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APPENDIX 58

Methodology 58
Five thousand UNISON members work for the probation service in England and Wales. They are an important group within UNISON’s wider criminal justice membership, and in 2009 the union commissioned independent researchers from Incomes Data Services to find out more about their views and aspirations. We wanted to find out how probation members were working, how they felt about their jobs and what they wanted UNISON to achieve on their behalf.

Over 1,000 members responded to the survey, carried out in the early part of 2010, which represents just over 30% of those contacted by the researchers. This is the first time that UNISON has done in-depth research with our members in probation and the results will be fed into the union’s national negotiating agenda. It can also be used by UNISON locally to open up discussions with individual probation trusts on the key issues identified in the final report.

UNISON members in probation face many challenges in the coming years, particularly around job security, pay, privatisation and training. Being in UNISON gives members the collective strength to defend the vital work that they do and protect their jobs and terms and conditions. UNISON is one of the largest unions in the criminal justice sector. We are committed to giving probation members a stronger and more distinctive voice within the union. The publication of this important report is a reflection of this commitment. We hope you enjoy reading it.

The aim of our survey was to:

- find out the opinions of a range of UNISON’s probation members
- evaluate members’ attitudes to their pay and conditions
- find out the pros and cons of being a probation worker
- ask members what would improve their working lives and the services they provide
- analyse the results to identify key differences in responses by gender and/or occupation
- provide a checklist of issues for UNISON to take up on members’ behalf.

Objectives
Twenty-two thousand staff work for the probation service in England and Wales. They are indispensable to the delivery of community justice, for the rehabilitation of offenders and the protection of the communities in which they work. But in 2010 the future of probation is uncertain. The new government talks about creating a ‘rehabilitation revolution’ to cut the prison population, but has failed to mention the probation service as the delivery agent for this revolution. Instead, we are haunted by the spectre of private companies being paid by results to deliver what probation currently provides. Alongside this, the government holds out the prospect of major cuts to the Ministry of Justice which, if they fall on probation, will result in major job losses and many probation services no longer being viable. UNISON does not accept that the cuts agenda is inevitable and will fight to protect probation jobs and the services which our members provide. The results of this survey show conclusively that members are fearful for their job security and want UNISON to do all we can to campaign to keep jobs and services intact.

UNISON’s membership in the probation service is strongest among probation services officers (PSOs), case administrators, approved premises workers, unpaid work supervisors, corporate services and other administrative staff. UNISON therefore covers members working across offender management, interventions and corporate services. Our members carry out both operational and support functions; both groups of staff are equally important. We also represent members who once worked for probation, but who have been transferred out to the private sector in one or other of the service’s ill-advised privatisations. But who ensures that all these staff get the recognition and reward that they deserve? Who speaks up for probation staff?

UNISON, with 5,000 probation members, is doing just that. We represent probation staff in every one of the 35 probation trusts in England and Wales. The union has a growing number of dedicated branches for our probation members. And in 2009, UNISON created a totally new executive structure inside the union to bring together all our membership in the criminal justice system in one place. We are committed to making the probation service a better place for members to work. By negotiating on behalf of members at the Probation Service National Negotiating Council, we have steadily improved pay and conditions over the last five years. But despite the advances of the last few years, UNISON was aware that probation staff did not always feel valued, nor were they properly consulted on changes to the service. This survey was conceived on the strength of some of these concerns. It shows UNISON’s determination to raise the profile of our members and to get them the status, training and rewards that they deserve. Our members are not resistant to change, but they expect a better deal in return. We will use the results of this survey to help achieve that better deal.
1. Executive summary

1.1 Profile of respondents

- Overall 69% of respondents were female, 31% were male.
- Women outnumbered men in all occupational groups, except for unpaid work supervisors and approved premises supervisors.
- The age profile of respondents was older, with a majority aged between 35 and 54 years old.
- Just 1% of respondents were aged under 25 and just 2% were aged 65 and over.
- Black and ethnic minority (BME) groups were under-represented in the sample at just 10%.
- The most represented occupational groups were probation services officers (33%), administration staff (24%) and case administrators (21%).
- The smallest sample sizes were from corporate services staff (4%) and ancillary and maintenance staff (2%).

1.2 Pay

- The majority of respondents (50%) were paid at pay band 3.
- Overall men were more commonly found in higher pay bands than women.
- A third of respondents responded favourably about whether or not they felt well paid and just less than half (44%) responded unfavourably.
- Almost three-quarters (74%) of respondents were paid below the development point for their pay band. The development point is a pay point three quarters of the way up each probation pay band, which regulates pay progression.
- Gender had no bearing on where a respondent was paid in relation to the development point, however, those in lower pay bands were more likely to be paid above this point than higher-paid colleagues.
- Pay issues featured high in members concerns and cost-of-living pay rises and protecting pay increments were ranked as the second and third most important priorities for UNISON.

1.3. Pensions

- Overall 90% of respondents were members of the Local Government Pension Scheme
- A breakdown by working hours showed that 91% of full-time staff and 88% of part-time staff were members of the scheme, this fell to 70% for those working a job share.
- Membership levels also varied by pay, age and across the different occupational groups.
- Corporate services and administration staff were the most likely, and ancillary and maintenance staff the least likely, to be members of the scheme.
- Defending pensions ranked fourth in importance as a priority for UNISON to focus on.

1.4. Hours

- Nearly three-quarters of respondents worked full time and around a quarter worked part time.
- More male respondents worked full-time hours than women; 78% compared to 71%.
- Older respondents more commonly worked part time, as did ancillary and maintenance staff and unpaid work supervisors.
- Overall 46% of respondents worked office hours, 39% flexi-time, 1% a job share and less than 1% sessional hours.
- Both gender and occupation exhibited a strong influence on the pattern of work.
- The survey showed unsocial hours to be a common feature in the probation service: 23% of respondents worked unsocial hours, either on a fixed or variable pattern.
- Overall, men were more likely to work unsocial hours: 30% of men worked fixed unsocial hours, compared to 5% of women.
- Unsocial hours working averaged 14 hours in the normal working week. More men worked unsocial hours at weekends and bank holidays, and more women worked unsocial hours during the week i.e. evenings.
1.5. Training and development

- Four-fifths (79%) of respondents had undertaken work-related training in the previous 12 months.
- 77% of those who had undertaken training said it had lasted a week or less.
- Full-time staff were slightly more likely to have undertaken work-related training than part-time staff (81% versus 75%), and full-time staff undertook longer periods of training than part-time staff.
- Overall, 84% had received an annual performance and personal development review. However, in only 39% of cases did the review result in an agreed development plan and firm actions taken on that plan.
- There were significant variations in the progress of reviews by occupation.

1.6. Workload pressure

- Eighty per cent of respondents felt that workload and pressure had increased over the previous year; 18% said it had stayed the same; and 2% said it had decreased.
- Unpaid work supervisors, corporate services staff and probation officers were the most likely to report an increase in workload pressure.
- Staff in Wales, the South West and the North East were the most likely to report an increase in workload and pressure.
- Fifty-four per cent of respondents said that they felt supported by their manager, 46% said they did not.
- A focus on managing workloads was ranked fifth in terms of priority for UNISON action.

1.7. Recommending the probation service

- Fifty-two per cent of respondents said that they would not recommend their career in the probation service to others; 41% said that they would.
- Women were more likely to recommend their job to others, compared to men.
- Unpaid work supervisors and probation officers were the most likely occupational groups to recommend the probation service as a good place to work to others.

1.8. Job security and staffing levels

- The survey highlighted job security as a major concern for members and this was ranked the as the most important priority for UNISON.
- Sixty-eight per cent of staff felt less secure in their job compared to a year ago; 27% felt the same; and 3% felt more secure.
- 69% said staff numbers in their area had decreased over the previous year; 33% said they had stayed the same; and 7% said staff numbers had increased.
- Staff in Wales, the South West, Greater London and Eastern England were more likely to report a decrease in staff numbers over the previous year.

