freelancing have a positive effect on the international competitiveness of the UK⁹ and employers with an international footprint see the impact as well.

'The UK contractor market allows us to access highly skilled flexible labour when we need it. In other regions, for example, Poland and South America (where we operate), local laws make it much more difficult, if not impossible, to engage individual contractors for short term contract work. To access temporary IT skills, we need to go through larger domestic employers/service companies, which can mean paying more while getting less in terms of motivation and specialist skills. For example, I have rarely, if ever, had an individual UK contractor terminate their own contract. In contrast I have lost team members supplied by 3rd party consultancy/service companies where the individuals have jumped to alternative employment to get a salary or position increase. While the 3rd parties have supplied substitute staff in these cases, this has not helped when projects have been at a critical stage and the specific project knowledge and skills are lost.'

David Bullimore, NSG Group

'We use a range of approaches to flexibility across our territories. In Germany, most of the staff are on full-time contracts, and the only flexibility comes in the form of additional freelancers at peaks in demand. Belgium, by way of contrast, is very much run on a project-by-project basis – skilled individuals are brought together as needed to deliver.'

Liz Love, Z-Card

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

5. The importance of flexibility: benefits to business, the economy and the workforce

5.1 Why is flexibility important?

Flexibility is often promoted as a positive option for workers, which is certainly the case for most individuals. However, its total value extends much further, offering macro benefits to businesses and the economy that help secure competitive advantage for the UK. This success can flow back to individual workers through more job opportunities in better-performing organisations.

For the economy

The UK is recognised as a 'successful economic performer' by the OECD, based on the continued rise in overall employment despite cyclical fluctuations in the market. This success is attributed to structural reforms in the 1980s. A key driver for growth is the UK's lighter-touch approach to employment regulation and more flexible labour market. This provides an important element of our competitive advantage¹⁰ and helps attract inward investment. The UK's labour market flexibility also contributes towards its ranking among the top ten global economies on the World Bank's 'ease of doing business' index.¹¹

The argument for flexibility is accepted not only among economists, however. A 2011 study by leading pollsters ComRes showed that some 82% of MPs and 77% of the public consider flexible working patterns to be essential for the modern economy, while 86% of MPs and 78% of the public consider encouraging a flexible labour force to be important for stimulating economic growth.¹²

For business success

Businesses are under constant pressure to become more productive and efficient in order to compete. To do this, they need the right skills and knowledge at the right time to meet demand. They also want to motivate and retain workers, and where possible, bring down costs and environmental impact.

A recent CIPD survey showed that some three-quarters of UK employers feel that implementing flexible working practices has a positive impact on talent retention, while 73% report a positive impact on motivation and staff engagement. This helps explain why fully 96% of employers now offer some form of flexible working.¹³

Studies have also begun looking at work flexibility in terms of engaging agency workers and contractors. This year, NIESR studied nationally representative workplace data and found that the use of temporary agency workers is positively associated with financial performance in the private sector.¹⁴

For workers

Increasingly, people wish to combine professional ambitions and preferences with personal goals and aspirations. Especially for those with skills in high demand, they often wish to have more control over when and where they work, and the type of activities they perform.

'We aim to be an employer of choice, and the benefits of flexible working go a great way to position us as such.'

Sarah Harbour, SHINE

CIPD's recent research shows that more than half of employees report that flexible working helps them achieve a better work/life balance. Other reported benefits are increased productivity, reduced stress and the ability to manage caring responsibilities.¹⁵

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

The importance of flexibility: benefits to business, the economy and the workforce (contd.)

For those in temporary roles, or in part-time work, this is often a positive choice as it fits in with their lifestyle, for example studying, raising children or a career break. But where people prefer a permanent, full-time role, the vital labour market experience provides a valuable stepping stone. And, where flexible work functions best, there can be mutually beneficial outcomes for individuals and businesses.

5.2 The benefits of flexible working

Flexible work can offer innovative solutions to social and economic issues, such as demographic changes, labour market participation and even environmental concerns as well as the challenges of business competitiveness and saving on plant costs.

However, not every type of flexibility will work for every company, and embedding some types of flexibility in the workforce may actually create conflicts or pressures on other workers. It is therefore important to understand the ways flexible work can add value, and what types of flexibility function best for certain roles. Equally, before implementing flexible approaches, an organisation must assess both the positive and potentially negative impacts to ensure that the fundamental business case and relationships between staff members are not undermined.

Business performance and competitiveness

Despite the availability of some statistics about the business benefits of flexibility, there is still a lack of a comprehensive measure of how much value it creates for the UK economy. The best evidence comes from the experience of employers who have adopted various types of flexibility suited to their particular needs, and are reaping very specific benefits – financial and otherwise – as a result.

The businesses the Commission spoke to said flexibility helped them to deliver a better service to their customers and bring in the skills they needed at the right times. Flexible options also helped smaller companies access the talent they would otherwise not have been able to afford on a full-time basis.

'I couldn't afford the talent I wanted, but I had identified that the level of person I needed often had a young family. So I started offering senior designers part-time hours and other flexible arrangements that fit with their other commitments in a bid to attract them. The experiment was a resounding success. It's all about competition. The driver is making your own business better. We want to retain people, and we get contractors in when we need to access talent that we cannot afford on a full-time basis.'

Ann Rimmer, Director of Strategy, Clock Creative

Scalability is a key benefit. Using temporary agency workers, freelancers and contractors enables organisations to grow and shrink their workforce in direct response to fluctuations in demand. The Commission's conversations with employers show that the recession has engendered a new era of business caution. To take a risk on growth now, a business needs to know that it has a means of quickly downsizing if the expansion cannot be sustained – the preservation of the company, and therefore jobs, must be the primary goal.

'Agency work is a fundamental part of our model - scalability is a key driver. We need to be competitive in a global market and the flexibility we use goes hand in hand with that goal'

Jaguar Land Rover

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

During the depths of the recession, this drive for survival manifested itself when managers, workers and union representatives at companies around the UK reached compromises on changes to pay, hours and other working arrangements to ensure the future viability of their organisations. Thos Storey, a steel fabricator with a large blue collar workforce, survived the recession by striking exactly this sort of compromise.

CASE STUDY: Thos Storey

Thos Storey is one of the largest privately owned suppliers of steel fabricated components to original equipment manufacturers (OEM)s in the UK. Customers include the largest manufacturers of earthmoving and construction equipment in the world as well as OEMs of specialist commercial vehicles.

Severe commercial pressures during the recession in 2008/09 left Thos Storey in a difficult financial position. Its combined labour costs and overheads were not sustainable in the face of dwindling demand in the market. As a manufacturing firm, with machines to run and targets to meet, reducing the total number of hours worked via informal shift flexibility was not a viable option.

The management therefore entered into discussions with the workers and their union representatives centred on compressing the working week from five days to four, enabling them to shut the entire factory for a day a week, reaping significant savings on utilities and site security.

By compressing, rather than cutting, the hours, Thos Storey ensured that no worker lost out on pay. The entire workforce agreed to move to a Monday-to-Thursday working week, simply working longer shifts over the course of three or four days. This was a case of every worker, from management to shop floor, agreeing on a change that would preserve the company and every job therein. The result has been a huge fall in staff turnover, as the vast majority of the workforce has realised the benefits of a four-day working week: a reduction in travel and childcare costs and an improved work/life balance while their pay packets remain unchanged.

As the economy recovered, and with it customer demand, management introduced a contingent shift working Tuesday to Friday, but still on a four-day week; none of the workers wanted a return to a five-day shift pattern and many have actually turned down better paid positions elsewhere as a result.

Other organisations have found different ways of staying competitive in an uncertain global market. Taking on workers initially as temps as demand picks up allows companies to effectively manage the risks of expanding operations. They can create new jobs in the short term without permanently expanding their payroll and jeopardising the future viability of the company if demand then drops again. While this sort of strategy is primarily management-led and many workers who are taken on initially as temps might desire a permanent position, a balance needs to be struck between the needs and wants of those workers, and the financial realities of job creation and company expansion.

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

The importance of flexibility: benefits to business, the economy and the workforce (contd.)

'The key question we ask is: "Can the revenue justify a permanent staff member"? If the income or demand is not sustainable, we'll look at flexible solutions. When it becomes clear that revenue is secure, then we'll explore more permanent options.'

Liz Love, Z-Card

Worker choice, satisfaction and retention

The Commission's investigations have shown that many workers now want to have more control over where and when they work, as well as the types of tasks they undertake.

For employed people, the benefits are long established. Companies report gains in motivation, engagement and productivity as a result of flexible work.¹⁶ Over half of employees working flexibly say it enables them to achieve a better work/life balance, while more than half of female employees and 44% of males would take up flexible working if it was offered.¹⁷

'We've had very positive feedback, as people like not having to commute, and they can manage their personal life better as well. We have seen absence levels drop among home-workers compared to the rest of the company.'

Mid-Counties Co-op Group

Businesses also report better staff retention through the use of flexible work, with 73% of firms noting a net positive impact.¹⁸

'We've certainly been successful at retaining talent through our home working programme. Currently our staff retention in the home working team is 81%, compared to about 71% in our office based reservations team. This is excellent as call centre staff are generally harder to retain - the market-wide retention level is around 60-65%.'

Enterprise Rent-a-Car

'Flexible work breeds much better retention, so it has pound notes behind it!'

Alex Wilson, former HR Director, BT

According to the CBI's 2011 workplace health survey, UK employers lost nearly 190 million days to sickness absence in 2010, equating to a £17 billion loss in economic output. Any measures that demonstrably reduce employee absence rates should therefore be welcomed. The Commission has found that firms offering flexibility report a significant, positive impact on absence rates. Nearly half the companies surveyed considered this to be a key benefit.¹⁹

'Rates of absenteeism are much lower with home workers and we've had just a single disciplinary issue across the whole home working programme.'

Enterprise Rent-a-Car

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

For those working on a temporary basis, this is also often a matter of choice and is a useful way to meet financial or lifestyle needs, whilst studying or looking for a permanent position. Research carried out by the Department for Business and the REC ²⁰ shows that:

- a quarter of temporary agency workers are studying on a full or part-time basis;
- most temps are well qualified: 25% have A-levels, 28% have A-levels plus degrees and 11% have a post-graduate qualification;
- 63% worked on a temporary basis following a period of unemployment;
- 33% worked on a temporary basis while seeking a permanent role;
- 39% worked on a temporary basis while on a career break;
- 68% of temporary workers are satisfied with their pay.

Companies increasingly see agency staff as part of their workforce and manage them as such, offering temporary workers the same flexibility as direct employees.

'We issue project-specific guidance on flexibility and the client can't always tell which are agency workers and permanent staff. I think flexibility is culturally engrained in the energy sector.'

Leanne Byrne, Amec

Many freelancers and contractors move into freelancing after successful careers as employees and appreciate the opportunity to choose the projects and tasks that most interest them, often working with a variety of companies.

Part-time work is also becoming more prevalent, driven in part by demand from workers. It has grown faster than full-time employment over the past ten years, and there is a growing demand for quality work opportunities at higher skill levels. Companies have also found that recruiting for specific part-time roles helps them reach a better candidate pool and access senior skills in a cost-effective way.

Recruitment agencies are responding to this change by building exclusively part-time candidate pools. A good example is REC member and Flexible Work Commission member Timewise Recruitment, which works solely with candidates seeking part time roles. When seeking to fill a part-time vacancy, a business can therefore be confident that Timewise will only put forward candidates who can offer a good fit both in terms of hours they are interested to work, and in skills and experience for the role. This approach avoids businesses wasting time on interviewing candidates looking for full-time hours whilst ensuring that they have a wide pool of talent from which to recruit.

CASE STUDY: Colliers International

Colliers International is a commercial brokerage firm with offices in Asia, North and South America, Europe and Australia.

Martin Lubieniecki, chief operating officer of the firm's EMEA's region and based in London, sought a candidate to fill an accounting role. On assessment, he found the job could be done on a part-time basis of around 15 hours per week with flexibility on timing.

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

The importance of flexibility: benefits to business, the economy and the workforce (contd.)

CASE STUDY: Colliers International (cont.)

Martin explains: 'I was always open to part-time working; my priority was to make sure I got value for money so there would have been no point simply making this role full-time purely out of convention. The main concern was finding the right candidate. The role had responsibility for the accounting for two companies, and for the employee to work only 15 hours meant they had to be autonomous as well as highly experienced.'

'The natural step would have been to go down the traditional accounting recruitment service route, but it didn't feel right for this role; I worried how many candidates they would have on their books looking for part-time hours, plus I wanted to ensure I was able to find a quality individual who could grow with the company. By accessing a pool of part-time candidates only, we were able to find the right candidate with the right kind of experience.'

Martin's rationale underpins the key driver that leads many employers to consider recruiting part-time staff where they usually would not: access to candidates with years of experience. He advertised through Timewise Recruitment, and successfully hired an accountant with nine years' experience, built at PriceWaterhouseCoopers. She began the role on a two day a week basis in 2011.

Labour market participation and transitions

Companies have also seen flexibility help drive diversity, allowing them to reach groups of workers they previously found difficult to engage. The driver for widening participation in the labour market doesn't exist only within companies, however. The coalition government has put bringing young people, parents and many of those on unemployment benefits into the workforce at the heart of its legislative programme.

'We recognise that more flexibility at work is better for people, for families and for business... The labour market is on the cusp of a major change, one that will be an opportunity for employers to draw upon a new pool of talent, freed up to take up flexible working.'

Lord David Freud, Minister for Welfare Reform, 26 September 2011

Flexible working has long been heralded as a way to bring more family-friendly working practices into the labour market; part-time work in particular is very valuable helping women back into the workforce after having children and helping carers balance work and home lives.²² Flexibility can contribute to a better gender balance in the workforce, particularly at senior levels. The Lord Davies review on women on boards found that one of the key barriers to improving board diversity in gender terms was a lack of flexibility around work/life balance, particularly with regard to maternity leave and young families.

'We saw 98% of women on maternity leave at BT come back once we introduced flexible work.'

Alex Wilson, former HR director, BT

Part-time and temporary work can keep people in the labour market during difficult economic times, thereby reducing unemployment levels, or help people back into work, for example after being made redundant or when changing sectors.

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

'We didn't know what to expect when we first advertised our home-working positions publicly, but we received over 260 applications for first the 12 places and saw a definite shift in demographics. Many applications for our home working positions came from more mature and experienced candidates than we see applying for our office based roles.'

