

## **Aberdeenshire Council UNISON Branch .**

### **2013 Working Time & Stress Survey Report**

#### Introduction

Branch members have in recent years been reporting an increase in working time and stress levels at work which is affecting their health and well being. Stress at work is a national problem of growing importance and severity and has been linked to a range of physical and mental illnesses which at the most extreme kill people e.g. heart attack and suicide. There are national campaigns such as “Whats Keeping You Awake at Night” which seek to raise awareness of the importance of the need to recognise and resolve stress related illness. Aberdeenshire UNISON branch decided to carry out a stress at work survey over the spring and summer of 2013 to establish a better understanding of what levels of stress its members are suffering from.

The aim of this survey report is to inform management of the well being of staff and limit the impact of stress in the workplace caused by increased working time, workloads, work pressures and to encourage a better work life balance for all UNISON members at Aberdeenshire Council.

#### About the Survey

The survey was sent to all UNISON members employed in Aberdeenshire Council, and was distributed throughout workplaces in Aberdeenshire Council. All surveys were returned to UNISON and results collated by the branch with the help of the Local Organiser and the Grampian Resource Centre.

Surveys were completed anonymously. Personal questions include department, role, gender, age and hours worked per week – but the anonymity of the employee is never jeopardised.

Employees were asked if their workload had increased, decreased or remained the same over the last year. If employees indicated it had increased, they were asked by how much.

Employees were also asked to select which pressures apply to them in the workplace, and were asked which of the following issues applied to them:

1. Worried about job security
2. Conflict with organisation’s targets
3. Don’t know where you’re career is going
4. Deadlines and time pressures
5. Equipment breakdown
6. Conflict with line management
7. Conflict with work colleagues
8. Conflict with clients
9. Conflict with members of the public
10. Can’t cope with the amount of work

Finally, employees were able to give any additional comments.

#### Results of the Survey

Surveys returned by department:

Education, Learning & Leisure = 24.7%,

Housing and Social Work = 40.4%

Infrastructure = 24.7%

Corporate Services = 10.2%

### Increase in workload

In all departments, the majority of employees indicated their workload had increased in the past year

DEPARTMENT	% of staff whose workload has increased
Education, Learning & Leisure	73%
Housing and Social Work	71%
Infrastructure	51%
Corporate Services	53%

From the survey, these key points were found:

### **At least half of those who filled in the survey are stressed by deadlines and time pressures in the workplace**

(Education, Learning & Leisure 50%, Housing & Social Work 62%, Infrastructure Services 65%, Corporate Services 76%)

### **There is significant concern about job security**

(Education, Learning & Leisure 50%, Housing & Social Work 47%, Infrastructure Services 45%, Corporate Services 64%)

### **A third of those in Housing & Social Work feel they cannot cope with the amount of work (34%)**

### **Aberdeenshire Branch Actions.**

2.1) Circulate the report to the Council's Senior Management Team for a meeting to discuss a Council wide strategy for stress monitoring and management for employees.

2.2) Link the Stress Survey to the national UNISON Campaign "What keeps you awake at night" <http://www.unison.org.uk/news/what-keeps-you-awake-at-night>

2.3) Put the Stress Survey report and the national UNISON Campaign "What keeps you awake at night" on the Branch Website for members to note and support.

2.4) Review in May 2014 with a follow up Stress Survey by Stewards if the Council fails to prepare and deliver a Stress Monitoring and Management process which complies with appropriate legislation and best practice.