1.9. Morale and stress levels

- Overall, 69% felt that staff morale had worsened over the previous year; 26% said it had stayed the same; and 5% said it had improved.
- Men were more likely to report worsening morale than women; 74% of men compared to 67% of women.
- Interventions supervisors and probation officers were the most likely to report a fall in staff morale, while corporate services staff were the most likely to report improvements.
- The majority of respondents (74%) reported that stress levels had increased over the previous year; 23% said levels had stayed the same; and 2% said levels have decreased.
- Staff in the North East, the South West, Wales and Eastern England were the most likely to report an increase in stress.
2. Profile of respondents

2.1 Occupation
Chart 2.1: Profile of survey respondents by occupational group

- Administration staff: 23%
- Case administrators: 21%
- Probation services officers: 33%
- Corporate services staff: 4%
- Probation officers: 5%
- UPW supervisors: 10%
- Ancillary and maintenance staff: 1%
- AP supervisors: 3%

2.2 Gender
Chart 2.2: Profile of survey respondents by gender

- Male: 30.7%
- Female: 69.3%

2.3 Age
Chart 2.3: Profile of survey respondents by age

- 45-54: 32%
- 35-44: 21%
- 55-64: 31.5%
- 25-34: 12.5%
- 16-24: 0.9%
- 65+: 2.2%

2.4 Pattern of work
Chart 2.6: Profile of survey respondents by pattern of work

- Full time: 72.6%
- Part time: 26.0%
- Job share: 1.0%
- 0.4% Sessional hours
2.5 Ethnic origin

Chart 2.4: Profile of survey respondents by ethnic origin

2.6 Region

Chart 2.5: Profile of survey respondents by location of work
3. Pay

Any employee survey would perhaps not be complete without some questions on pay. The survey gathered information on the distribution of earnings in the probation service. More specifically, respondents were asked to provide details of their pay band, the relationship of their salary to the development point, whether they felt well paid and if they were members of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

3.1 Pay band

Given the sample profile and make-up of UNISON’s membership, the distribution of respondents in each pay band was as expected, with the majority of staff (50%) on pay band 3. This pay band covers probation services officers – the largest occupation represented within the sample and within the national probation service as a whole.

Chart 3.1 What pay band is your job in?

The distribution of earnings by occupational group showed that the largest proportions of ancillary and maintenance staff, case administrators and approved premises supervisors were paid at pay band 2, administration staff, probation services officers (PSOs), and unpaid work supervisors at pay band 3, and probation officers at pay band 4. There were even proportions of corporate services staff paid at pay bands 3 and 4.

* Salaries at 1 April 2010
An analysis of the distribution of earnings by male and female employees within the probation service shows more males with higher earnings. The results showed that men are more commonly found in higher pay bands compared to women, the reverse is true for the lower pay bands. Chart 3.3 shows the breakdown of male and female respondents by pay band. We can see that the largest proportions of both male and female respondents are paid at pay band 3, although the proportion of men paid at this level is much greater than that for women. Some 64% of male respondents were paid in pay band 3, compared with 43% of female respondents. A key factor here will be occupational segregation, whereby men and women are found for different types of roles. This is a factor in the gap in earnings between men and women.
Furthermore, a look at the proportions of men and women in each pay band (which is influenced by the overall sample bias towards female respondents: 68% women versus 31% men) shows that the proportion of men in each band continues to increase by pay band. For example, there were twice as many women in the sample than men, yet men still accounted for around half of all those in pay bands 4 and 5. This means that women are more commonly found in lower pay bands and indicates a possible concern over progression for women.

A look at the age profile of staff in each pay band shows that, perhaps unsurprisingly, there were greater proportions of younger staff in the lower pay bands. Since progression is often linked to service as well as individual performance, those in the higher bands are likely to have longer service and be older.
3.3 Progression within pay bands

Most of those surveyed (74% of those who answered this question) were paid below the ‘development point’ for their pay band. This is not surprising given that progression arrangements are still relatively new and that each pay band contains a number of pay points. The probation service introduced new pay and progression arrangements in 2006. Under this system, progression depends on an employee’s position in their pay band. Those below the development point for the pay band are progressed faster than those between the development point and maximum.

Interestingly, 23% of the whole sample (some 240 respondents) did not provide an answer to the question ‘is your salary point above or below the development point in your pay band?’ This may be because respondents don’t know, indicating a lack of understanding or knowledge of how progression works in the probation service.

A closer look at where respondents were paid in relation to the development point showed some distinct differences by occupation, age and location of work. Ancillary and maintenance staff, unpaid work supervisors and approved premises supervisors were the least likely to be paid above the development point for their pay band. On the other hand, case administrators and probation officers were the most likely to be paid above the development point for their pay band.

Chart 3.5: Is your salary above or below the development point in your pay band?

- Above 26%
- Below 74%
Older employees aged 55 and over were the most likely to be paid above the development point, and those aged 16 to 34 the least likely to be paid above this level. This is not surprising given that the probation service operates incremental progression. There were a few noticeable variations between locations – most likely linked to the types of roles represented in each region. However, some of the samples are quite small here and should be treated with caution.

Chart 3.7: Proportion of respondents in each age band paid above/below the development point in their pay band
Positive signs to emerge from the findings were firstly that gender had no bearing on where an employee was paid in relation to the development point for their pay band and secondly, that part-time workers were marginally more likely to be paid above the development point for their pay band at 29%, compared to 25% of full-time staff.

In order to address the issue of low pay in the probation service and elsewhere in the public sector, there have been moves to shorten the number of pay points within each band, particularly at the bottom of the pay structure. These moves effectively raise pay for the lowest paid. Results of the survey indicate that these changes may have had an impact at local level. Chart 3.8 shows the proportions of staff in each pay band paid above/below the development point for their pay band. It shows that slightly larger proportions of staff on the lowest pay bands reported that they were paid above the development point.

**Chart 3.8: Proportion of respondents in each pay band paid above/below the development point in their pay band**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pay Band</th>
<th>Above</th>
<th>Below</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Band 1 (£14,049 – £16,420)</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 2 (£16,744 – £20,566)</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 3 (£21,179 – £27,102)</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 4 (£27,914 – £35,727)</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 5 (£34,677 – £39,929)</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band 6 (£39,037 – £46,650)</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4 Perceptions about pay

Most respondents disagreed with the statement “I am well paid for the job that I do”, although an employee’s position in the pay band affects their perception about how well they are paid. Overall, 30% responded favourably about whether or not they felt well paid and 44% responded unfavourably. However, from our experience individuals are more likely to respond negatively when asked about their perception of their pay. The full breakdown of responses is shown in chart 3.9.

Chart 3.9: Do you agree with the statement “I am well paid for the job that I do”

There was some variation by occupational group which showed that probation officers were the least satisfied and case administrators the most satisfied. Overall, 59% of probation officers disagreed with the statement “I am well paid for the job that I do”, compared with 29% of corporate services staff. Similarly, job sharers, and the youngest and oldest were more likely to agree, although these categories represent relatively small proportions of the overall survey sample. The full breakdown of responses is shown in chart 3.10.
Chart 3.10: Differences in perceptions about pay by occupation

Staff perceptions about being well paid were better among those paid above the development point for their pay band. As chart 3.11 shows, 8% of those who agreed strongly were paid above the development point. This is twice the proportion of those paid below this level in their pay band. At the other end of the spectrum, almost twice as many who disagreed strongly about being well paid were paid below the development point for their pay band.

Chart 3.11: Differences in perceptions about pay level by position in the pay band
3.5 Pensions

Pensions are seen as a big-ticket employee benefit as they are typically worth a lot of money to staff. In the current climate, where the trend has been to move away from defined benefit (DB) schemes to those with defined contributions (DC), defined benefit schemes such as the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) are seen as particularly valuable. Such schemes provide salary-related defined benefits to members on retirement.

The overwhelming majority (90%) of respondents are members of the LGPS. Despite the high membership level, some patterns emerged when various sub-groups of the sample were examined more closely. Firstly, more full-time staff were members of the scheme than part-time workers. In total, 91% of full-time workers were members, compared with 88% for part-time workers. Notably this falls to 70% for those employed on a job-share basis and to just 20% for sessional workers – although this is based on a small sample and eligibility maybe a factor here.

A focus on occupation shows that corporate services staff and administration staff had the highest levels of membership of the scheme. On the other hand, ancillary and maintenance staff and, to a lesser extent, approved premises supervisors had the lowest proportions of staff reporting to be members of the scheme. Worryingly, these two groups also contain a majority of the lowest paid.
Perhaps unsurprisingly there was a correlation between pay and membership of the LGPS. Chart 3.14 illustrates a worrying pattern, where a greater proportion of respondents in the higher pay bands are members of the scheme, compared with colleagues further down the earnings distribution. The survey also showed that respondents paid above the development point for their pay band were more likely to be members of the pension scheme than those paid below this point in their pay band, 95% compared with 89%. However, as highlighted earlier, those in higher pay bands were overall more likely to be paid above the development point for their pay band than those in lower pay bands.