Enterprise Rent-a-Car

Some 84% of the public and 87% of MPs agree that more needs to be done to enable unemployed people to use flexible working as a bridge into employment.

Providers of the Work Programme, the government's flagship back-to-work programme, are increasingly engaging with recruiters who specialise in temporary roles, as is Jobcentre Plus. The forthcoming Universal Credit initiative is also designed to better accommodate flexible work patterns, avoiding the damaging benefits traps many workers experience when trying to get back into the labour market through temporary or part-time opportunities.

'The inflexibility and uncertainty of the current system makes people too afraid to take part-time or temporary work for fear of ending up worse off. This situation isn't just bad for people, locked into set hours or indeed out of work altogether. It is also bad for businesses, forcing people to be inflexible and shrinking the potential recruitment pool. The changes we are making to the welfare system and the support we are putting in place to help people into work will come together to radically change the labour market. People claiming benefits will, for the first time, be free to work flexibly.'

Lord David Freud, Minister for Welfare Reform, 26 September 2011

CASE STUDY: Shine

Shine, a charity dedicated to supporting those affected by spinal bifida and hydrocephalus, has implemented flexible work to accommodate the needs of staff. One example is Membership Development Officer Gobi Ranganathan, who has spina bifida and is a wheelchair user. He is also an international para-badminton champion, currently ranked number two in the world. He works full-time for Shine, based half in the office and half at home. He uses compressed hours for office days to accommodate his travel and sporting needs.

According to Gobi, 'The job at Shine is perfect for me as it allows me to juggle my lifestyle needs and sporting commitments. I can honour my public responsibilities as a para-athlete, while still earning a living and contributing to the important work that Shine does. I work from home several days a week, compress my hours and have the flexibility to work my hours whenever I can, within reason. I would not have been able to accept the job with Shine if it had not been for the flexible working patterns they offer.'

Demographic change

People are working longer, either through choice or financial need. Many older workers hold key knowledge that must be transferred to younger workers if it isn't to be lost entirely. Meanwhile, youth unemployment has topped 1 million and young people are struggling to get a foothold in the jobs market.

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

The importance of flexibility: benefits to business, the economy and the workforce (contd.)

New, flexible approaches to work can help both these groups participate productively in the labour market. Older workers can scale down their hours, work remotely to avoid long commutes, or even move to a freelance model. In the meantime, temporary roles can offer young people vital work experience that makes them much more attractive to employers.

Demographic changes mean that skills and knowledge transfer is set to become an increasingly significant issue. With scarce job opportunities for new entrants to the workforce, longstanding reports of skills shortages in many sectors, and continued pressure on the bottom line as the economy slowly returns to growth, businesses need to find new ways to retain the skills and knowledge of their most experienced staff members.

'We find that typically candidates for office based positions tend to be school or college leavers but with home working we are getting a wider range of candidates with varying levels of experience.'

Enterprise Rent-a-Car

'We are concerned about the age distribution of our staff, so some flexibility agreements come with clauses on skill and knowledge transfer. We have only recently introduced this, precipitated by the end of the Default Retirement Age. As a result we do have a few older workers on reduced hours with knowledge and transfer caveats which are regularly reviewed.'

Jon Goodchild, Nuvia

Recommendation

Employers must recognise the dangers of future skills gaps in the workforce and take action now to plug them. Flexible arrangements for older workers, such as a phased retirement system, can help retain skills, facilitate knowledge transfer and reduce the pensions burden on the public purse.

Carbon footprint and savings on plant

The recession has made companies look carefully at all costs and expenditure, especially fixed costs such as plant and premises. They see energy efficiency and reducing environmental impact as a key branding issue. Some firms said that savings on property and office space were the impetus for flexibility, but they saw wider benefits as a result.

'One of the reasons we took a decision to adopt a home working model was space. With the growth of our business we were already utilising a hot-desk model and space was becoming more and more of a challenge. Plus for our reservations team, we need to staff unsocial hours, including early shifts, and manage peak time demands.'

Enterprise Rent-a-Car

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

6. Making it work: meeting the organisational challenge

6.1 Selling the idea

Having established the benefits, the next challenge is implementation – making it work within an organisation. Key to that is getting management buy-in. The most successful examples of flexible working we've seen have all been led from the top by managers and company owners who understand the full range of benefits.

'You need education of line managers, but the tone from the top is key.'

Alex Wilson, former HR director, BT

Where flexibility is not being led from the top – and a recent CIPD report found that a negative attitude towards flexibility from senior management was an issue at 37% of large employers – there is a need for line managers and other key internal stakeholders to really sell the idea upwards. Many junior or line managers may question how they can go about this. The answer is relatively simple: cost. Ultimately the bottom line is the big hook for selling in flexibility in whichever form it takes.

Cost is a key lever when it comes to convincing management about the value of flexibility. In many cases, this is already happening; however, properly integrating flexibility into workforce planning and design is essential if it is to pay off. Reducing permanent headcount in a bid to cut costs achieves nothing if the use of temp workers or freelancers then soars unchecked to compensate. Conversely, firms that immediately cut back on temps and freelancers when the recession hit often saw a negative impact on their employees who were put under more pressure as a consequence.

Flexibility is not about changing the balance of your workforce with the year-end financial report in mind – it is a long-term people strategy that assesses fluctuations in demand over a decent period of time and then maps the workforce to those patterns. Managers must look at designing entire business processes with the use of flexible workers or working arrangements in mind.

'When thinking about a new project or work stream, I always look at which model would work best, be it home-working, new shift patterns or using contractors or agency staff.'

Gail Moss, Mid-Counties Co-op Group

That level of foresight and strategic integration is paramount to making flexibility work properly. The Midlands Cooperative Group is an excellent example of success in flexing an entire business process, having moved its invoice-processing function from the office to a home-working environment.

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

Making it work: meeting the organisational challenge (contd.)

CASE STUDY: Mid-Counties Co-op Group

Having struggled with high absence rates and high staff turnover in the finance function and conscious of a company-wide drive to cut carbon emissions, management took a decision to shift invoice-processing workers to a remote-working set-up.

With the work being so easily quantifiable – either an invoice gets processed or it doesn't – the initial challenges were quickly overcome with a thorough system of metrics and clear workload allocation. There was some initial resistance from longstanding employees who were used to the 9-5 office format, but everyone who moved to home-working quickly came to see the benefits of a vastly improved work/life balance generated by a system of flexible hours. Sickness absence rates dropped dramatically compared to the rest of the company, and productivity increased noticeably.

With the entire work system being online, set-up costs were minimal and clear carbon footprint savings were made as significant numbers of workers no longer had to drive in to work.

Our CEO has made it clear that flexible working was central to our future. This was motivated by the positive impact on absence rates where we have used flexible options to date. The board has been very supportive as they know that with more flexibility, we will have better run stores.

We'll have a more engaged workforce with lower turnover, less absence and people feeling valued and performing well. It also goes with our brand, our culture and our values.

Cost issues extend beyond quarterly budget reports. Flexibility in talent acquisition and retention also has significant, positive ramifications for the bottom line. Lower staff attrition rates brought about by flexibility reduce the need to train and develop new workers and avoid skill and knowledge deficits.

Employer branding

Selling the idea of flexibility works best where the concept can be tied to employer branding and the power to increase revenue and influence. BT's approach to flexible work started off with savings in office space and environmental impact. But the company is candid about the fact it makes for good marketing, which has a positive impact on the bottom line.

The diversity benefits can also help convince company leaders to try flexibility. Many companies are now concerned with how they are progressing in terms of workforce diversity. Simply adding a line in a job advertisement indicating that flexible work options (either structural or cultural) are available can widely improve the response – a point worth making when encouraging your firm to adopt flexible work.

'Part of the reason for flexible work was that we wanted to modernise the brand and bring more women into managements.'

Alex Wilson, former HR director, BT

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

6.2 Accessing the right advice

This holistic approach to managing a flexible workforce does not always come easily or intuitively to businesses, however. Fear of the unknown can often stop both line managers and senior management from rolling out flexible work across their departments or organisations. The sheer range of flexible options can be overwhelming, and redesigning or restructuring roles can also be a challenge. Fears around the longevity of flexibility and the difficulty of recruiting for part-time or flexible jobs are also a factor.

Use piloting to test and learn

Managers sometimes fear that once they start allowing some flexibility, the floodgates will open and things will quickly spiral out of control. Yet every company we spoke to that had successfully implemented flexibility started off slowly – one part-time role, a few home-workers, a contractor or two, or a clearly defined new flexible project – before moving on to more widespread implementation. Identify the areas where you think flexibility might work best, decide at the outset how long the trial period will last and how you will measure success, and communicate the plan to those affected to manage expectations on both sides.

Some firms found that even where people were initially reluctant to try flexibility, when they saw the benefits it created for other staff, they became much more willing to try it out themselves. So choose your 'first movers' carefully, as they can set the tone for the rest of the business.

Prioritising: remember the business case

Even experienced companies can become so enthusiastic about flexibility that they lose sight of the business case, or struggle to prioritise company needs against a widespread demand for flexibility.

BT eventually brought more than 1,000 home-based workers back into their offices, as the model simply wasn't delivering the results required for the business in every department. Regular reviews of flexible work arrangements (both structural and cultural) are necessary to ensure standards are being maintained and the models used are working for often-changing company needs.

'Our drive towards flexibility did stall a bit. Three years ago it was much more dynamic. We then saw a retrograde step in presenteeism and efficiency as things became too undisciplined. So we needed to re-establish credibility. Flexible work was not a "social case" but something we did for business benefits.'

Alex Wilson, former HR director, BT

Where agency workers, contractors or outsourced models are used, regular reviews are advisable to ensure the best results on an ongoing basis. The bottom line is paramount – where it doesn't work for the company, flexibility cannot work for the individual either in the long run.

Call on the experts

Recruitment consultants have a central role to play in assuaging many of these fears. Those REC members who weathered the recession most effectively did so by living up to their names – operating as true workforce 'consultants' for their clients. The best recruiters help their clients to look carefully at a job and the skillset it demands to assess what type of model can best meet the company need.

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

Making it work: meeting the organisational challenge (contd.)

Where a flexible option is deemed suitable, agencies should help their clients adjust the responsibilities and expectations for the role accordingly. It's no use offering a job on a part-time basis if the workload isn't scaled down to fit into the allocated hours; both the company and worker will end up dissatisfied.

Commission member Timewise Recruitment has led the way in educating companies about better job design, particularly for flexible work, and together with CIPD it now offers a free job design helpline for employers. More recruiters must step up in this area and support end-user organisations in redesigning their jobs for an increasingly flexible labour market.

Recommendation

Recruitment agencies must foster change in their own organisations by training and equipping consultants to advise clients on job design and flexible work options, challenge assumptions about flexibility, help clients improve job descriptions and advertisements to reflect flexible options available and devise creative and bespoke solutions in line with business need.

Finding corporate role models and learning from flexibility champions

Establishing 'flexibility champions' can be helpful for larger companies as managers can then look to these in-house experts for advice and support. It's also beneficial when working flexibly is seen as something not only for lower-level staff, but is role modelled by senior management. This helps reinforce the important message that flexibility should not hold back progression.

For smaller firms, it can be helpful to look for corporate role models or other companies that have successfully implemented flexibility in their sector. The exact approach may need to be modified for the size of the business, but learning from the experience of other companies is particularly valuable for the often cost-sensitive, time-poor leaders of SMEs who can avoid the pitfalls experienced by first movers.

Recommendation

Businesses must identify internal champions, particularly at higher levels, to foster change. Larger businesses should share knowledge and best practice with smaller organisations in their supply chains to encourage wider uptake of flexible arrangements.

Creating training and support at both team and senior management levels

One of the worst outcomes for a business is to start implementing flexibility at a headlong pace, hand the reins to (perhaps bewildered) managers, and then leave staff to 'get on with it'. Without proper support and training for all those involved, it is likely not only to fail, but to lose credibility as a concept within the company at large.

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'The direct line manager is the most important person in the process. HR can advocate flexibility, but there will be no progress if the line manager isn't on board.'

Venetia Leigh, My Family Care

Proper training for managers as well as staff working flexibly is important, as is communicating with those who will continue traditional working arrangements to avoid misinformation and conflict between colleagues. It's also a good time to ensure your performance management processes are up to scratch, as these become even more important when assessing the impact of new flexible approaches.

Compared to our European counterparts, the UK has more managers proportionally in the workforce, yet lags far behind in professional accreditation for them.²³ A recent report from the CMI found that 43% of managers rate their own line manager as ineffective.²⁴ This underlines the need for proper training and ongoing support, especially when they are faced with the new challenges of managing flexible workers, which should address how to articulate expectations for flexible staff, using technology in management, performance management techniques and ideas on how to develop and motivate staff. Equally, ongoing support should be provided, ideally via a direct link to HR colleagues, external support personnel or others in the business who can provide help if things start to go wrong.

'One of big challenges is in terms of the technology available. When we set up our home-working programme, it was only for level-one employees and we weren't yet ready for supporting the supervisory role and above.'

Enterprise Rent-a-Car

Recommendation

Businesses must do more to proactively train leaders and managers, giving them the confidence, skills and tools to lead their teams effectively. Core management skills are vital for managing teams that work flexibly but will also pay dividends for those working in traditional ways. A good manager must be able to see the business benefits of flexibility and advocate for it where appropriate.

Professional bodies must do more to demystify the processes behind managing a flexible workforce and assist their members in addressing the practical aspects by providing advice and information on employment law, regulation, health and safety and insurance issues, while avoiding a cottage industry dedicated to 'flexibility' training.

Engage workers in the process

The Commission found that the relationship between managers and staff is essential. Where relationships are limited, strained or even insufficiently open, flexibility is much more likely to fail. Conversely, where flexibility works best, relationships between workers and managers are open, communicative and consultative.

'With flexibility for permanent staff, our company policy is to consider all requests. We find that informality works best!'

Leanne Byrne, Amec

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

Making it work: meeting the organisational challenge (contd.)

'Flexibility is indeed driven by the "Facebook generation" towards senior management. We let it happen at the line manager's discretion.'

Mike Jackson, Hurst Accountants

Recommendation

Engage workers in designing flexibility and reinforce to the whole workforce that flexibility is not just for certain groups but for everyone. Invite workers to discuss flexible arrangements informally with line managers.

Start with trust, underpinned by robust performance management

Managers and indeed companies often fear that offering flexibility means losing control over employees and their work, or that flexible workers will take advantage of the situation to the detriment of company performance. Among employers who have implemented flexibility, such outcomes were surprisingly uncommon. Instead, if anything, workers made extra efforts to ensure the new flexibility worked.

Robust performance management is central to monitoring performance, especially among flexible workers. If colleagues feel that those who work flexibly (whether as an employee, temp or contractor) gain an unfair advantage, it can undermine team morale. This means ensuring performance levels are maintained, and swift action is taken if they start to slip.

"I think the key mindset change is trust – we've only had one real example of a flexible worker's performance suffering."

Gail Moss, Mid-Counties Co-op Group

'It is easy to quantify output, especially as the role our home workers are doing is exactly the same as those in the office. We have the same metrics in place and the technology enables visibility – we can see when every worker logs on to begin their shift, and details of all calls made and received during a session are logged and recorded as normal.'

Enterprise Rent-a-Car

"There will be 5% who try to work the system and if people see that, it sends a bad message and creates resistance."

Alex Wilson, former HR director, BT

It also means being clear about the benefits available in terms of salary and contract conditions. Where employed workers think that contractors are being remunerated at a higher level, it may be worth pointing out that they do not enjoy staff benefits such as paid holidays, sick leave, company pensions, etc.

Recommendation

Where flexibility is implemented, empower managers with robust performance management processes and defined metrics.

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

7. Barriers, limitations and trade-offs

7.1 Company size

CIPD's recent research surveyed a range of employers, large and small, on perceived barriers to the implementation of flexible working arrangements. There was some common ground on certain barriers: 'customer service requirements' were cited by 40% and 39% of large/SMEs respectively. Some 29% of large businesses felt financial constraints were holding them back; 33% of SMEs were also feeling the pinch. Technology issues were a barrier for 10% of larger businesses and 12% of SMEs.

The starkest differences emerged when it came to management. Fully 44% of large businesses stated that 'line management attitudes' create a barrier to flexible working, compared to just 11% of SMEs. This gap narrowed only slightly when it came to 'senior management attitudes', with 37% of large organisations finding an issue there against 17% of SMEs.

The CIPD's findings were in line with those of the Commission.

'We need to bring along those who still have an old school view, plus key people like local and district retail managers.'

Gail Moss, Mid-Counties Co-op Group

Larger organisations often have the resources to train managers in how to successfully handle flexible work patterns. This can be more difficult and costly for medium-sized firms, but they have less trouble overcoming that initial hurdle of entrenched managerial reliance on presenteeism and the standard 9-5 office routine.

Small and micro businesses often already have informal flexibility within their companies, given that they rely on a small number of workers with little replication of job roles. There is a premium on retaining talented individuals, especially given the knowledge they may have built up around the organisation, and they are able to respond to changes in market conditions much more quickly than their larger, more established counterparts, expanding into new regions, or indeed countries, as demand allows:

"In terms of expansion, Z-Card proactively identifies territories where there is demand for our services, then we look for the skills we need within those local labour markets. We use a range of models for identifying talent, from personal contacts and social media through to recruitment consultants for specialist skills. Whatever model we use, the key question we ask is: "Can the revenue justify a permanent staff member"? If the income or demand is not sustainable, we'll stick with flexible solutions.'

Liz Love, Z-Card

While many SMEs are instinctively willing to consider flexibility to retain talent, the barriers they face tend to be around managing HR and legal issues, such as choosing the right structure, knowing what type of contract to use, and understanding their rights and obligations towards workers, compounded by the lack of dedicated personnel support. Often the owner/manager of the firm has to deal with these issues as well as the day-to-day running of the business, which can make it more difficult to implement new working patterns and approaches.

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

Barriers, limitations and trade-offs (contd.)

7.2 Sector

Flexibility is already culturally engrained in a number of sectors, notably the creative industries, high-end engineering, energy and IT. All these sectors see a high volume of project work and highly skilled operatives – circumstances that suit freelance contractors, remote working and flexible shift patterns.

Yet there are clearly sectors where the constant physical presence of a worker is required for work to actually take place. A production line or manufacturing plant needs operatives on the shop floor for any products to get made. On the face of it, this appears to be a significant barrier to flexibility, but the Commission spoke to a number of manufacturers and factory owners who had found ways around the problem and were embracing the flexible agenda with great success - Thos Storey and Jaguar Land Rover being prime examples:

'When an employee requests flexibility, our default management position is "yes, how do we make it work?" In most cases we find a way. While flexible working patterns are harder to implement on the shop floor due to the need for physical presence and the sheer logistical challenges posed by varying shift patterns in a thousands-strong workforce, we do our best to accommodate requests where they are made.'

Jaguar Land Rover



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7.3 Client demand

The majority of businesses we spoke to in sectors like manufacturing, engineering and energy told the Commission that the nature of their businesses and that of their clients was as much a factor in implementing flexible solutions as employee or management demand. Thos Storey's clients initially feared they would not be able to produce the same output on a reduced working week and that the business-to-business relationship would suffer, but these fears were quickly assuaged as the staff productivity gains resulting from the move to a four-day week outweighed the loss of a production day.

In other sectors – energy maintenance is a good example – companies have changeable requirements that require constant on-call support. This might on the face of it reduce a company's ability to implement flexibility; employers we spoke to actually found the opposite.

'In the energy sector, flexibility is driven by customer requirements. Power station maintenance is a prime example, requiring flex hours due to the unpredictable nature of the work.'

David Bremner, Serco Energy

Where the nature of demand is uncertain and there is a need for businesses to respond quickly and urgently to their clients' needs, the challenge is to ensure they have sufficient resource on call to meet all client eventualities. Flexible and contingent workforces can be a solution.

'Since we adopted home working, our corporate customers have noticed our ability to respond quickly to outages - they've said the response has been seamless. If there is a spike in demand, we send a text to home workers asking if they can log on to help alleviate it; we generally see quite a high uptake. We pay this as overtime and home workers receive recognition from their team supervisor.'

Enterprise Rent-a-Car

'Flexible work patterns are dictated by our clients. They want to minimise disruption to the service, so flexibility is important. We work in alliances to achieve the best flexibility, from permanent staff to agency workers and contractors.'

Leanne Byrne, Amec

7.4 Familiar faces

The need for the highly skilled independent workers and contractors to remain flexible and mobile is growing in the UK. As projects get shorter in terms of completion schedules, profit margins get smaller and skills become more specialised in respect of delivery, it is important that access to this group of workers is not limited by ill thought-out government intervention. By choice these constituents of the flexible workforce forgo the traditional securities of employment - holiday pay, sick pay, redundancy pay, maternity leave, paternity leave, bank holiday pay – choosing instead the independence and freedom of contracting. Organisations that use contractors do so because they wish to access a talent pools talent that relies on their talent and ability to deliver a good job consistently, and contractors and their customers – particularly repeat customers – should be confident that the tax regime in the UK will not penalise them through clumsily defined and poorly implemented employment status tests.

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

Barriers, limitations and trade-offs (contd.)

'We use limited company contractors when there is a client need for short-term demand. These individuals do not want to be permanent, but we like to use the same contractors over time if they are good.'

Leanne Byrne, Amec

Professional bodies including PCG and the REC have made repeated efforts to work with HMRC to simplify the tax laws surrounding contractors and freelancers (commonly known as IR35) in a bid to promote entrepreneurialism and foster growth. Despite initial positive noises from the government, they now seem to be moving in the opposite direction, consulting as they are on proposals around the nature of 'controlling persons' that could have a severe impact on the freelance and high-end contractor market and deprive both public and private sector organisations of a valuable talent pool.

Recommendation

The government must ensure that the tax and welfare systems in the UK encourage increased flexibility in all its forms. HMRC's 'controlling persons' proposals - to tax all contractors and freelancers deemed to be 'controlling', as employees - should be scrapped and personal allowance thresholds and the universal credit policy should be adjusted to emphasize the financial incentive to work.

7.5 Current definitions

Much of the existing research and debate around flexible working centres on family-friendly working practices within permanent employment rather than the wider definition encompassing all forms of work flexibility. One aim of this report is to raise awareness of the sheer diversity of flexible options on offer to organisations in both the public and private sectors. In the public sector certainly, there is scope to dramatically expand the use of work flexibility, like the increasing trend of work 'projectisation' being seen in certain sectors of private industry. Far from cutting the use of temporary workers and implementing additional barriers to the use of freelancers and interim managers in the public sector, the government should be embracing these forms of work flexibility and the huge efficiency savings and increased access to in-demand skills they can bring to central and local government-funded projects.

Recommendation

A wider understanding of flexible work should be adopted by government to help move the debate beyond the current focus on family-friendly working practices. The government should lead the way by demanding increased work flexibility through public procurement and the public sector supply chain.

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

7.6 Employer vs worker

One pattern that emerged from our discussions with employers is in the types of flexibility that can viably be implemented across the employment spectrum. Clearly there are major differences in the options for structuring the workload of a trainee accountant and someone on a car factory production line. No amount of innovation in workforce design will enable that factory worker to perform his role from home, and that fundamental barrier has led many to assume that there is no place for flexibility at the lower end of the jobs market. Yet our case study on Thos Storey has shown this assumption need not be true.

Where organisations use significant temporary labour, they often lay themselves open to attacks from trade unions about the 'casualisation' of labour. However, unions must recognise that temporary roles can be a valuable way of gaining experience, testing the waters of a particular sector before jumping headfirst into a career. Employees are not unduly bound to a company and there is a mutual benefit for employers in that they can get a clearer sense of the worker's ability and enthusiasm for a role before taking them on for the longer term. Trade associations must do more to represent the interests of businesses to trade unions and open productive dialogue around the benefits of work flexibility to individuals across all sectors of the UK economy.

Recommendation

Trade associations and professional institutes should look to work cooperatively wherever possible with unions and employee organisations to advocate the benefits of flexibility for both businesses and workers and move the debate beyond the over-simplified accusation of 'casualisation'.

7.7 Management and progression

A clear logistical problem, particularly for remote working and flexible arrangements which reduce office contact time, is how to ensure such workers still progress within a company and don't miss out on training, development and team-building opportunities.

A number of the organisations we spoke to combat this problem through face-to-face team meetings every few weeks or months. Many will also train new starters at the office before moving to home-working or other flexible arrangements. All have clear metrics and appraisal processes in place.

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

Barriers, limitations and trade-offs (contd.)

7.8 Team cohesion and internal communications

Another potential risk, particularly if flexibility is introduced in a piecemeal manner within a department rather than wholesale through new business processes designed with flexibility in mind, is that rifts that can develop between flexible and non-flexible workers.

Many firms we spoke to reported initial scepticism from some employees when management-led flexibility was first proposed. Any workforce has staff members that are comfortable with the 40-hour office week and view change with suspicion, because they fear a lack of accountability and an imbalance in workloads.

Overcoming these fears is paramount; strong, open internal communication between line managers and their office-based and remote or flexible staff must be a top priority. Enterprise Rent-a-Car provides a compelling example of this.

CASE STUDY: Enterprise Rent-a-Car

The decision to promote homeworking was taken by senior management due to growth, the increasing requirement for further space, and the desire to broaden flexible working opportunities at the company. Homeworking was not new to us as a global company - nearly 500 homeworkers were already working successfully in the USA. We began in the UK with a pilot programme, with the assistance of Gillan Bell from a company called "At Home". We started with just 12 home working places and sought 6 internal and 6 external candidates.

We received over 260 applications from a diverse range of candidates. Once the benefits of the pilot had been recognized - in the form of a dramatic reduction in absenteeism, disciplinary issues and increases in punctuality and productivity - we rolled out the project across our entire Reservations team. The pilot project manager became the home working team supervisor and now for every office based worker who leaves, we recruit a home-working replacement with a view to achieving a target of 50% of the reservations department being home working.

Barring some company events and exceptional circumstances - i.e. serious technological failures or disciplinary issues - home workers are never seen at the office. This has required strong internal communication systems to be put in place; home workers have a weekly catch up over the phone with their manager and monthly performance appraisals are also carried out over the phone. They are able to listen back to their calls with their manager and have virtual team meetings via online conferencing software. Home workers can always see who else is online at any given time and communicate with them via internal instant messaging software and email which ensures a sense of team spirit is preserved. We also maintain a company-wide intranet hub for business and company policy updates and staff recognition announcements.

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8. The role of government

8.1 Current direction of regulation

The coalition government has repeatedly asserted its support for building a flexible workforce but too often this has been too narrowly defined, focusing almost wholly on cultural flexibility and 'family-friendly' practices. The Commission believes that construing flexibility in the widest possible sense – including contractual work flexibility – gives employers more options and opportunities to pursue growth and create jobs.

The Commission's investigation has clearly demonstrated that employers are using both strands of flexibility to meet the needs of their businesses and their workforce. Government policy and support programmes for employers should reflect this.

8.2 Right to request

At present, although any employee can ask for flexible work arrangements, some employees have a statutory right to make such a request and have it considered. These include parents of a child under 17 (or a disabled child under 18), or employees who are carers for a spouse, partner, relative or someone else living with them. The law requires employers to 'seriously consider' an application to work flexibly and may only reject the application on the basis of a legitimate business reason for doing so.

Most of the firms we spoke to have a demonstrable interest in flexible working and have well-established flexible working practices. Generally, the Commission found that a shift in workplace culture has taken place irrespective of the right to request legislation, for business reasons and to accommodate the changing needs of a more diverse workforce. Indeed, some managers see right to request as a potential regulatory risk, despite a recent CIPD report noting that in reality, very few employment tribunals have been brought, successfully or otherwise, as a result of the legislation.

The Commission felt that fundamental cultural change in workplaces, founded on a comprehensive understanding of the business case for flexibility was central to expanding the scope and implementation of flexible working practices amongst UK businesses; such cultural change is impossible to legislate.

Perceptions are key though, and most employers the Commission met saw informal negotiations between line managers and staff as the preferred route to flexibility. Indeed, many view such informality as empowering: it breaks down rigid workplace power structures and promotes employees as individuals who can negotiate with managers as equals, without recourse to an inflexible statutory process.

'None of our flexibility is as a result of the current right to request legislation – we want to open up our home-working programme to all our employees, and anyone can ask to join. We encourage informal negotiations on shift patterns and hours which are then signed off by management once all parties are happy with the arrangement.'

Enterprise Rent-A-Car

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

The role of government (contd.)

'If the right to request didn't exist, we'd be just as flexible!'