Chart 3.14: Pension scheme membership by pay band

There was little variation in the level of pension scheme membership by age, with those aged 16 to 23 only slightly less likely to be members than those aged 35 to 54 and 55 and over (87% compared with 90%). Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the high proportion of pension members overall, there were no discernable patterns in pension membership by ethnic background or gender of participants.
4. Working patterns

Although the normal working week for staff in the probation service is 37 hours (35 in London)\(^1\), there is a variety of working patterns with certain roles, particularly operational roles dealing directly with offenders, involved in work outside normal office hours. The majority of respondents work full-time office hours, although there were some notable differences in the hours and patterns of work by occupation.

4.1 Full-time and part-time work

As chart 2.1 shows, the majority of staff (73%) reported working full time, while 26% reported working part time. A small number of respondents worked either a job-share arrangement (1%) or sessional hours (less than 1%). Sessional workers have no guaranteed hours of work and work sessions on a flexible basis.

There was some variation in the overall pattern of full-time and part-time working by region. Greater London stuck out as the region with the largest proportion of full-timers at 87%. At the opposite end of the spectrum Eastern England and the West Midlands had the smallest proportions of full-time staff (66%), and subsequently the largest proportions of part-time workers.

The breakdown of full- and part-time work by age showed a correlation, with the proportion of respondents working part-time increasing with age. The proportion of those aged 16 to 34 working part-time was just 12%, rising to 27% for respondents in the 35 to 54 age bracket and to 30% among those aged 55 and over.

The most striking differences in hours of work were by occupation, which showed some distinct patterns. Chart 4.2 shows that probation services officers and probation officers were the most likely to work full time, and ancillary and maintenance staff and unpaid work supervisors the most likely to work part time. Very few occupations had significant numbers of staff reporting working on a job-share basis or sessional hours.

Surprisingly, gender had less of an impact than might be expected on whether or not staff work full- or part-time hours. Overall, men were marginally more likely to work full-time hours than their female colleagues: 78% of male respondents worked full-time compared to 71% of female respondents. This picture is reversed when looking at part-time hours: 28% of women worked part-time compared to 22% of men. Women were marginally more likely to work a job share than men – although the overall sample of those working a job share was small.

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\(^1\) The NNC Handbook sets down normal weekly working hours in London as 35 and outside London as 37, with the exception of probation officer grades which are 150 in every four weeks.
Chart 4.2: Hours of work by occupation

4.2 Working patterns
A breakdown of respondents by work pattern shows that while 46% work normal office hours (9am to 5pm), 39% work flexi-time. Some 13% have fixed unsocial hours and 2% work sessional hours. In terms of respondent characteristics, both gender and occupation exhibited a strong influence on the pattern of work. The findings follow some predictable patterns; mainly that more males work fixed unsocial hours than females and more females than males work flexi-time.

In terms of occupation, respondents working flexi-time were mainly office-based staff, and those on fixed-unsocial hours work closely with offenders, for example interventions staff. A respondent’s location of work and ethnic origin had little impact on their pattern of work.
Working patterns by gender revealed a polarised picture. Some 48% of female respondents worked office hours and 46% worked flexi-time, while 31% of male respondents worked fixed unsocial hours. These differences are partly explained by the variation in working pattern by occupation.

As chart 4.4 illustrates, there is a clear relationship between occupation and pattern of work. For example, approved premises and unpaid work supervisors predominantly work fixed unsocial hours – here unsocial hours working is likely to be a key component of the job. Similarly the main patterns for administration staff and case administrators are either office hours or flexi-time.
Chart 4.4: Working pattern by occupation

- Administration staff: 67%
- Ancillary and maintenance staff: 53%
- AP supervisors: 46%
- Case administrators: 40%
- Corporate services staff: 30%
- UPW supervisors: 20%
- UPW officers: 10%
- Probation services officers: 0%
- Probation officers: 12%
- Case administrators: 2%
- Corporate services staff: 3%
- Ancillary and maintenance staff: 4%
- Administration staff: 1%
- Office hours (9 to 5): 63%
- Flexi-time: 47%
- Fixed unsocial hours: 36%
- Sessional hours: 2%
4.3 Unsocial hours working

Unsocial hours can either be worked on a fixed or variable pattern. Some 13% of respondents reported working fixed unsocial hours – mainly unpaid work supervisors and approved premises supervisors – whereas the proportion who reported some form of unsocial hours working, either on a fixed or flexible basis, was higher. Overall 23% of all respondents reported working unsocial hours, either fixed or flexibly.

In terms of when staff work unsocial hours, the data showed three patterns: those who work unsocial hours during the week, those who work unsocial hours at weekends and bank holidays, and those that work unsocial hours both during the week and at weekends/bank holidays. Of those reporting working unsocial hours, 22% worked unsocial hours during the week, 50% worked unsocial hours at weekends and bank holidays only, and a further 28% reported working unsocial hours both during the week and at weekends and bank holidays.

Chart 4.5: When are unsocial hours worked?

A further analysis by gender showed that men work more unsocial hours at weekends than women. This takes into account both those working unsocial hours on weekends only and those working them during the week and at weekends (see chart 4.6). This finding is influenced by occupation, however, since we already know that fixed unsocial hours is the main pattern of work for approved premises supervisors, and we also know that men made up 82% of all approved premises supervisors who participated in the survey.
The age of staff also had a bearing on the pattern of unsocial hours, with older staff working more unsocial hours than their younger colleagues, particularly at weekends and bank holidays. In particular, those aged 55 and over work more unsocial hours than any other age group. However, the personal characteristics of those working unsocial hours are likely to be linked closely to the characteristics of certain occupational groups and most likely also reflecting changing patterns of social behaviour in different life stages.

Chart 4.7: When are unsocial hours worked? (by age)
4.4 Levels of unsocial hours

Of those supplying details of how many hours in the normal working week are unsocial, the breakdown was as follows:

- 23% worked less than five unsocial hours a week
- 28% worked between five and 10 unsocial hours a week
- 17% worked between 10 and 15 unsocial hours a week
- 32% worked more than 15 unsocial hours a week.

Overall, respondents reported that on average 14 hours a week were worked during unsocial hours. At the median this figure was slightly less at 10 hours a week. A breakdown of the hours by gender highlights that men work longer unsocial hours on average than women, at 16 hours a week compared to nine for women. At the median the difference was more marked at 15 hours a week for men and six for women.

A key reason for the higher incidence of unsocial hours working among men is occupation, since male respondents tend to dominate those roles where unsocial hours are a common feature. Chart 4.8 illustrates the levels of unsocial hours working by occupation and highlights that approved premises and unpaid work supervisors reported the highest levels. Unsocial hours for administration staff and case administrators were much less. These figures include both those working unsocial hours on a fixed basis and those working unsocial hours on a varied pattern.

Chart 4.8: Number of unsocial hours worked a week by occupation

2 Based on a sample of 232 respondents.
5. Workload and pressure

While pay and development opportunities are the most visible factors influencing employees’ decisions over whether or not they wish to stay with an employer, other aspects of day-to-day working life can often have a more profound effect on such choices. Poor job security, high stress levels and an absence of management support, for example, can soon cancel out any benefits resulting from a competitive pay package or generous promotion prospects. This is why it is important to examine employees’ own perceptions of such issues and the results emerging from the survey paint a rather bleak picture.

In particular, perceptions of a number of the issues respondents were questioned on gave the impression that, for many, the probation service is a somewhat disheartening place to work. For instance, responses characterised it as a place in which stress levels are rising, job security is falling and morale is deteriorating for a majority of staff. Perhaps explaining such views are further replies demonstrating that for many staff, workloads, as well as the pressure they are under, had risen in the previous year while, at the same time, staff numbers in most areas were down. On the other hand, responses relating to this area of the survey were not wholly downbeat with a slight majority of staff at least saying they feel supported by their managers. Similarly, while not all staff would recommend their jobs in the probation service, a significant minority, just over 41%, said that they would.

Perhaps the most prominent finding from this part of the survey, however, is the strong correlation between the key issues affecting working life: workload and pressure, stress levels, management support, morale and job security. For example, most respondents who reported rises in workload and pressure, also told of staffing levels going down, stress levels going up, morale falling and more serious concerns over job security. In fact, 31% of those surveyed who answered all the questions relating to these aspects of work believed that there had been a deterioration across all areas. From the opposite perspective, no respondents reported an improvement in every one of these aspects of working life. In fact, the most positive replies were from those who perceived that the situation was unchanged rather than having improved.

5.1 Changes in perception

An overwhelming 80% of respondents reported that workload and pressure levels had increased over the previous 12 months. This compared to just 2% who reported that levels had fallen and 19% who perceived no change (chart 5.1).

Chart 5.1: Perceptions of workload and pressure changes over the previous 12 months

Although perceptions of an increase in workload and pressure were universally high for almost all groups, there were some patterns emerging when we examined various sub-groups of the sample more closely. For instance, a focus on regional differences showed that the South West and Wales stood out, because larger proportions of staff reported increases in workload and pressure at 89% and 87% respectively.

Similarly, a relatively high proportion of corporate services staff and unpaid work supervisors reported increases in workload and pressure. In contrast, for ancillary and maintenance staff and approved premises supervisors there were lower proportions of staff reporting increases in workload and pressure, although both figures are based on relatively small sample sizes. Chart 5.2 illustrates the full pattern of changes in workload and pressure according to the main occupational groups.
In contrast, there were certain other sub-groups that showed very slight variations. Those in different pay bands, for example, had contrasting perceptions of how workload had changed over the previous 12 months. For example, 90% of those in pay band 5 felt that their workload had increased in the previous 12 months compared to 73% of those in pay band 1 and just 67% of those in pay band 6, although this last figure is based on a very small sample. Similarly, a look at perceptions of pay levels showed that those who felt more positive about how much they were paid were more likely to have reported a decrease in workload over the previous 12 months.

Moreover, there was some relationship between changes in workload and whether or not staff would recommend their job in the probation service to others. For instance, 90% of those that said they would "definitely not" recommend their profession perceived an increase in workloads in comparison to the 73% who would "definitely" advocate their jobs to others.

In contrast, however, there were other characteristics of those surveyed that appeared to have little effect on the replies relating to workload and pressure. For example, whether they are employed full-time, part-time or in another work pattern made little difference to responses to this question. This was also true for the replies from those working office hours, flexi-time, fixed unsocial hours or ‘sessional’ hours.

5.1 Changes in staff numbers

Increases in workload and pressure can be caused by a number of factors but the survey results indicate that changes in staffing levels are a key contributor. In total, around 60% reported that the number of staff in their departments had decreased over the previous year - which must surely have impacted on workloads. This compares with a further 33% who felt that numbers were unchanged, while just 7% experienced an increase in staffing in their area of work.

Chart 5.3: Changes in staff numbers in your work area in the previous 12 months

In contrast, there were certain other sub-groups that showed very slight variations. Those in different pay bands, for example, had contrasting perceptions of how workload had changed over the previous 12 months. For example, 90% of those in pay band 5 felt that their workload had increased in the previous 12 months compared to 73% of those in pay band 1 and just 67% of those in pay band 6, although this last figure is based on a very small sample. Similarly, a look at perceptions of pay levels showed that those who felt more positive about how much they were paid were more likely to have reported a decrease in workload over the previous 12 months.

Moreover, there was some relationship between changes in workload and whether or not staff would recommend their job in the probation service to others. For instance, 90% of those that said they would "definitely not" recommend their profession perceived an increase in workloads in comparison to the 73% who would “definitely” advocate their jobs to others.

In contrast, however, there were other characteristics of those surveyed that appeared to have little effect on the replies relating to workload and pressure. For example, whether they are employed full-time, part-time or in another work pattern made little difference to responses to this question. This was also true for the replies from those working office hours, flexi-time, fixed unsocial hours or ‘sessional’ hours.
At the same time, there were variations according to other factors, notably region, job type and pay levels. Reported decreases, for example, were larger in Wales, the South West, Greater London and Eastern England than in other locations, with around 70% of staff working in these areas highlighting falls. In contrast, only 45% of those in the West Midlands witnessed decreasing staff levels in their working areas while 52% of those in the North East did so.

Differences according to occupation were even more pronounced: at one end of the spectrum, 80% of probation officers reported falls in staffing levels in their work area. At the other, just 47% of administration staff witnessed decreases in employee numbers, while there were two other jobs with even lower proportions (although these were based on small sample sizes).

As chart 5.4 shows, those in pay band 5 were the only group where less than half said that staff levels had fallen, with just 45% reporting this. In contrast, 66% of those in pay band 3, the highest proportion from any of the pay bands, stated that staff levels had fallen over the previous 12 months.

Chart 5.4: Changes in staff numbers over the previous 12 months by pay band

Interestingly, men were more likely to report decreases in staff numbers than their female counterparts. In fact, 63% of male respondents reported a reduction in staff numbers while just 4% said that they had increased. In contrast, a smaller proportion of women (58%) reported a decrease in the number of staff in their work areas while 8% reported an increase.
5.3 Stress in the probation service

With rising workloads and pressure against a backdrop of falling staff levels, it is not surprising that the survey also painted a picture of rising stress levels. Some 74% of those surveyed said they felt that stress levels in their work area had intensified over the previous year. On the contrary, just 2% perceived a reduction, while the remaining 23% thought levels were unchanged.

Chart 5.5: Movements in stress levels over the previous 12 months

When this aspect of the working environment was examined in more detail, there were some noteworthy patterns. For example, while reported rises in stress levels were widespread, the regional picture showed striking similarities with the regional findings relating to workload and pressure. The three regions with the largest rises in workload - the South West, Wales and Eastern England - also exhibited the highest increases in stress levels.

Similarly, unpaid work supervisors and probation officers were more likely to report rising stress levels than other job holders. Likewise, those reporting rises in stress over the previous 12 months were the same people that did not consider they were well paid for the job they do. In contrast, variations in reported changes to stress levels were less significant when examined according to other respondent characteristics.

5.4 Job security

Stress can also be caused by worries over job security and the results from the survey show that a large proportion of staff in the probation service had concerns about this issue. In fact, 68% of those surveyed said they felt less secure in their jobs than they did 12 months earlier while 27% believed that the situation was unchanged, 3% did not know and just 3% felt more secure.

Chart 5.6: Changes in perceptions of job security over the previous 12 months

With such a small proportion of probation service staff in the whole sample feeling more secure than a year ago, an analysis of the replies to this question by other respondent characteristics, unsurprisingly, only showed very slight variations. For example, there was a greater proportion of respondents in the South West and Yorkshire and Humberside who felt more secure than a year ago, although this still only represented 6% of staff in both these locations.

Similarly, a slightly higher proportion of those receiving earnings in pay bands 4 and 5 said they felt more secure than a year ago in comparison to the whole sample, although this still only represented 5% of staff in both these groups. There were other slight differences when variables such as age and type of job were analysed but again, the overwhelming proportion of employees in every occupational group reported feeling less secure.

5.5 Morale in the probation service

Given this situation, it is not unexpected that across the whole sample, a significant majority of staff felt that morale is on a downward trend. In total, 69% of those surveyed said that morale was lower than a year ago while only 5% believed it had improved. In contrast, the remaining 26% of respondents felt that morale levels were unchanged.
morale, administration staff were the most likely to say the situation was unchanged. The pattern of how the most negative perceptions of changes in morale differ according to occupation, alongside similar differences in stress, workload, staff numbers and job security are shown in chart 5.8. The chart shows, for all five aspects of working life examined, that the picture is discouraging for all occupations with the exception of ancillary and maintenance staff, although for this group the sample size was particularly small.

As with the other variables, the overriding negative perceptions meant that an analysis of morale according to some of the other factors examined in the survey illustrated few differences. Nevertheless, there were some variations notably according to region, type of job and gender. By gender, for example, men were more pessimistic than women about how morale had changed over the previous 12 months, with 74% perceiving a drop in morale compared to 67% of women. Similarly, while 28% of women thought morale was unchanged over the period, only 22% of men did so. In both groups only around 5% believed it had improved.

By region, the same three regions, Wales, the South West and the North East, stood out as being the locations where staff responses were slightly more negative than those in other areas. For example, while overall, 70% of staff thought morale had worsened, the corresponding proportions in these three regions were 78%, 80% and 77% respectively. In contrast, views of staff in the West Midlands and Yorkshire and Humberside were slightly more positive than the whole sample with 9% and 7% of staff in these regions reporting improvements in morale over the previous year. Nevertheless, even in these locations a majority of staff said that morale had deteriorated.