Jon Goodchild, Head of HR, Nuvia

'As a small business, if the right to request is extended, we would insure ourselves against the risk and then follow the list or process the insurer put down. We would add to our employment insurance – we are simply not prepared to carry that risk.'

Steven Hale, Crofton Design

Informal arrangements outside of the statutory Right to Request can provide far greater flexibility both for employees and employers. Under the Right to Request legislation, an employee can only make one application for flexible working every 12 months, locking them into that arrangement even if their circumstances change. Likewise, whilst an employer can turn down an initial request for one of eight statutory 'business reasons' (e.g an inability to meet customer demand), if a request is granted, there is no scope for the business to amend the flexible working arrangement even if, for example, customer demand is failing to be met.

Arrangements made outside of the Right to Request are not so rigid and can flex in line with the needs of both employees and employers. They also provide more scope for trial periods and encourage a constant dialogue between employer and employee around how the flexible arrangement is working for both parties

The coalition government has also recognised the positive impact of a dialogue and trust-based workplace culture.

'We want to see a wider change in the employment relations culture in this country. A culture that establishes dialogue rather than confrontation as the norm between employers and employees. That trusts people to do the right thing rather than relying on regulation to deal with every single issue that may arise. And that ensures businesses have the confidence to hire the talented and committed workforce they need in order to thrive.'

Employment Relations Minister Norman Lamb speaking at CIPD conference, 3 July 2012

However, the coalition has already pledged to extend the right to request to all employees after 26 weeks. The government has attempted to make guidance on the new legislation employer-friendly by keeping it brief and non-prescriptive, but employers actually need a clear understanding of their duties under the new rules. Small firms in particular will want to know the exact process required and may wish to insure themselves against any possible tribunal action.

Recommendation

The new statutory code for the extension of the Right to Request to all employees must be and clear and concise as possible, laying out the full extent of obligations employers must meet using language that avoids any possible confusion or debate around the process that must be followed.

There should also be a clear option for employers to use trial periods for new flexible work arrangements.

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

Recommendation (cont.)

The non-statutory guidance must make it clear that informal routes to flexibility outside of the Right to Request legislation are perfectly valid and can actually enable far greater flexibility for both employers and employees.

There should be a comprehensive and objective review of the Right to Request after any extension to assess how it has affected overall workforce flexibility and employer attitudes towards flexible work. If it is found that the Right to Request extension is not delivering on the goal of increasing workforce flexibility and improving employer understanding, or that it is actively hindering growth in flexibility, the government should look seriously at reforming the legislation.

8.3 Perceptions vs actual levels of regulation

The Commission found a gap between perceived and actual legislative or regulatory barriers to flexibility in the UK labour market. However, the employers we spoke to all preferred to reach flexible arrangements informally with the formal processes required under the right to request legislation often perceived as a barrier by managers. However, few other tangible labour market obstacles were identified, although there may be some on the horizon.

Some of the bottlenecks, notably the abuse of the Employment Tribunal system, are already being addressed by the coalition government.

'In October 2011, we said that we would focus on ensuring that we do not have any unnecessary employment regulations. Since we last updated the House, the red tape challenge has examined all of the regulations in scope of the review of workplace rights, compliance and enforcement.'

Written ministerial statement by Employment Relations Minister Norman Lamb, 10 July 2012.

In Europe, the UK labour market is already viewed one of the most flexible and deregulated, behind only Denmark, although some employers who have had experience operating across the EU do feel there is room for improvement in the UK in terms of fostering start-up and micro business growth.

'Some EU countries are far easier than others to operate in. As a sub-10 person micro-business in Germany, we were able to operate much more flexibly than larger competitors. As a small business, we knew we had more freedom from regulation, which gave us the confidence to take a risk on expansion. We could attract people that valued the opportunity for growth and progress a small company can offer over the comparative security but lack of future development a larger organisation might present and looking back at that experience, I'm certain the UK would reap huge benefits from exempting micro and start-up businesses from certain business regulations, if only to deal with that perception of regulation as a barrier to growth.'

Liz Love, Z-Card

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

9. Appendices

1: Members of the Flexible Work Commission

David Frost, Chair

Kevin Green, REC

Stuart Davis, FCSA

John Brazier, PCG

Jason Atkinson, Interim Management Association and Russam GMS

Amanda Francis, Manpower

Neil Smith, Kinetic

Emma Stewart, Women Like Us and Timewise Recruitment

Alex Wilson, Former HR Director for BT

Joanna Lewis, Head of HR, Commercial & Diversity, BSkyB

Gary Franklin, Founder, The Forum for In-house Recruitment Managers and Group Head of Resourcing, FirstGroup plc

Liz Love, Director, Z-Card

Steven Hale, Director, Crofton Design

Dr. Clare Kelliher, Cranfield University

Matthew Tinsley, Policy Exchange

Venetia Leigh, My Family Care

Patrick Woodman, Chartered Management Institute

The Commission's recommendations represent a consensus view and do not necessarily reflect each member organisation's precise individual position on each issue.

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

2: Employer contributors

BT

BSkyB

Mars UK

Timewise Recruitment

Z-Card

Crofton Design

Thos Storey

First Group

Clock Creative

Team Employment Support Ltd

Pilkington/NSG Group

Hurst Accountants

My Family Care

SHINE

MAN Diesel

Nuvia

Amec

Serco Technical Services

Mid-Counties Co-op Group

Enterprise Rent-a-Car

Jaguar Land Rover

REC Flexible Work Commission Report

Appendices (contd.)

3: Other contributors

Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development*

*The CIPD does not endorse the Commission's final position and recommendations on the right to request legislation.

4: International contributors

Jakob Tietge, DANSK ERHVERV, Denmark

Colin Donnery, National Recruitment Federation, Ireland

Gabriella Sebardt, Bemanningsförtagen, Swedish Staffing Agencies

Merru Tuliara, HPL, Finland

Even Hagelien, NHO Service, Norway

Francois Roux, PRISME, France

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10. Notes

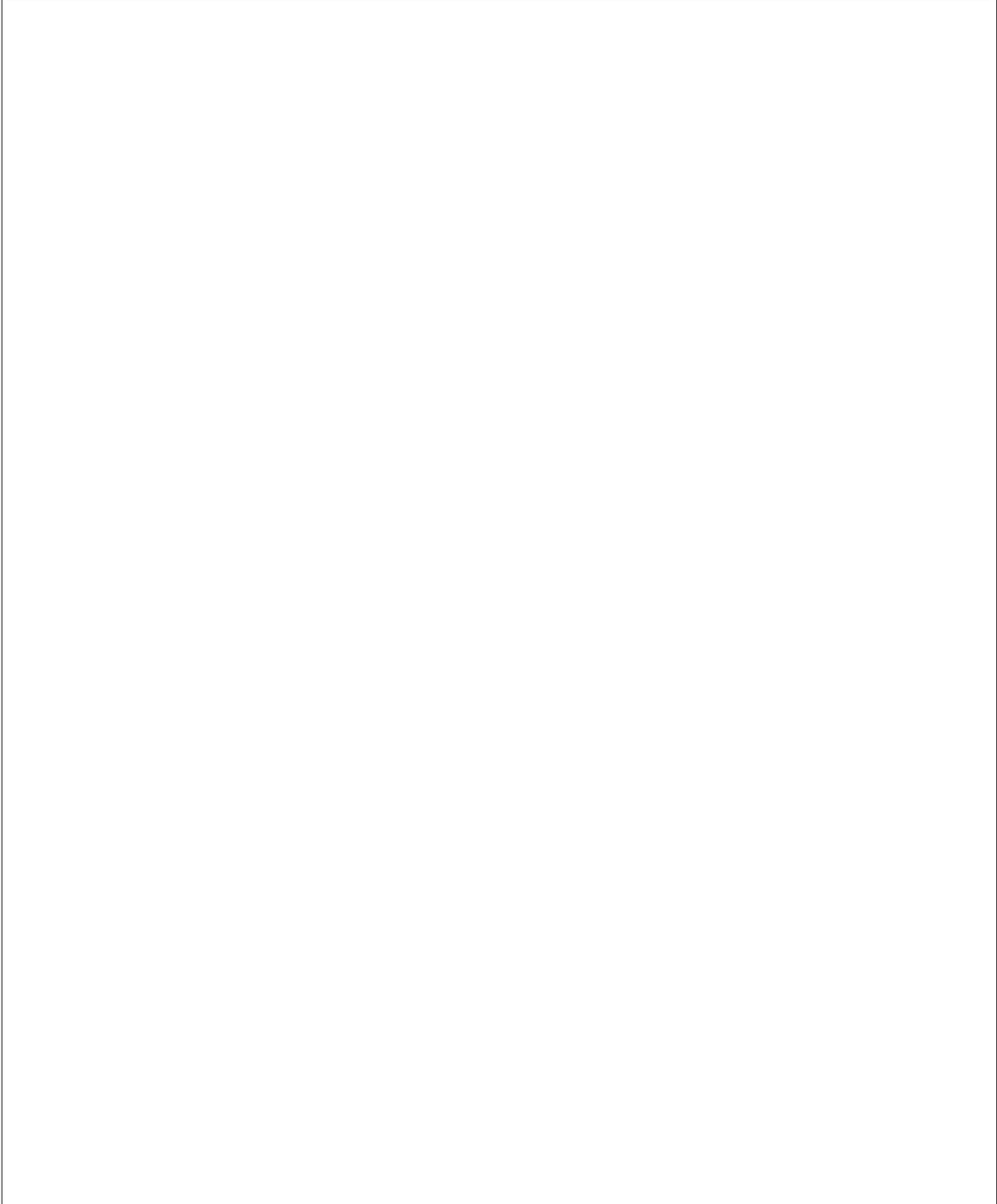
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REC
Dorset House
First Floor, 27-45 Stamford Street
London, SE1 9NT

t: 020 7009 2100
f: 020 7935 4112

➤ www.rec.uk.com

9/12



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Appendix 6

Assembly Research Papers



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Research and Information Service Research Paper

Paper 000/00

21 March 2014

NIAR 124-2014

Barbara Love

Sickness absence in the public and private sectors

This paper considers the levels of, reasons for and approaches to managing sickness absence in the public and private sectors. Sections 1 and 2 present the latest available information on the levels of sickness absence in the public sector in Northern Ireland while section 3 examines the reasons for sickness absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service. As there is a dearth of information on sickness absence in the private sector in Northern Ireland, section 4 presents research findings on the levels of and reasons for private sector sickness absence and section 5 examines differences in public and private sector sickness absence at the UK and ROI level. Sections 6-8 then consider approaches to managing sickness absence in the public and private sectors

Research and Information Service briefings are compiled for the benefit of MLAs and their support staff. Authors are available to discuss the contents of these papers with Members and their staff but cannot advise members of the general public. We do, however, welcome written evidence that relates to our papers and this should be sent to the Research and Information Service, Northern Ireland Assembly, Room 139, Parliament Buildings, Belfast BT4 3XX or e-mailed to RLS@niassembly.gov.uk

Key Points

- In 2012/13, an average of 10.6 days per staff year were lost due to sickness absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS), although this varies by Department. Sickness levels also vary considerably within Northern Ireland Health and Social Care Trusts, by school type in the education sector and within local government.
- Data on sickness absence levels is not available for the whole of the public sector or for the private sector in Northern Ireland.
- Apart from that for the NICS, there is little information available on the reasons for sickness absence in the public and private sectors in Northern Ireland.
- Mental ill-health, including work-related stress, is one of the main causes of sickness absence in the NICS. Although specific data is not published, stress has also been identified as an issue of concern in the Teacher Attendance Procedure.
- Although data is not available at the Northern Ireland level, surveys such as the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's (CIPD) annual Absence Management Survey, which includes organisations from Northern Ireland, have found that levels of sickness absence in the public sector tend to be higher than in the private sector, although some evidence suggests that this gap may be narrowing.
- Surveys have also suggested that stress and mental ill-health are more likely to be cited as a main cause of sickness absence in the public sector than in the private sector.
- Research has found that the public sector is more likely to record sickness absence information, take a more proactive approach to managing short-term absence, have capability procedures, have trigger mechanisms to review attendance, use absence rates as a key performance indicator, have or use an occupational health service, take steps to identify and reduce workplace stress and to offer services to support employees with mental health problems. Private sector employers are more likely to offer private health/medical insurance and are much more likely to restrict sick pay than public sector employers.
- Differences in sickness absence rates in the public and private sectors may, in part, be attributable to differences in the types of jobs between the two sectors, a higher proportion of female workers in the public sector, individuals in smaller private sector workforces being under more pressure to make up any lost hours and the financial consequences of taking sick leave in the private sector.

Executive Summary

Sickness absence levels in the NICS

In 2012/13, an average of 10.6 days per staff year were lost due to sickness absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS). While this was slightly higher than the previous year, the general trend has been a downward one. Within the NICS, the number of working days lost per staff year ranged from 7.8 days in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) to 12.9 days in Department of Justice (DOJ), although it is argued that the staffing profile of a Department in terms of age, gender and grade can have an impact on its overall level of sickness absence.

In 2012/13, 4.9% of available working days were lost due to sickness absence in the NICS.

Sickness absence levels in the rest of the public sector

While not available for the whole of the public sector, data on sickness absence levels is available for health trusts, teachers, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and local government:

- During the monitoring period 01 October 2012 – 31 March 2013, the regional average working days lost for **Health and Social Care Trusts** in Northern Ireland stood at 5.7%, ranging from 5.1% in the South Eastern HSC Trust to 8.5% in the Ambulance Service.
- The average number of days lost due to sickness per **teacher** in 2012/13 was 7.8 days, ranging from 5.3 days in Grammar schools (excludes voluntary Grammar) to 12.4 days in Peripatetic Units.
- The average number of days lost due to sickness in the **PSNI** in 2012/13 was 10.6 days for police officers and 8.8 days for police staff.
- The average sickness rate in local government in 2011/12 was 10.3 days, a decrease from 10.9 days in the previous year. The average sickness rate ranged from 15.9 days in Carrickfergus Borough Council to 4.3 days in Magherafelt District Council.

Reasons for sickness absence

There is limited information available on the reasons for sickness absence in Northern Ireland although the main reasons in the NICS are mental ill-health (including anxiety, stress and depression), injuries and fractures, gastrointestinal problems, pregnancy related disorders and colds, coughs and influenza.