As with region, there were also slight variations in the responses received from staff in different occupations. For instance, both types of supervisor role in interventions work and probation officers were more likely to report falls in morale than other occupations while a higher proportion of corporate services staff believed there had been improvements. Moreover, while not perceiving improvements in
Chart 5.8: Extent of deterioration in morale, staff numbers, job security and increase in workload and pressure and stress levels over the previous 12 months by occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Morale decreased</th>
<th>Stress increased</th>
<th>Staff numbers down</th>
<th>Workload and pressure increased</th>
<th>Job security worsened</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration Staff</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP Supervisors</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation Services Officers</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation Officers</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Services Staff</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Administrators</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation Supervisors</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPW Supervisors</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.6 Management support

Given the challenging environment, a lack of management support could add to employees’ concerns and stresses, perhaps explaining why responses to some of the issues were so negative. The good news for the probation service is that the majority of respondents said that they felt supported by their manager in relation to workload pressures. Overall, 54% of respondents said that they felt supported by their immediate line manager and 46% felt the opposite, that they did not feel adequately supported. Although the majority responded favourably, nearly half of those surveyed responded negatively, indicating a cause for concern.

Chart 5.9: Do you feel supported by your immediate line manager in relation to workload pressure?

By occupation, respondents in the two occupational groups least pessimistic in terms of morale, corporate services (68%) and administration staff (66%), were also the most likely to feel supported by their managers. At the opposite end of the spectrum, only 34% of unpaid work supervisors had similar opinions – the lowest proportion of any occupational group.

In terms of the impact of pay on whether or not staff felt supported by their manager, there were only slight variations. While just 50% of those paid below the development point for their pay band said that they felt supported by their managers, the figure rose to nearly 60% for those paid above this level. However, when replies were analysed according to whether those surveyed believed they were well paid or not, a clear pattern emerged, with those that were most satisfied with their pay, also the most likely to feel supported by their managers. For example, of those that agreed strongly with the statement on pay reporting that they felt adequately supported by their manager.

The same pattern emerged when we looked at the link between those who would recommend their own occupation in the probation service, and those who felt supported by their manager.

The survey also highlighted a link between feeling adequately supported by your manager and other changes in workload and pressure. For example, employees were more likely to say they felt supported by their managers if workload had fallen, staff numbers risen, stress levels were down, morale had improved and/or they considered their jobs to be safer than a year ago.

There also appears to be a correlation between progress on reviews and opinions on whether respondents felt supported by their immediate line manager. Interestingly, though perhaps not surprisingly, those who had been through all three stages of the review process were much more likely to feel supported by their line manager than those who had not. Chart 5.10 shows how individuals who had received a review, been assigned a development plan and had that plan actioned, felt more supported by their managers than those who had not. This illustrates that the simple act of engaging in a review plays a part in signalling to staff that they are supported.

Chart 5.10: Feelings about management support of those staff that had gone through all three stages of the review process
5.7 Recommending the probation service

Perhaps the litmus test of whether someone is really happy in their work, however, is their answer to the question: “Would you recommend your own occupation as a career to others?” For the probation service the replies from the survey provided mixed messages. For instance, 10% said that they “definitely would” recommend their jobs while a further 31% said they “probably would”. In contrast, just over a half of respondents expressed the opposite view, with 18% of these saying that they would “definitely not” recommend their occupations as shown in chart 5.11.

Examining the replies by some of the other characteristics of respondents did illustrate a number of patterns. For example, women were slightly more likely to recommend their occupations than men, as were those in Yorkshire and Humberside and the North East. In contrast, Greater London was the region with the largest proportion of staff, at over 60%, who said they would not recommend their occupations, while the number one spot was filled by probation officers when the data was analysed by job type. In fact, nearly 70% of probation officers would not recommend their jobs, slightly ahead of unpaid work supervisors where the proportion was 67%.

A look at the influence of pay shows that those in the higher pay bands were more likely to recommend their jobs than those in lower ones. Similarly, those above the development point were more likely to endorse their occupations then those below it. Nevertheless, it was the degree to which those surveyed believed that they were well paid that had the biggest impact. Of those that agreed with the statement “I am well paid for the job that I do”, the majority said that they would recommend their jobs, while the contrary was true for those who disagreed with this statement.

As with perceptions about being well paid, factors such as morale, staffing levels, stress, workload and job security also had an influence on whether those surveyed would recommend their jobs. In all cases, there was a clear positive correlation between encouraging changes in the previous 12 months and the likelihood of recommending their job in the probation service to others.

Chart 5.11: Would you recommend your occupation to others?

Not sure/don’t know 7%
Definitely not 17%
Probably not 35%
Yes, probably 31%
Yes, definitely 10%
6. Training and development

The national probation service describes itself as a “major component” in the complex process of reducing crime. It also says it aims to compete successfully against voluntary and private-sector providers. Given this, it is reasonable to expect that the service places a strong emphasis on the training and development of its staff and, on one level, this appears to be true.

For example, the majority of those responding to the survey had participated in work-related training or study in the previous 12-month period and had received an annual performance and personal development review. However in many cases training typically only lasted for a few days and less than half of all development reviews were subsequently followed up with a development plan and actions on the plan.

6.1 Work-related training

The training section of the survey asked respondents to outline whether they had undergone any work-related training or study in the previous 12-month period and how long this training had lasted. Overall, 79% of respondents had participated in some form of work-related training. Differences in the proportion undertaking training by gender, ethnicity, age or region of work were negligible, with results tending to align with those for the whole sample. There was, however, a slight difference in the proportion of full- and part-time staff having undertaken work-related training in the previous year. Overall, 81% of full-time staff had participated in some form of work-related training or study, compared to 75% of part-time staff.

There were also some noticeable variations by occupation, with certain groups of staff more commonly undertaking work-related training than others. Staff in operational roles, such as approved premises supervisors, unpaid work supervisors and probation officers undertook more training than their colleagues in support roles. For example, the proportion of ancillary and maintenance staff who reported receiving training was just 33% - significantly less than for the other occupational groups, where around 75% said they received training, although this finding was based on a small sample size. The differences between occupations were starker when it came to the amount of training received, as shown in chart 6.4.
However, further analysis appears to explain why some of those surveyed undertook longer periods of training than others. In particular, factors such as age, occupation, region, working pattern and, to a lesser extent, pay, help explain many of the variations in the number of days’ training or study undertaken by respondents.

A look at the amount of training received by age showed a broad pattern, with younger members of staff more likely to have undertaken longer periods of training than their older colleagues. This picture is illustrated in chart 6.3, which shows larger proportions of those aged 16 to 34 undertaking longer periods of training.

Chart 6.3: Number of days’ work-related training undertaken by age

Chart 6.4 shows the proportion of staff from each occupational group that had undertaken training that totalled either up to a week, between one and four weeks, or over a month. To a certain extent the chart shows what might be expected, with the more operational roles, such as probation services officers, engaging in the longest periods of training. At the other end of the spectrum, no ancillary and maintenance staff engaged in training lasting longer than a week, although this finding was based on a small sample size.

Looking only at those who had undertaken training lasting a month or more, four groups stood out and perhaps not surprisingly all of them had responsibility for dealing directly with offenders. Most prominent were probation officers, where 12% of staff had undertaken training lasting a month or more, followed by probation services officers, where the equivalent proportion was 6%. The other two roles were approved premises supervisors and unpaid work supervisors, where 4% of staff in both groups engaged in training which lasted a month or more.

Region was the other main factor that showed variation when it came to the number of days’ training received by those in the probation service, as shown in chart 6.5. The chart shows quite stark differences, with those in Wales far less likely to engage in longer periods of training than their colleagues in the North East. The regional disparities could reflect different approaches to staff development at local level, although variations in the occupational profile of staff employed in different locations could also play a role.

6.2 Access to training

The findings also indicated some cause for concern over access to training where those working part-time or unsocial hours typically received less training than their full-time, 9 to 5 colleagues. The proportions of full- and part-time staff undertaking work-related training showed only a slight variation; 81% versus 75%. However an analysis of the number of days of training by working pattern showed that part-time staff
received less training, measured in terms of days, than their full-time colleagues. For example, overall 11% of part-time staff participated in training lasting between one and four weeks, around half the proportion of full-time (20%) staff who received training lasting between one and four weeks. This is partly linked to the types of roles part-time workers are found in. Ancillary and maintenance staff, unpaid work supervisors and approved premises supervisors had the largest proportions of part-time workers.