Sickness absence in the private sector

Data on sickness absence in the private sector is limited. However, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's (CIPD) annual *Absence Management Survey* covering the UK and ROI, which included 8 organisations from Northern Ireland, found that:

- The average number of days lost per employee in private sector services increased from 5.7 days in 2012 to 7.2 days in 2013;
- The average number of days lost per employee in 2013 varied considerably within the private sector, ranging from 4.6 days in IT Services to 12.5 days in call centres;
- The most common causes of short-term sickness absence in non-manual private services and manufacturing and production sectors were minor illness (for example colds/flu, stomach upsets, headaches and migraines), stress, musculoskeletal injuries, back pain and recurring medical conditions (for example asthma, angina and allergies); and,
- The most common causes of long-term sickness absence in the manual private services and manufacturing and production sectors were musculoskeletal injuries (for example neck strains and repetitive strain injury, but excluding back pain), acute medical conditions

(for example stroke, heart attack and cancer), stress, mental ill-health (for example clinical depression and anxiety), back pain and injuries/accidents not related to work.

Differences in sickness absence in the public and private sectors

Levels of sickness absence in the public sector tend to be higher than in the private sector, although some evidence suggests that this gap may be narrowing. The Office for National Statistics has suggested that differences in the types of jobs between the two sectors, a higher proportion of female workers in the public sector, individuals in smaller private sector workforces being under more pressure to make up any lost hours and the fact that individuals within the private sector are more likely to not be paid for a spell of sickness than individuals within the public sector might all be contributory factors to these differences. Also, self-employed people are less likely to take sick leave.

In terms of reasons for sickness absence, the CIPD found that, in 2013, the public sector was more likely than the private sector to rank stress, mental ill-health and musculoskeletal injuries among their top five causes of short- and long-term absence. Non-genuine sickness absence was found to be more common in the private sector than in the public sector. Research also suggests that smaller organisations tend to have lower sickness absence levels than bigger organisations.

Approaches to managing absence in the public sector in Northern Ireland

Public sector bodies tend to have established policies and procedures for managing absence. These policies and procedures tend to cover the roles and responsibilities of employees and management, procedures for reporting and recording sickness absence, return to work discussions or interviews, disciplinary and inefficiency procedures or arrangements for retirement due to ill-health and support such as occupational health and sick pay. Differences within the public sector mainly regard targets, trigger or review points and levels of sick pay.

Differences in approaches to managing sickness absence in the public and private sectors

While most organisations have a written absence/attendance management policy, very small private sector organisations (1-49 employees) are less likely to have a formal policy.

Public sector organisations are more likely to record sickness absence information.

While most organisations use a range of approaches to manage short-term and long-term absence, the public sector tends to take a more proactive approach to managing short-term absence and are more likely to give line managers primary responsibility for managing absence, train them in absence-handling and provide them with support, have capability procedures, trigger mechanisms to review attendance and use absence rates as a key performance indicator than the private sector.

Public sector organisations are more likely to have or use an occupational health service.

The public sector is considerably more likely to be taking steps to identify and reduce workplace stress such as staff surveys, risk assessments/stress audits, flexible working options/improved work-life balance, employee assistance programmes, training for line managers in identifying and managing stress, occupational health and changes in work organisation.

The public sector is also more likely to offer services to support employees with mental health problems such as counselling services, awareness raising and training.

Private sector employers are more likely to offer private health/medical insurance and they are also much more likely to restrict sick pay.

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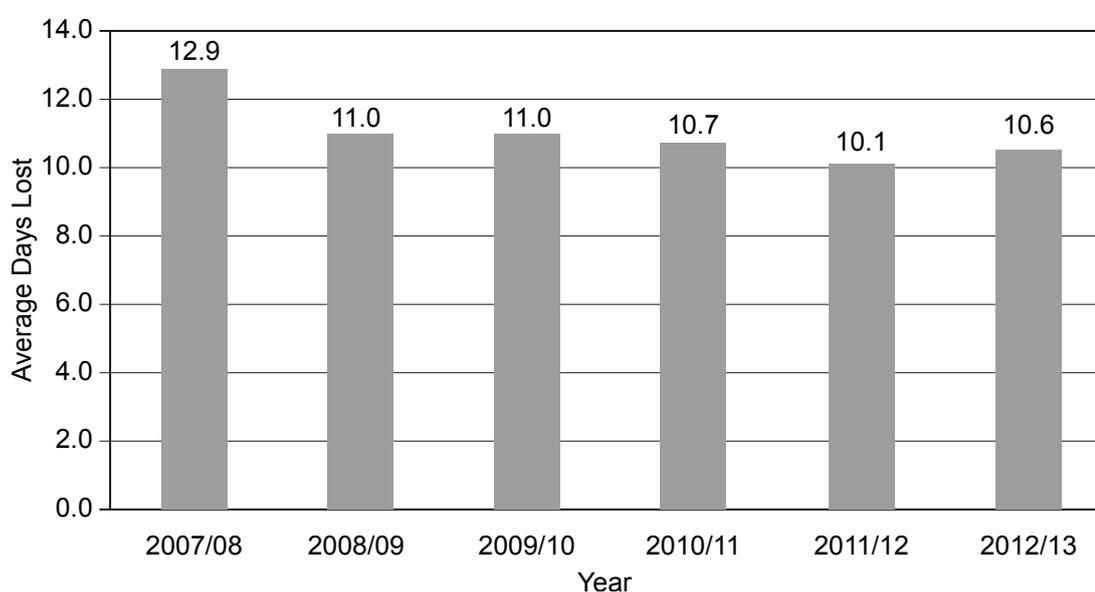
- 1 Sickness absence levels in the NICS
- 2 Sickness absence levels in the rest of the public sector
- 3 Reasons for sickness absence in the NICS
- 4 Sickness absence in the private sector
- 5 Differences in sickness absence in the public and private sectors
- 6 Approach to managing sickness absence in the NICS
- 7 Approaches to managing sickness absence in the rest of the public sector
- 8 Differences in approaches to managing sickness absence in the public and private sector
- 9 Conclusions

1 Sickness absence levels in the NICS

This section presents sickness absence figures for the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS). Data on sickness absence in the NICS as at December 2013, as provided by the Department of Finance and Personnel, is included in Annex A at the back of this document.

NISRA publishes sickness absence figures for the NICS annually in its report *Sickness Absence in the NICS*.¹ One of the main measures of sickness absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) is **working days lost per staff year**.² In 2012/13, an average of 10.6 days per staff year were lost due to sickness absence in the NICS. While the average number of days lost per staff year due to sickness absence in the NICS has generally been decreasing over the last number of years, this represents an increase of 0.5 days on the 2011/12 average of 10.1 days.

Figure 1: Average number of working days lost due to sickness absence in the NICS per staff year, 2007/08 - 2012/13



Source: Sickness absence in the NICS 2012/13, NISRA

Within the NICS, the number of working days lost per staff year, ranged from 7.8 days in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) to 12.9 days in Department of Justice (DOJ). The biggest contribution to DOJ's absence level was made by Prison Grade staff (16.1 days). The report on *Sickness absence in the NICS* points out that when making comparisons between Departments it is important to consider that the staffing profile of a Department can have an impact on its overall level of sickness absence. Generally speaking:

- Older staff tended to have fewer absences, but when they were sick the illnesses tended to be of longer duration;
- The absence level of females tend to be higher than that of males even when Pregnancy Related Disorders were taken into account;
- The level of absence generally increases as grade level decreases; and

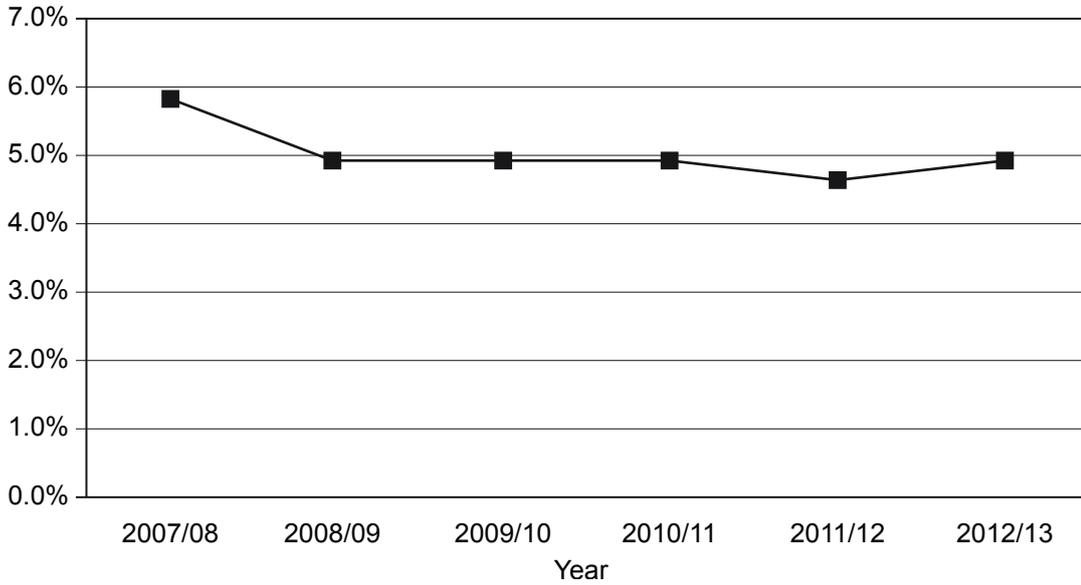
1 Latest report: Sickness absence in the NICS 2012/13, NISRA <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/1213%20Financial%20Year%20Absence%20Report.pdf>

2 The "Working days lost per staff year" approach was recommended by the Cabinet Office in the review "Managing Attendance in the Public Sector (1999)". This approach replaced 'working days lost per person' which does not always permit valid comparisons to be made between or within organisations that differ in their proportions of part-time staff and/or their levels of staff turnover. In particular, it can misrepresent the absence rate in organisations that have a high proportion of part-time staff and/or high levels of staff turnover.

- Staff who have been in post for under two years tend to have a lower level of absence than staff who have been employed for two years or more.

The **percentage of available working days lost** is also reported as a measure of sickness absence in the NICS. In 2012/13, 4.9% of available working days were lost due to sickness absence in the NICS. This represents an increase on the 2011/12 figure of 4.6% but a decrease on the 2007/08 figure of 5.8%.

Figure 2: Proportion of available working days lost in the NICS, 2007/08 - 2012/13



Source: Sickness absence in the NICS 2012/13, NISRA

2 Sickness absence levels in the rest of the public sector

This section considers levels of sickness absence in the rest of the public sector in Northern Ireland.

The public sector in Northern Ireland is made up of more than 100 bodies, many of which are relatively small in size. Apart from the NICS, the main employers in the public sector are the health sector, the education sector, local government and the security sector. The following section presents sickness absence figures for these sectors. In the case of the security sector, the Police Service of Northern Ireland figures are presented. Data for small public sector bodies is not presented.

The main measure of sickness absence in the **health sector** is the percentage of working days lost. During the monitoring period 01 October 2012 – 31 March 2013, the regional average working days lost for Health and Social Care Trusts in Northern Ireland stood at 5.7%, ranging from 5.1% in the South Eastern HSC Trust to 8.5% in the Ambulance Service. Generally speaking, sickness absence levels were lowest in Medical and Dental staff (1.3% of working days lost) and highest in the NI Ambulance Service (8.9% of working days lost).

In the **education sector**, the average number of days lost due to sickness absence per teacher in 2012/13 was 7.8 days, ranging from 5.3 days in Grammar schools (excludes voluntary Grammar) to 12.4 in Peripatetic Units. Data for non-teaching staff is not available.

The average number of days lost due to sickness in the **PSNI**³ in 2012/13 was 10.6 days for police officers and 8.8 days for police staff. This represents an increase on 2011/12 when the average number of days lost due to sickness was 9.3 days for police officers and 7.7 days for police staff.

The average sickness rate in local government in 2011/12 was 10.3 days, a decrease from 10.9 days in 2010/11.⁴ The average sickness rate ranged from 15.9 days in Carrickfergus Borough Council to 4.3 days in Magherafelt District Council.

3 PSNI Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2013 http://www.psnipolice.uk/chief_constables_annual_report_and_accounts_-_2012_2013.pdf

4 The exercise by local government auditors of their functions in the year to 31 March 2013, Northern Ireland Audit Office http://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/niao_local_government_audit_report_2013.pdf

3 Reasons for sickness absence in the NICS

There is very little information published on the reasons for sickness absence in the public sector as a whole in Northern Ireland. However, information is published on the reasons for sickness absence in the NICS. The following section presents a summary of the reasons for sickness absence in the NICS.

The main reasons for sickness absence in the NICS in 2012/13 were recorded as **mental ill-health** including anxiety, stress and depression, accounting for 29.8% of all working days lost due to sickness absence in the NICS in 2012/13. Absences due to mental ill-health tended to be long-term, lasting an average of 36.3 working days. Almost a third of the working days lost due to mental ill-health (30.8%) were recorded as being work-related stress.

Injuries and fractures accounted for 8.3% of working days lost, the second highest percentage. **Gastrointestinal problems** accounted for 7.7% of working days lost while **pregnancy related disorders** accounted for 6.4% of working days lost and **colds, coughs and influenza** accounted for 6.2% of working days lost.

Table 1: Percentage of working days lost by reason for sickness absence in the NICS, 2012/13

	% of working days lost
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	29.8
Injury, Fracture	8.3
Gastrointestinal Problems	7.7
Pregnancy Related Disorders	6.4
Cold, Cough, Influenza	6.2
Back Problems	5.6
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	4.9
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	4.4
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	3.8
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	3.3
Chest and Respiratory Problems	3.3
Ear, Nose, Throat	2.1
Nervous System Disorders	1.4
Other/not specified	12.9

Source: Sickness absence in the NICS 2012/13, NISRA

Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding

Colds, coughs and influenza accounted for the greatest proportion of spells of sickness absence (22.7%), followed by gastrointestinal problems (19.3%) and mental ill-health (10.9%).