Chart 6.4: Number of days’ work-related training undertaken by occupation

Chart 6.5: Number of days’ work-related training by region
Another interesting finding relates to working patterns, with those working fixed, unsocial hours slightly less likely to have undergone long periods of training than those who work normal office hours or flexi-time. Around 80% of staff working office hours, flexi-time and fixed unsocial hours had undertaken work-related training, however nearly 82% of those working fixed unsocial hours engaged in training that lasted less than a week in total compared to 76% of those working normal office hours and 75% of those on flexitime.
6.3 Development reviews

Training is obviously important to help staff develop and enhance their performance, but to ensure that this type of investment continues to pay dividends in the future, organisations need to review progress regularly and guarantee that what has been agreed actually occurs. This is why those surveyed were asked whether they had received an annual performance and personal development review (PPDR) with their manager, whether this review had led to an annual development plan and whether this plan was followed up and acted upon at a later date.

At first glance the replies show a relatively positive outcome, with a clear majority, 84%, reporting that their development and performance had been reviewed. Of those who had received a review, 75% said that this had led to a development plan. Some 66% of respondents said that action had been taken on their development plan. However, the proportion of individuals who had been through all stages of the development process – a PPDR followed by an annual development plan that was subsequently acted on – was just 39% of the overall sample. This highlights possible concerns as to how well development processes are being followed at local level.

Chart 6.8: Proportion of reviews completed, development plans devised, action taken on plans and completions of the review process

Chart 6.9 shows the proportion of staff receiving reviews, the percentage of reviews that led to a development plan and the proportion of plans that were followed up, analysed by occupation, illustrating differences that are quite marked. For example, even after excluding ancillary and maintenance staff and approved premises supervisors, which were based on small sample sizes, the proportions that had annual PPDRs ranged from 77% for unpaid work supervisors to almost all (98%) corporate services staff.
An examination of what occurred after the initial PPDR meeting illustrates that while probation officers were only the fifth most likely group to have a PPDR, where one was in place, they were the most likely to receive a subsequent annual development plan. Nevertheless, it appears that many such plans for probation officers are neglected later on as this group was only the fourth most likely to have their plans followed up with action at a later date. In contrast, performance reviews, annual development plans and the probability of a subsequent follow-up were all quite common for probation services officers and administration staff. On the other hand, corporate services staff and unpaid work supervisors ranked near the bottom when it came to development plans and, especially, any further action resulting from them, as chart 6.9 also shows.

There was also a regional pattern with those in Greater London and the West Midlands, in particular, much less likely to have an annual PPDR than other regions as chart 6.10 shows. In contrast, proportions in the North East and Yorkshire and Humberside stood at 90%, or above, while numbers in the South East and East Midlands also ranked highly. Where a performance review did take place however, Northern England and Wales were the places where they were most likely to lead to an annual development plan, while Eastern England was the least likely. Eastern England also had a relatively poor record of following up such plans with subsequent action as did the South West. In contrast, Yorkshire and Humberside was the best region for revisiting plans, as the chart also illustrates.

A respondent’s pay band was another factor in whether probation employees received an annual performance review, with those on higher pay bands more likely to receive a regular review. In fact, around 82% of staff on pay band 1 took part in the review process, with proportions rising with each higher band. Overall, nearly 86% of those on pay band 4 had a review while the equivalent proportion on pay band 5 was 92%.

In addition, those paid above their pay band development point were slightly more likely to take part in an annual performance review than colleagues paid below this level. The pattern was the same when the proportions that had reviews which led to an annual development plan were examined, although this was not the case with the number of these that were followed up at a later date, with pay level making no difference at all. In contrast, working patterns made little difference to whether staff had a performance review, although they did appear to impact on the likelihood of an annual development plan emerging and whether that was subsequently followed up. For example, 84% of both full- and part-time staff had received a performance review but whereas over 77% of those of full-time staff reviews led to an annual development plan, only 69% of part-time staff reviews did so. Conversely, however, a greater proportion of the part-time staff plans, 76%, were followed up with some sort of action compared to a figure of 63% for full-time staff.
Chart 6.10: Proportion of performance reviews conducted, annual development plans and action on development plan by region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Yes – PPDR</th>
<th>Yes – annual development plan</th>
<th>Yes – action on development plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern England</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater London</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cymru/Wales</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire &amp; Humberside</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.4 Progress on completing the review process

A closer look at which groups of staff had gone through all three stages of the development process showed little variation by gender or working hours, although part-time staff were marginally more likely to have had a review that was subsequently acted on than full-time staff. However there were distinct variations by occupation, pay band and region.

Chart 6.11 shows the percentage of staff who had been through all three stages of the review process by occupational group. Typically, around a third received all three stages of a review – the initial review, a development plan and actions on the development plan – but the figures varied from just under a quarter (24%) of all unpaid work supervisors to nearly half (44%) of all probation services officers.
Worryingly, pay proved to be an important factor in whether or not staff managed to receive all three stages of the review, with those in higher pay bands much more likely than lower-paid staff. For example, 35% of those in pay band 3 had received a review, been set a development plan and had that plan acted on, compared to 53% of those in pay band 5.

A regional analysis showed that those based in Yorkshire and Humberside, Wales and the North East were the most likely to have been through all three stages of the development process. On the other hand those based in Eastern England and Greater London were the least likely (see chart 6.13).
Chart 6.13: Proportions of staff in each region who had been through all three stages of the review process

- **Eastern England**: 26%
- **East Midlands**: 33%
- **Greater London**: 26%
- **North East**: 47%
- **North West**: 37%
- **South East**: 45%
- **South West**: 31%
- **Cymru/Wales**: 49%
- **West Midlands**: 33%
- **Yorkshire & Humberside**: 50%
UNISON members in the probation service were asked to tell us directly what issues the union should make into organising and bargaining priorities. The survey showed an overwhelming consensus – that job security is by far the most important issue. Respondents were asked to rank 10 separate priorities in order of importance as issues for UNISON to focus on and the results in order are as follows:

1. Job security
2. Cost of living pay rises
3. Protecting pay increments
4. Defending pensions
5. Managing workloads
6. Fighting privatisation
7. Better staff training
8. Health and safety
9. Career development
10. Promoting equality

In order to examine more closely the ranking of these priorities by the various respondent characteristics the rankings have been simplified. Respondents were asked to rank each priority with a score from 1 – the most important – to 10 – the least important. These scores have been used to create levels to enable comparisons to be made between different types of staff working in the probation service, such as male and female employees, different occupations and full-time or part-time staff. These levels range from a top-level priority corresponding to the original scores of 1 or 2, ‘high-level’ representing scores of 3 or 4, down to ‘base-level’ representing scores of 9 or 10.

Using the level rankings, chart 7.1 shows that job security is still by far the most important issue on members’ minds. In addition, it shows that ensuring pay rises are related to the cost of living, and protecting pay increments, are the next two most important issues for UNISON to focus on.
Chart 7.1: Respondents’ rankings of key UNISON priorities for action
A broader view shows that the priorities for action can be separated into four main tiers as follows:

- **job security** – with over 80% of those surveyed assigning this issue a top-level rating in terms of importance it is clearly the main concern on members’ minds

- **cost-of-living pay rises and protecting pay increments** – these represent members’ secondary concerns, with between 30% and 40% deeming these issues top-level priorities

- **defending pensions, managing workloads and fighting privatisation** – some way behind the top two tiers but still with around 20% of those surveyed believing these issues to be top-level ones

- **better staff training, career development, health and safety and promoting equality** – the final tier of concerns, with only around 10% of survey respondents judging these issues as top-level in terms of UNISON’s priorities.

### 7.1 Patterns in priorities for action

Overall, 74% of respondents ranked job security as their number 1 priority, with very little variation by age, gender, occupation or other characteristics of respondents. In fact, an analysis of this priority showed little variation across any of the respondent attributes. However, a look at how respondents ranked the other priorities did show some variations when examined by factors such as age, occupation and pay level.