Table 2: Percentage of spells of absence by reason for sickness absence in the NICS, 2012/13

	% of spells of absence
Cold, Cough, Influenza	22.7
Gastrointestinal Problems	19.3
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	10.9
Pregnancy Related Disorders	7.0
Chest and Respiratory Problems	5.3
Injury, Fracture	5.0
Back Problems	4.6
Ear, Nose, Throat	4.4
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	2.9
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	2.4
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	1.4
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	1.0
Nervous System Disorders	0.6
Other/not specified	12.4

Source: Sickness absence in the NICS 2012/13, NISRA

Note: Figures may not sum due to rounding

Whilst more than half of NICS staff (52.3%) had no recorded sickness absence in 2012/13, long-term absences accounted for 70.7% of the total working days lost. In terms of average duration, benign and malignant tumours and cancers (60.2 days), heart, cardiac and circulatory problems (36.6 days) and mental ill-health (36.3 days) were longest and colds, coughs and influenza (3.6 days), dental and oral problems (3.7 days) and burns, poisoning, frostbite and hypothermia (4.8 days) were shortest.

4 Sickness absence in the private sector

There is little data available on sickness absence in the private sector in Northern Ireland. This section considers findings from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's (CIPD) an annual *Absence Management Survey* which covers the UK and ROI. The 2013 survey included eight organisations from Northern Ireland. Although the data is not disaggregated for Northern Ireland and caution should be taken when making inferences on reasons for sickness absence in the private sector in Northern Ireland, it is worth noting that the survey found that:

- The average number of days lost per employee in 2013 varied considerably within the private sector, ranging from 4.6 days in IT Services to 12.5 days in call centres;
- The average number of days lost per employee in private sector services increased from 5.7 days in 2012 to 7.2 days in 2013;
- The average percentage of working time lost per year ranged from 2.0% in IT Services to 5.5% in call centres;
- The average number of days lost per employee in manufacturing and production in 2013 stood at 6.0 days, the same as in 2012;
- 77% of private services sector absences and 76% of manufacturing and production sickness absence lasted up to 7 days. 12% of private services sector absences and 11% of manufacturing and production sickness absence lasted between 8 days and up to 4 weeks. 12% of private services sector absences and 13% of manufacturing and production sickness absence lasted four weeks or longer;⁵
- The most common causes of short-term sickness absence in non-manual private services and manufacturing and production sectors were minor illness (for example colds/flu, stomach upsets, headaches and migraines), stress, musculoskeletal injuries, back pain and recurring medical conditions (for example asthma, angina and allergies); and,
- The most common causes of long-term sickness absence in manual private services and manufacturing and production sectors were musculoskeletal injuries (for example neck strains and repetitive strain injury, but excluding back pain), acute medical conditions (for example stroke, heart attack and cancer), stress, mental ill-health (for example clinical depression and anxiety), back pain and injuries/accidents not related to work.

5 Figures may not sum due to rounding

5 Differences in sickness absence in the public and private sectors

While data on sickness absence is available for parts of the public sector in Northern Ireland, detailed information on sickness absence and reasons for sickness absence is not available for the whole sector. Furthermore, there is a dearth of published sickness absence information for the private sector in Northern Ireland. The following section draws on research findings comparing sickness absence in the public sector to that in the private sector in the UK and ROI. This research was not limited to Northern Ireland and so care should be taken when making inferences about sickness absence in the region.

Although the estimates vary, surveys conducted in this area have found that **sickness absence levels** tend to be higher in the public sector than in the private sector.

The CIPD's *Absence Management Survey* found that in 2013 an average of 8.7 days were lost in public services compared to 7.2 days in private sector services and 6.0 days in manufacturing and production, although this gap has been narrowing.

The CBIs *Fit for Purpose: Absence and workplace health survey 2013*⁶ found that the average days lost per employee was 6.9 days in the public sector compared with 4.9 days in the private sector.

In an analysis of the UK labour market using Labour Force Survey data, the Office for National Statistics⁷ found that the percentage of hours lost to sickness was higher in the public sector (2.6%) than in the private sector (1.6%). The ONS does, however, point out that differences in the types of jobs between the two sectors, a higher proportion of female workers in the public sector, individuals in smaller private sector workforces being under more pressure to make up any lost hours and the fact that individuals within the private sector are more likely to not be paid for a spell of sickness than individuals within the public sector might all be contributory factors to these differences. Also, self-employed people, at 1.2 per cent of working hours lost, took less sickness than employees in 2011 (1.9 per cent of working hours lost). The ONS argues that self-employed people do not generally have the same sick-leave cover as employees do and would therefore have more incentive to make up any hours.

In terms of **reasons for sickness absence**, the CIPD found that, in 2013, the public sector is more likely than the private to rank stress, mental ill-health and musculoskeletal injuries among their top five causes of short- and long-term absence. Non-genuine sickness absence is more common in the private sector than in the public sector.

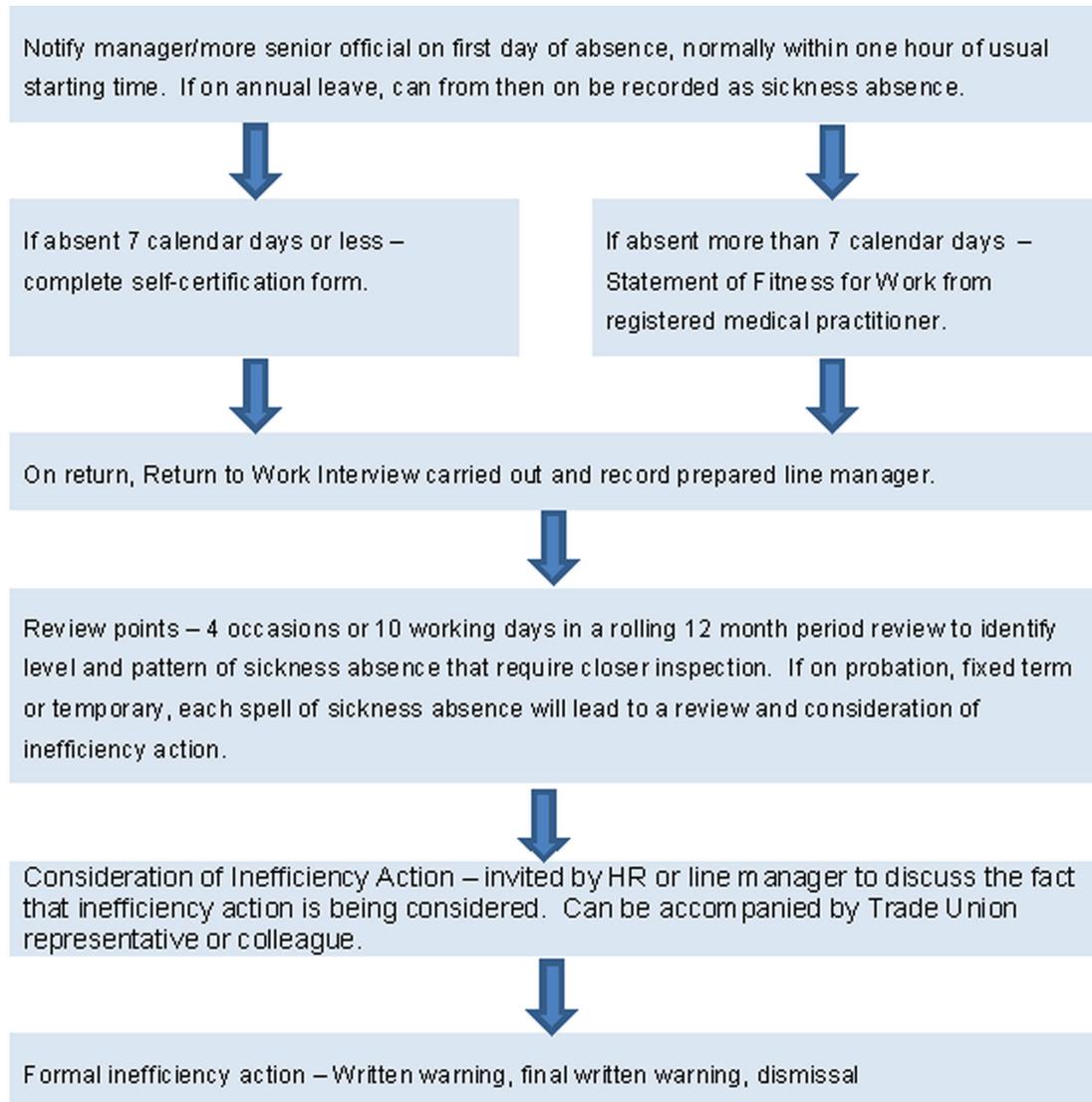
The ONS found that the **size of an organisation** can also be important. They found that workers in organisations with more than 500 employees had the highest percentage of working hours lost in 2011, at 2.3 per cent. Those working in firms sized 25 to 49 and 50 to 499 lost a similar percentage of hours (2.1 and 2.0 per cent respectively) and the smallest firms had the lowest percentage of hours lost at 1.5 per cent. Sickness absences in small workplaces may be less common as workers do not feel able to take time off due to work commitments and not having colleagues to cover their work. This is supported by the research by the CBI which also found that, as the size of an organisation increases so too do sickness absence levels.

6 Fit for purpose: Absence and the workplace health survey 2013, CBI, sponsored by Pfizer http://www.cbi.org.uk/media/2150120/cbi-pfizer_absence___workplace_health_2013.pdf

7 Sickness absence in the Labour Market, April 2012, Office for National Statistics http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_265016.pdf

6 Approach to managing sickness absence in the NICS

The section considers the approach used in the Northern Ireland Civil Service to managing sickness absence.^{8,9} If an individual reports sick having commenced work, that day is not usually recorded as sickness absence. Otherwise, the following approach is used:



Where necessary (e.g. absence exceeds 20 days or earlier for more urgent), individuals are referred to the Occupational Health Service who provide professional and appropriate occupational health advice.

Where a Written Warning or Final Written Warning is issued or in the case of dismissal, individuals have the right to appeal. Departments have discretion to pay compensation in cases of dismissal on grounds of inefficiency. The minimum period of notice given to staff with 4 years' or more continuous service and who are dismissed on grounds of inefficiency is one week for each year of continuous employment plus one week, to a maximum of 13 weeks. A shorter period of notice applies where service is less than 4 years.

8 NICS Sickness Absence policy <http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/3.01-sickness-absence.pdf>

9 NICS Absence inefficiency policy <http://www.dfpni.gov.uk/inefficiency-sickness-absence.pdf>

The NICS also offers occupational sick pay. Full details on sick pay are outlined in the NICS staff handbook but broadly speaking occupational sick pay is paid a rate of full pay for not more than 6 months and thereafter on half pay subject to a maximum of 12 months in any period of 4 years or less for permanent staff and not more than one week on full pay for every completed 4 weeks of effective service (each period of temporary employment will be treated separately and a previous period may not be aggregated with a current period for determining sickness absence allowable).

7 Approaches to managing sickness absence in the rest of the public sector

Public sector bodies tend to have established policies and procedures for managing absence, similar to those in the NICS. These policies and procedures tend to cover the roles and responsibilities of employees and management, procedures for reporting and recording sickness absence, return to work discussions or interviews, disciplinary and inefficiency procedures or arrangements for retirement due to ill-health and support such as occupational health and sick pay.

There are a number of differences within the public sector. For example, sickness absence targets vary from organisation to organisation.

In the health sector, the *Attendance at Work protocol*¹⁰ specifies that sickness absence be reported by 9:30 on first day of absence or 8:30 for warehouse operatives.

The review points or triggers for management action also vary within the public sector. For example, the triggers for management action in respect of short term absence in the health sector as specified in the *Attendance at Work protocol* are 3 episodes of absence within a 12 months rolling period or 2 episodes of absence totalling 10 working days or 2 calendar weeks within a 12 month rolling period or 1 episode of 10 days within a 12 month rolling period. The recommended review points for teachers as specified in the *Teacher Attendance Procedure TNC 2008/2*¹¹ are more than 6 casual days in a 12 month rolling period and continuous absences of 4 weeks or more. However, the policy specifies that the School Principal should consult with the Employing Authority when absence becomes cause for concern.

Stress is recognised as a major cause of occupational ill-health amongst teachers that may cause sickness absence, high turnover and poor performance in school. The *Teacher Attendance Procedure TNC 2008/2* states that absences related to stress should be monitored and that the Employing Authority should be approached for advice and guidance in cases where there is a possibility that occupational factors may be impacting on a teacher's health.

The options for improving absence in the health sector are more flexible than that for teachers and include a change in starting time or finishing time or redeployment.

Sick pay also varies in the public sector. For example, while the PSNI comply with the same occupational sick pay terms and conditions as the NICS¹², health sector workers (through Agenda for Change)¹³ and local government employees (by National Agreement) are entitled to receive sick pay in accordance with the following scale:

- During the first year of service - one month's full pay and two months' half pay;
- During the second year of service - two months' full pay and two months' half pay;
- During the third year of service – four months' full pay and four months' half pay;
- During the fourth and fifth years of service – five months' full pay and five months' half pay; and,
- After completing five years of service – six months' full pay and six months' half pay.

10 Attendance at work protocol, BSO http://www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/pdf/Attendance_at_Work_Protocol.pdf

11 Teacher Attendance Procedure, available from DENI website http://www.deni.gov.uk/microsoft_word_-_tnc_2008-2_-_teacher_attendance_procedure_final_version.pdf

12 PSNI Response to FOI request http://www.psnipolice.uk/occupational_sick_pay.pdf

13 Agenda for Change: NHS Terms and Conditions of Service Handbook http://library.nhsggc.org.uk/mediaAssets/Staff/nhsgg_afc_tc_handbook.pdf

A teacher's entitlement to sick leave/pay also depends on the number of years of service they have completed and the number of days they have been absent owing to illness in the year, which ends on the 31 March.¹⁴ The scales are as follows:

- Less than 4 months – 25 working days on full pay;
- 4 months – 1 year: 25 working days on full pay and 50 working days on half pay;
- 2nd year: 50 working days on full pay and 50 working days on half pay;
- 3rd year: 75 working days on full pay and 75 working days on half pay; and,
- 4th year: 100 working days on full pay and 100 working days on half pay.

14 Teacher's pay popular questions, DENI http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/school-staff/teachers_pay1_pg/10-administrationofpay-popularquestions-pg.htm#sickent

8 Differences in approaches to managing sickness absence in the public and private sector

The following section outlines findings from the CIPD's 2013 *Absence Management Survey*. Again, although a number of Northern Ireland organisations participated in the survey, extreme caution should be taken when making inferences about these findings to the public and private sectors in Northern Ireland. The main differences in approaches to managing sickness absence in the public and private sectors in the UK and ROI were that:

- While most organisations have a written **absence/attendance management policy**, very small private sector organisations (1-49 employees) are less likely to have a formal policy.
- Public sector organisations are most likely to **record sickness absence information** and private services the least (public sector: 95%; private services: 72%; manufacturing and production: 83%).
- Most organisations use **a range of approaches to manage short-term and long-term absence**. The public sector tends to take a more proactive approach to managing short-term absence and are more likely to give line managers primary responsibility for managing absence, train them in absence-handling and provide them with support, have capability procedures, trigger mechanisms to review attendance and use absence rates as a key performance indicator than the private sector.
- Virtually all public sector organisations (99%) report that **occupational health** is currently involved in their absence management approach compared with 78% of manufacturing and production organisations and just under two-thirds (63%) of private services.
- The public sector is considerably more likely to be taking steps to identify and reduce workplace **stress** than the private sector (public sector: 82%; private sector: 48%). This includes staff surveys, risk assessments/stress audits, flexible working options/improved work-life balance, employee assistance programmes, training for line managers in identifying and managing stress, occupational health and changes in work organisation.
- The public sector is also more likely to offer services to support employees with **mental health** problems such as counselling services, awareness raising and training.
- Private sector employers are more likely to offer private health/medical insurance and they are also much more likely to restrict **sick pay**.

9 Conclusions

While data on sickness absence is publically available for the biggest sectors of the public sector, it is not readily available for all of the public sector or for the private sector in Northern Ireland. This data is needed in order to allow a comparison of sickness absence in the public and private sectors to be carried.

Sickness absence rates vary considerably within both the public and private sectors with higher rates reported in customer facing services in both sectors.

There is limited information available on the reasons for sickness absence in Northern Ireland. The main reasons in the NICS are mental ill-health (including anxiety, stress and depression), injuries and fractures, gastrointestinal problems, pregnancy related disorders and colds, coughs and influenza. Data on the reasons for sickness absence in the rest of the public sector and the private sector in Northern Ireland is needed.

Research has found that the public sector tends to have a more robust approach to monitoring and managing sickness absence than the private sector, although absence rates tend to be higher in the public sector. It has been suggested that these differences in sickness absence rates may, in part, be attributable to differences in the types of jobs between the two sectors, a higher proportion of female workers in the public sector, individuals in smaller private sector workforces being under more pressure to make up any lost hours and the financial consequences of taking sick leave in the private sector.

Annex A

Latest data provided by DFP

	December 2013	December 2013
Absence Rate (%)	3.5	4.2
Staff with no Absences (%)	92.0	91.6
Absence Rate (%) by Gender		
Male	3.2	3.4
Female	4.0	5.0
Female (Adjusted for Pregnancy Related Disorders)	3.5	4.5

Source: DFP

Analysis of Absences by Grade Level - DFP

Grade Level	Staff in Post	Working Days	Working Days	Absence Rate	Estimated Lost
	(fte)	Lost	Lost per fte	(%)	Production (£)
SCS	45.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0
G6	84.1	52.0	0.6	3.4	11,969
G7	228.3	160.0	0.7	3.8	36,862
DP	495.1	232.5	0.5	2.6	44,373
SO	554.1	249.0	0.4	2.5	35,408
EOI	515.3	286.8	0.6	3.0	32,928
EOII	442.6	339.3	0.8	4.1	35,634
AO	821.4	717.3	0.9	4.8	64,513
AA	189.0	161.2	0.9	4.5	9,821
Industrial	12.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0
DFP Overall	3,351.3	2,198.0	0.7	3.5	271,508

Source: DFP

Analysis of Absences by Grade Level - NICS

Grade Level	Staff in Post (fte)	Working Days Lost	Working Days Lost per fte	Absence Rate (%)	Estimated Lost Production (£)
SCS	270.2	64.0	0.2	1.3	25,592
G6	272.7	179.0	0.7	3.5	46,535
G7	1,284.4	698.6	0.5	2.9	150,072
DP	2,475.4	1,190.7	0.5	2.6	210,538

Grade Level	Staff in Post (fte)	Working Days Lost	Working Days Lost per fte	Absence Rate (%)	Estimated Lost Production (£)
SO	3,267.4	1,705.4	0.5	2.8	240,813
EOI	3,479.9	2,343.7	0.7	3.6	282,093
EOII	4,336.5	3,167.0	0.7	3.9	344,284
AO	7,194.4	7,510.1	1.0	5.6	703,134
AA	1,579.4	1,435.0	0.9	4.9	108,004
Industrial	1,036.9	913.9	0.9	4.6	59,257
Prison Grade	1,537.3	1,787.1	1.2	5.5	213,579
NICS Overall	26,499.2	20,994.4	0.8	4.2	2,383,901

Source: DFP

Percentage of working days lost by reason for sickness absence in the NICS, December 2013

	% of working days lost
Anxiety/Stress/Depression/Other Psychiatric Illnesses	29.8
Injury, Fracture	8.9
Gastrointestinal Problems	7.5
Pregnancy Related Disorders	7.0
Cold, Cough, Influenza	5.5
Back Problems	5.5
Other Musculoskeletal Problems	4.9
Benign and Malignant Tumours, Cancers	4.0
Heart, Cardiac and Circulatory Problems	3.6
Genitourinary and Gynaecological Disorders	2.8
Chest and Respiratory Problems	2.8
Ear, Nose, Throat	2.2
Nervous System Disorders	1.2
Other/not specified	14.3

Source: DFP



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Research and Information Service Briefing Paper

Paper 000/00

15 May 2014

NIAR 294-14

Barbara Love

Further information on sickness absence in the public and private sectors

1 Background

This briefing supplements the research paper entitled '*Sickness absence in the public and private sectors*' presented to the Committee for Finance and Personnel by the Assembly's Research and Information Service (RaISe) on 2 April 2014. As requested by the Committee, further information is provided on the impact of long-term sickness absence on sickness absence levels in the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS); long-term sickness absence by grade in the NICS; long-term sickness in the private sector; private health insurance in the private sector; and measures to address gaps in sickness absence data.

2 Key points

- While long-term spells¹ accounted for only 15.7% of all spells of sickness absence in the NICS in 2012/13, they made up more than two thirds (70.7%) of the total working days lost in that financial year². The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) have calculated that this equates to losing the work of approximately 890 full-time staff for the entire year. This demonstrates that a relatively small number of long-term absences can have a significant impact on the overall level of sickness absence.
- The impact of long-term absences on the overall number of working days lost has remained relatively stable since 2007/08.
- The proportion of staff with one or more long-term absences decreased as grade increased in 2012/13. However, the average duration of long-term absences tended to increase with grade, with the exception of staff at grades 5+ whose average duration of long-term absences was lower than those of staff at Grades 6, 7 and Deputy Principal level.
- There is limited information available on long-term sickness absence in the private sector, particularly at the Northern Ireland level. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's (CIPD) annual *Absence Management Survey*³, a UK and ROI wide survey, estimated the average proportion of sickness absence attributed to long-term absence to be 13% in the manufacturing and production sectors and 12% in the private services sector in 2013. The proportion of sickness absence attributed to long-term absence in manufacturing and production has decreased.
- The Employee Benefits Survey⁴ estimated that 47% of business in the industry sector in Northern Ireland and 48% of business in the services sector offer private medical insurance.
- There is potential for addressing some of the gaps in sickness absence data through existing surveys such as the Labour Force Survey.

1 Defined as an absence lasting more than 20 consecutive working days

2 NISRA, Sickness absence in the Northern Ireland Civil Service, 2012/13 <http://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/1213%20Financial%20Year%20Absence%20Report.pdf>

3 CIPD, Absence Management Survey, 2013 http://www.cipd.co.uk/research/_absence-management/

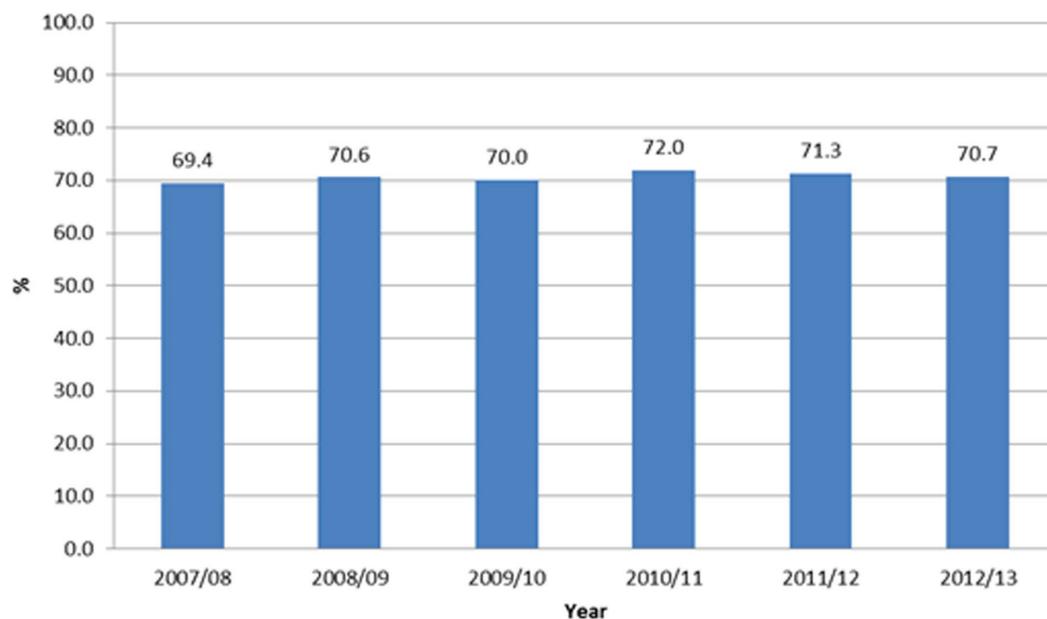
4 Perceptive Insight on behalf of Kerr Henderson, Ellipse and H3 Insurance, Employee Benefits Survey, 2012 <http://www.kerrhenderson.com/Documents/Benefits%20Survey%202012.pdf>

3 Impact of long-term sickness absence on sickness absence levels in the NICS

This section considers the impact of long-term sickness on sickness absence levels in the NICS. Long-term sickness absence in the NICS is defined as any spell of absence that lasted more than 20 consecutive working days during the financial year. In 2012/13, a total of 3,060 staff (10.4%) in the NICS had one or more spell of long-term absence, the same proportion as in the previous year. Long-term sickness absences contributed 7.48 of the 10.6 working days lost per staff year in the NICS in that year.

While long-term spells of absence accounted for only 15.7% of all spells of absence in the NICS in 2012/13, they made up more than two thirds (70.7%) of the total working days lost in that financial year. NISRA have calculated that this equates to losing the work of approximately 890 full-time staff for the entire year. This demonstrates that a relatively small number of long-term absences can have a significant impact on the overall level of sickness absence. Figure 1 shows that this impact of long-term absences on the overall number of working days lost has remained relatively stable over time.

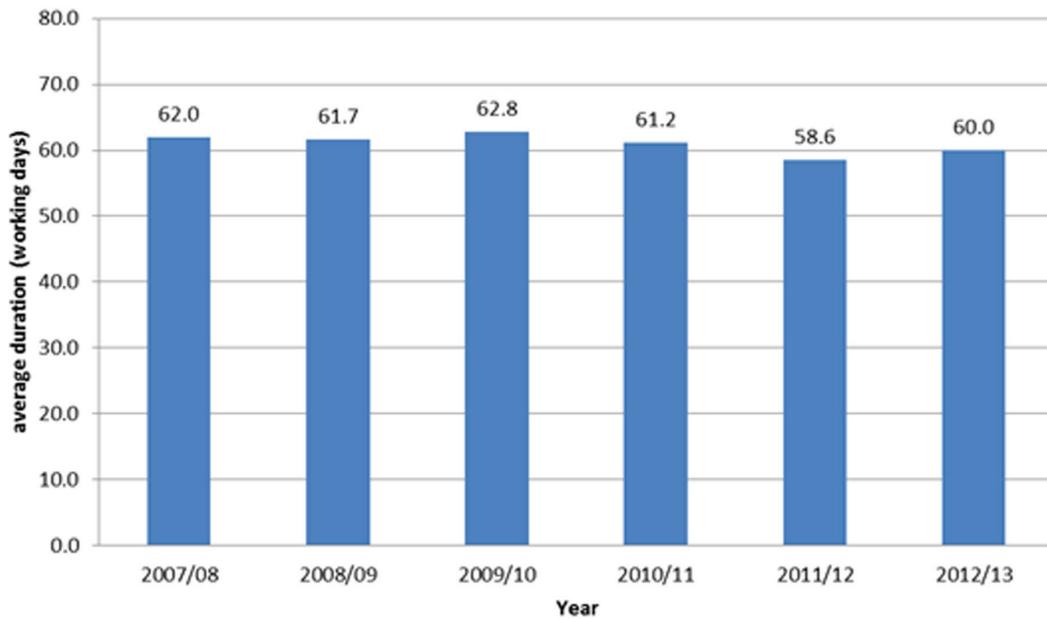
Figure 1: Proportion of working days lost due to long-term absence, 2007/08 – 2012/13



Source: NISRA, Sickness Absence in the NICS, 2012/13

In 2012/13, the average duration of long-term sickness absence was 60.0 days, far short of the NICS target of 53.7 days. This represents an increase of 1.4 days on the 2011/12 figure of 58.6 days. Figure 2 shows that, overall, the average duration of long-term absences decreased from 62.0 days in 2007/08 to 60.0 days in 2012/13, having peaked at 62.8 days in 2009/10.