In some cases, this was rather predictable. For example, those who are members of the local government pension scheme were more likely to be in favour of prioritising defending pensions than non-members. Similarly, both those who felt under greater workload and pressure and those who reported not feeling supported by their manager, were more likely to highlight managing workloads as a priority. Meanwhile cost-of-living pay rises and protecting pay increments were considered of greater importance by those responding negatively to the statement “I feel well paid for the job that I do”. Despite this, there were also some less predictable patterns.

### 7.2 Regional and occupational differences

Most notable among these were occupation and region but, while differences existed, there was no overall pattern emerging as illustrated in charts 7.2 and 7.3. The charts present data for the three most important priorities – job security, pay rises linked to the cost of living and protecting pay increments – and present the proportion of staff from each region or occupation who rated these issues as top-level priorities, ranking them as the first or second priority.

As the charts show, regardless of region or job area, job security was considered universally important although there was still some variation. For example, by job area, proportions deeming this a top-level issue ranged from 68% of approved premises supervisors to 87% of administrative staff and case administrators. By region there were also slight differences, with equivalent figures ranging from 72% in Greater London up to 91% in the South West.

The next most important priorities for the whole sample, both pay-related – linking pay rises to the cost of living and protecting pay increments – tended to provoke slightly more variation as charts 7.2 and 7.3 also show. For example, while around 40% of the sample as a whole thought cost-of-living pay rises were top-level priorities, only 28% of those in the South West did so. At the other end of the spectrum, those in Greater London, the North East and the West Midlands placed slightly more importance on the issue.

Chart 7.2 also shows that staff in the South West were more concerned about job security, with 91% of those reporting this issue to be a top-level priority. In contrast, 72% of those in Greater London ranked job security as a top-level priority, though staff here reported more concerns in other areas.
Chart 7.2: Proportion of respondents ranking job security, cost-of-living pay rises and protecting pay increments as ‘top-level’ priorities by region.
Opinions on the importance of cost-of-living pay rises as a priority for UNISON also varied when analysed according to occupation. Two groups were most notable; the first, ancillary and maintenance staff, because they placed greater importance on this priority than the other occupational groups, and the second, corporate services staff, for the opposite reason, placing less importance. Perhaps this can be explained by the fact that most ancillary and maintenance staff are positioned in the lower pay bands while a high proportion of corporate services staff are found in the higher ones.

Protecting pay increments also prompted some divergence in opinions when analysed by occupation. Unlike cost-of-living pay rises, however, this priority exhibited few differences when analysed by region, with the only notable finding to emerge being that those in Eastern England, Greater London and the South East tended to place slightly less importance on the issue than the other regions. In contrast, when analysed by occupation, there were clearer differences with corporate services staff, in particular, more likely than other groups to prioritise the issue.

In terms of the importance of defending pensions, fighting privatisation and managing workloads as priorities for action, in most cases there was a consensus among the different regions and occupation on these priorities but, in a few, there were some noteworthy exceptions. For example, while the most prominent opinion from nearly all job groups was that fighting privatisation was a mid-level priority, ranked as fifth or sixth, over 50% of approved premises supervisors ranked it as first or second. Similarly, those in the South West were most likely to prioritise the issue, whereas respondents employed in Eastern England, Greater London and the South East were least likely.

Probation service employees in the South West and Greater London, together with those in the North East, also differed from the rest of the sample in respect of their opinions concerning defending pensions. For example, those in the South West were the most likely to believe the issue to be important while those in Greater London and the North East were least likely.
Chart 7.3: Proportion believing job security, cost-of-living pay rises and protecting pay increments are ‘top-level’ priorities by occupation
Analysed by occupation, most notable were the responses from those in corporate services with around three-quarters of the group judging pensions to be a top- or high-level priority compared to just 55% of the whole sample. In terms of managing workloads, probation services officers and probation officers stood out because they were more likely than other groups to emphasise this as an issue of concern. Similarly, by region, those in Greater London, the North East and South East were most likely to highlight the workloads issue as essential while those in Wales were least likely although, again, differences were not great.

The issues of promoting equality, career development, health and safety and staff training were ranked as less important than those discussed above, with only around 10% of the whole sample ranking them as their first or second priorities. Despite this relative indifference there were a few groups expressing views contrary to the majority. For instance, 44% of approved premises supervisors believed that staff training was a top-level priority, while those in the South West placed greater importance on the issue than other regions. Similarly, ancillary and maintenance staff, unpaid work supervisors and approved premises supervisors were all three times as likely as others to think that health and safety was a top-level priority. In all three cases, this can be explained by the nature of these jobs.

### 7.3 Priorities by gender

With women making up nearly 70% of the survey sample, we might expect that the promotion of equality would be higher up the wish-list of respondents, but this was not the case. Perhaps more surprisingly, even when the data was split by gender, there was little difference in male and female responses to this issue. There were also very few gender differences on other UNISON priorities. In fact, there were only three issues where views diverged according to gender – cost-of-living rises, pay increments and fighting privatisation. Even on these issues, differences were only slight, with around 40% of women compared to 35% of men, for example, believing that linking pay increases to the cost-of-living was a top-level priority. Similarly, women placed slightly more importance on protecting pay increments than their male counterparts, while the situation was reversed for the issue of fighting privatisation.

### 7.4 Ethnicity, working hours and age

The importance of the priorities for action were also examined by ethnicity and working hours but few differences emerged, with views from the various ethnic groups and those working different hourly patterns not differing a great deal from those expressed by the whole sample. In contrast, responses from full-timers differed slightly from those of part-timers, with the latter group placing stronger emphasis on protecting equality, cost-of-living pay rises and, most clearly, health and safety.

A look at the rankings of priorities by age showed that some issues were more important to some age groups than others, while other issues showed little difference regardless of age. Chart 7.4 illustrates the differences in rankings for four issues which would be expected to vary by age. Perhaps most predictably, older workers were much more likely than younger staff to rank defending pensions as a top-level priority, at 29% of those aged 55 and over compared to 13% of 16- to 34-year olds and 19% of 35- to 54-year olds. On the other hand, younger staff were more likely to place greater importance on linking pay rises to the cost-of-living and protecting pay increments than their older colleagues. For example, 44% of those aged 16 to 34 ranked cost-of-living pay rises as the first or second priority, compared to 34% of those aged 55 and over.

In contrast, views on the importance of career development as an issue for UNISON to focus on showed virtually no difference between the various age groups. Overall just 9% of respondents aged 16 to 34 ranked career development as a top-level priority, compared to 8% of the other age groups. Respondents’ views on the importance of managing workloads and protecting equality were also similar regardless of age.
Chart 7.4: Proportion of respondents ranking defending pensions, cost-of-living pay rises, protecting pay increments and career development as ‘top-level’ priorities by age

Priorities such as fighting privatisation, promoting equality, better staff training and health and safety also exhibited patterns according to age. Here older staff felt more strongly, as shown in chart 7.5. Views on, for instance, staff training by age showed a typical pattern with a greater proportion of older people believing this to be an important priority compared to younger staff. The differences in views by age were the most marked on the issue of fighting privatisation and least marked on the issue of promoting equality.
Chart 7.5: Proportion of respondents ranking staff training, health and safety, promoting equality and fighting privatisation as ‘top-level’ priorities by age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Better staff training</th>
<th>Health and safety</th>
<th>Promoting equality</th>
<th>Fighting privatisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16-34</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-54</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 and over</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.5 Attitudes by pay band

Pay is another factor that can have a significant effect on the views of staff, although some of this will be linked to age and length of service. Those on higher levels of pay tend to be in more senior roles and, as a result, perhaps place less emphasis on priorities such as career development and staff training. On the other hand, those senior staff who have already benefited from training schemes and fulfilling careers may exhibit more positive attitudes to such issues because they believe that others should be provided with similar opportunities. The survey results, however, revealed that, when it came to career development, there was a polarisation of replies with those in pay band 1 and in pay band 5 placing the greatest importance on this priority. These pay bands contain both those starting out at the bottom of the career structure and those at the top, who are more likely to manage others.

In contrast, there was a clear relationship between pay band and the significance placed on staff training, protecting pay increments and cost-of-living pay rises with those in the lower pay bands more likely to be in favour of prioritising these issues than those in higher pay bands (see Chart 7.6, below).
Chart 7.6: Proportion of respondents ranking cost-of-living pay rises, protecting pay increments and staff training by pay band

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pay band</th>
<th>Cost-of-living pay rises</th>
<th>Protecting pay increments</th>
<th>Better staff training</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pay band 1</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay band 2</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay band 3</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay band 4</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay band 5</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Occupational focus

Some of the findings relating to specific occupations were striking, highlighting the differences in typical working conditions and perceptions of working in the probation service.