Figure 2: Average duration of long-term sickness absence, 2007/08 – 2012/13

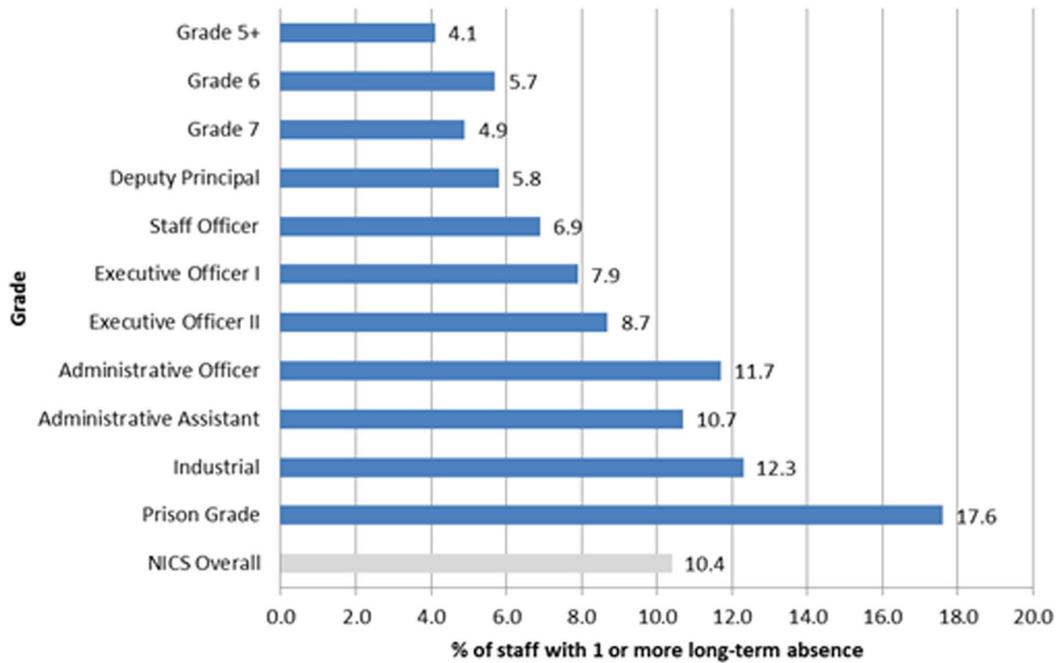


Source: NISRA, Sickness Absence in the NICS, 2012/13

4 Long-term sickness absence by grade in the NICS

This section considers the relationship between long-term sickness absence and grade in the NICS. Generally speaking, while prison grade and industrial staff tend to have the highest proportion of staff with one or more long-term absence in the NICS, the incidence of long-term absence tends to decrease as administrative grade increases in the NICS. In brief, the higher the grade, the fewer long-term sick absences. Figure 3 demonstrates that this was the case in 2012/13. For example, while 10.7% of Administrative Assistants and 11.7% of Administrative Officers had one or more long-term sickness absence in 2012/13, this decreased to 4.1% of staff at Grade 5 and above. The NICS average was 10.4%, demonstrating the impact of the numbers of staff at AA and AO grades on the overall figures.

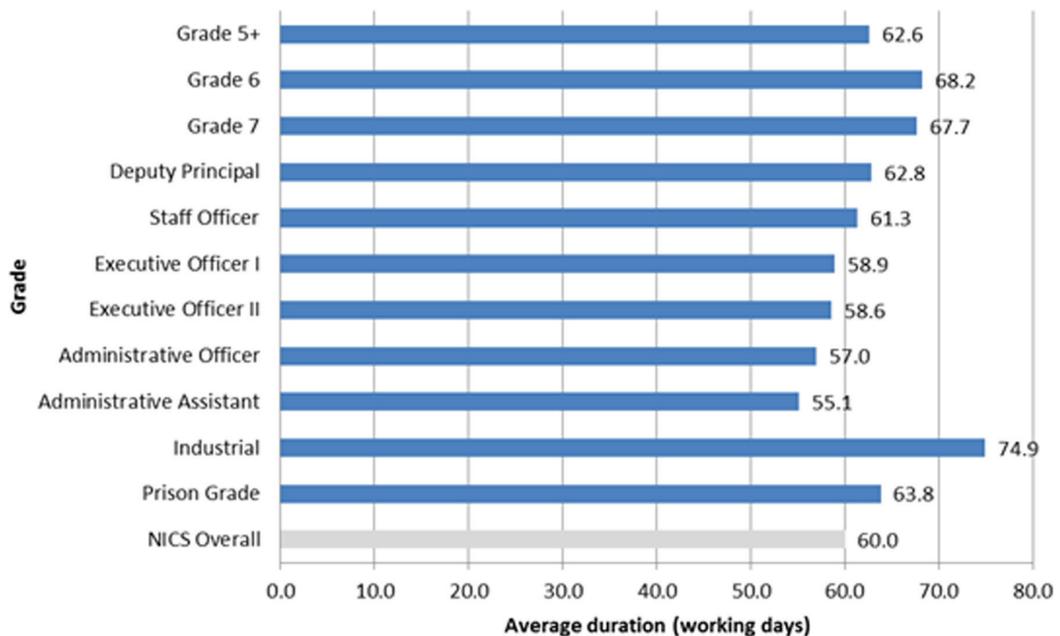
Figure 3: Proportion of staff with one or more long-term absence by grade 2012/13



Source: NISRA, Sickness Absence in the NICS, 2012/13

The proportion of staff with one or more long-term absences decreased as grade increased in 2012/13. However, the average duration of long-term absences tended to increase with grade, with the exception of staff at grades 5+ whose average duration of long-term absences was lower than those of staff at Grades 6, 7 and Deputy Principal level (see Figure 4).

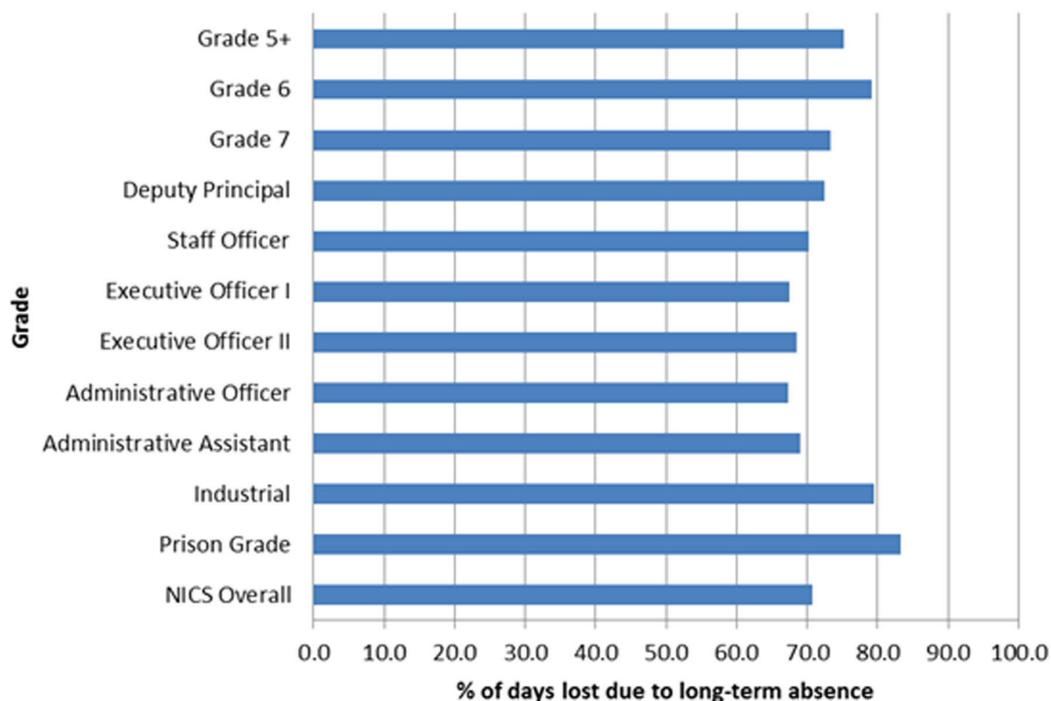
Figure 4: Average duration of long-term sickness absence by grade, 2012/13



Source: NISRA, Sickness Absence in the NICS, 2012/13

The proportion of working days lost due to long-term sickness absence tended to increase with grade in 2012/13 (see Figure 5), although the proportion of working days lost due to long-term sickness absence was lower for staff at Grade 5 than staff at Grade 6.

Figure 5: Proportion of working days lost due to long-term absence by grade, 2012/13



Source: NISRA, Sickness Absence in the NICS, 2012/13

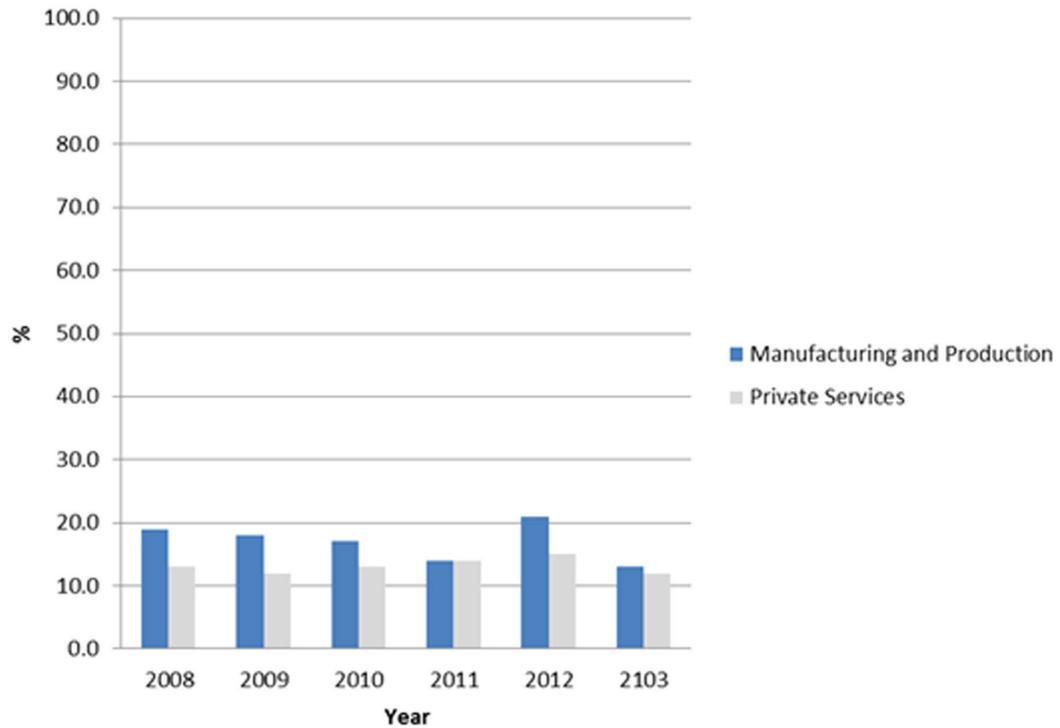
5 Long-term sickness absence in the private sector

There is limited information available on long-term sickness absence in the private sector, and what little data exists is not broken down to the Northern Ireland level. For example, the CBI's *Fit for Purpose: Absence and Workplace Health survey 2013*⁵ of the UK and Ireland estimated that 27% of working time lost due to sickness was classified as long-term⁶. Similarly, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development's (CIPD) annual *Absence Management Survey* estimated the average proportion of sickness absence attributed to long-term absence to be 13% in the manufacturing and production sectors, and 12% in the private services sector in 2013 (see Figure 6). The CIPD estimates were lower than those for 2012, (21% in manufacturing and production and 15% in the private services sector). Generally speaking, it appears that the average proportion of sickness absence attributed to long-term absence has decreased in manufacturing and production.

5 Fit for purpose: Absence and the workplace health survey 2013, CBI, sponsored by Pfizer http://www.cbi.org.uk/media/2150120/cbi-pfizer_absence___workplace_health_2013.pdf

6 Defined as an absence lasting over four weeks.

Figure 6: Average proportion of sickness absence attributed to long-term absence in the private sector 2008 - 2013



Source: CIPD, Absence Management Survey

6 Private health insurance in the private sector

There is limited information on private health insurance provision in the private sector in Northern Ireland. HMRC publishes '*Benefits in Kind Statistics*'⁷ which includes the number of recipients and taxable value of private medical/dental insurance but this is not published at the Northern Ireland level and is not broken down by sector.

A survey conducted by Perceptive Insight on behalf of Kerr Henderson, Ellipse and H3 Insurance, the *Employee Benefits Survey*⁸, estimated that 47% of businesses in the industry sector and 48% of businesses in the services sector offer private medical insurance. The main reasons cited for offering private medical insurance were to maintain/increase morale; to support the ethos/values of the organisation; and as a retention tool. The main reasons given for not offering private medical insurance included that it is too expensive; it is not seen as a key part of managing sickness absence; and employees do not see it as a valuable benefit.

⁷ HMRC, Benefits in kind statistics, June 2013 <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/statistics/tax-benefits/statistics.pdf>

⁸ Perceptive Insight on behalf of Kerr Henderson, Ellipse and H3 Insurance, Employee Benefits Survey, 2012 <http://www.kerrhenderson.com/Documents/Benefits%20Survey%202012.pdf>

7 Measures to address gaps in data

There are significant gaps in sickness absence data for Northern Ireland, i.e. data is not available for all of the public sector in Northern Ireland and there is very little information for the private sector. There are a number of potential measures that could be taken to address these data gaps.

One option would be to conduct new sickness absence research in Northern Ireland, although this would be subject to funding.

A potential alternative measure to address these data gaps would be to use existing surveys. For example, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) currently produces a 'Sickness absence in the Labour Market' report for the UK using the Labour Force Survey and the Annual Population Survey. There are limitations to the data, however: because the data is only collected about sickness or injury in the reference week the sample sizes are relatively small. Further, when looking at national estimates the Labour Force Survey data gives reliable figures but regional estimates are less robust. The Annual Population Survey has a larger sample size that allows for analysis at the regional level, as well as at the national level, but it does not include Northern Ireland. An option would be to ask NIRSA to explore the possibility of publishing sickness absence figures using Labour Force Survey data as part of their labour market reports, or produce a bespoke report on sickness absence similar to the ONS report using data from the Labour Force Survey.

Alternatively, the potential to gather information on sickness absence data on the private sector via the Northern Ireland Annual Business Inquiry (NIABI)⁹, which collects both financial and employment information from businesses and other establishments, could be explored.

An approach could be made to NISRA to investigate the potential for collecting robust sickness absence data for Northern Ireland through existing surveys such as those mentioned above. This could address the current data gaps.

9 The NIABI includes the Production, Construction, Distribution and Service industries in Northern Ireland, but excludes public sector activity for the most part.



information & publishing solutions

Published by Authority of the Northern Ireland Assembly,
Belfast: The Stationery Office

and available from:

Online

www.tsoshop.co.uk

Mail, Telephone, Fax & E-mail

TSO

PO Box 29, Norwich, NR3 1GN

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Textphone 0870 240 3701

TSO@Blackwell and other Accredited Agents

£34.00

Printed in Northern Ireland by The Stationery Office Limited
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ISBN 978-0-339-60570-1



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