8.1 Case administrators

Case administrators key data:
- 209 staff surveyed (21% of the overall sample)
- 93% female, 7% male
- 82% paid at pay band 2
- second most likely occupational group to be paid above the development point.

Case administrators make up an important occupational group in the probation service, not only due to the support they provide in the smooth running of an offender plan, but also because they represent a relatively large proportion of staff. Overall, 21% of the survey respondents were case administrators and the overwhelming majority (93%) were female. This was the highest concentration of female respondents across all the occupational groups. Other occupational groups where women were overrepresented were administration staff (87%) and ancillary and maintenance staff (80%).

An analysis of working patterns shows a relationship between the high proportion of female case administrators and flexitime working. Case administrators (like other administration staff in the probation service) typically work either normal office hours (9am to 5pm) or flexitime. Some 51% of case administrators work office hours and 46% work flexitime. A breakdown by gender shows 40% of male case administrators (small sample) work flexitime compared to 48% of female case administrators.

Case administrators had the highest concentration of earnings within a single pay band, with 82% paid at pay band 2. However, they were also the most likely (along with probation officers) to report being paid above the development point for their pay band, at 34% compared to 26% for the whole sample. Case administrators had the highest proportion of local government pension scheme membership, at 97%.

In terms of how case administrators felt about workload and pressure, stress, job security and morale, their views were in line with the overall sample, with the majority feeling negatively about these aspects of their working life. The top three priorities for action were job security, cost-of-living pay rises, and protecting pay increments – the same as for the sample overall.

8.2 Interventions staff

Interventions staff key data:
- 222 staff surveyed (22% of the overall sample)
- of these, 67% were in unpaid work and 33% in approved premises
- this was the only area of work where men made up the majority
- generally an older workforce profile
- more likely to work unsocial hours
- probation services officers (PSOs) working in interventions were more likely to be paid above the development point for their band than interventions supervisors.

Interventions rely on trained, qualified staff to work with offenders. The survey has collected data for two key interventions roles of supervisor and PSO. The survey focused on two main types of interventions: unpaid work, where a court has ordered that an offender must participate in a community sentence, and approved premises (controlled accommodation for offenders). The nature of unpaid work can vary but the key activities are environmental work, painting and decorating, and cleaning/maintenance duties.

Respondents working within interventions were overwhelmingly male; making up 86% of unpaid work supervisors, 70% of unpaid work PSOs, 82% of approved premises supervisors and 57% of approved premises PSOs. Interestingly, this was the only area of work in the service where males outnumbered females.

Typically, interventions staff are older than staff in other occupational groups. The majority of unpaid work supervisors who took part in the survey were aged between 55 and 64 years old (49%) and the majority of approved premises supervisors were aged between 45 and 54 years old (52%). Although many occupational groups had relatively large numbers of staff aged 45 and over, interventions staff stuck out as having a distinct majority within the older age brackets. Approved premises supervisors had the second largest proportion of black, minority and ethnic (BME) respondents, at 15%, behind ancillary and maintenance staff where 20% of respondents described themselves as BME.

There has been a gradual increase in the number of activities being delivered both during the week and at weekends. This inevitably affects interventions staff working in the probation service. The survey showed...
that interventions staff generally work more unsocial hours than probation officers – mainly staff involved in unpaid offender work or at approved premises.

A more detailed look at those working in interventions shows that PSOs are more likely than supervisors to be paid above the development point for their pay band, although this analysis is based on relatively small samples.

### 8.3 Probation services officers

**PSOs key data:**

- 339 staff surveyed (33% of overall sample)
- generally older than probation officers
- more likely to work unsocial hours, particularly in interventions work, than probation officers
- more likely than probation officers to recommend their job
- in all cases, PSOs fared marginally better than probation officers when it came to the questions relating to workload and pressure.

PSOs are the largest occupational group in the probation service, representing 33% of the sample overall. A breakdown by type of probation work (for example, unpaid work, drugs, offender management) shows that PSOs in offender management are the most heavily represented (26%) and those in accommodation the least represented (1%).

The data showed a distinct difference in the age profile of PSOs and probation officers. PSOs are generally older than probation officers with the largest proportion (32%) of respondents aged 45 to 54 years old, compared to 33% of probation officers aged 25 to 34 years old. This is probably due to the formal training and qualifications required to become a probation officer, which younger people are more likely to undertake before they have family and parental commitments. There is also some evidence that people move into the role of PSO after having been employed within a different area of work in the probation service, hence why staff are slightly older.

PSOs had more variations in their working patterns and were more likely to work unsocial hours than probation officers. Overall, 47% of PSOs worked office hours, compared with 62% of probation officers. Some 34% worked flexitime compared with 35% of probation officers; 17% worked fixed unsocial hours and 2% had a job share. Only 2% of probation officers worked unsocial hours.

On closer inspection there were clear differences in the pattern of work for PSOs by type of probation work – unsurprisingly those with fixed unsocial hours were typically in accommodation or approved premises and those working in offender management and programmes were the most likely to work flexitime.

Overall, 80% of PSOs reported an increase in workload and pressure over the previous year, 66% reported that the number of staff in their area had declined over the previous year and 75% said that stress levels had increased. This compares to 84% of probation officers reporting a rise in workload and pressure, 80% stating staff numbers had fallen and 84% saying stress levels had risen. In all cases, PSOs fared marginally better than probation officers when it came to the questions relating to the five key issues affecting working life. Some 72% said that they thought morale had worsened over the previous 12 months, compared to 78% of probation officers who thought there had been a decline.

Interestingly, PSOs were more likely than probation officers to recommend their job to others, with 44% stating either “yes, definitely” or “yes, probably” when asked “would you recommend your own occupation in the probation service to others?” This compares with 31% of probation officers who said they would either definitely or probably recommend their job to others.

A breakdown of PSOs by the different types of probation work (for example, drugs and alcohol services, prisons, unpaid work) although relatively small, showed some noteworthy differences in their perceptions about working life. PSOs working with approved premises and prisons were more likely to report increases in workload and pressure over the previous year; those in programmes work were more likely to report a reduction in staff numbers and those working with prisons reported higher levels of stress.

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In this section we will highlight the most striking features of the probation service membership attitude survey and make some recommendations on organising activities for UNISON.

9.1 Job security
The message from members was that job security should be the overwhelming priority for UNISON. This was ranked as the top-level priority by 80% of those surveyed, indicating that this is the main concern on members’ minds.

9.2 Effect of staffing cuts
The probation service, like many other public services, is facing cuts and organisational change over the next few years. The results indicate that this has a negative impact on staff, particularly in terms of stress levels and morale. The survey highlighted a link between staffing cuts and rising stress levels.

9.3 Lack of management support
Many members (46%) did not feel supported by their immediate manager in terms of workplace pressures. This is either an indication of a genuine lack of support or poor communication of the support on offer to staff who are feeling the pressure of work. This suggests that UNISON could enhance its workplace presence and communicate to members the support it can offer. Similarly, the union could raise this issue with management and try to work through a plan of action to tackle these issues. Particularly since workplace pressure, brought on by staffing and budget cuts, is likely to rise over the next few years.

9.4 Training and professional development
The majority of staff received some form of training in the previous 12 months, and the results raised no cause for concern in terms of unfair access to training on the basis of gender, age or ethnic origin. However, for many training extended to just a few days. There also appeared to be some issue around access to training for part-time workers. Another concern arising out of the survey findings was the low proportion of respondents who had followed the PPDR process throughout, i.e. they had had a PPDR and devised a development plan which was subsequently acted on. This could indicate that processes may not be being followed consistently across the service.

9.5 Pay and progression
Almost a quarter of the overall sample failed to respond when asked if they were paid above or below the development point for their pay band. This could mean that staff are not fully aware of progression arrangements in the probation service. The survey also showed that men were more commonly found in higher pay bands than women.

9.6 Improving UNISON’s campaigning role
Response rates for certain occupational groups suggest that there is some argument for improving awareness of UNISON among staff employed by the probation service. This applies particularly to corporate services staff and hostel (approved premises) staff, since respondents working in these areas were relatively few in number.

9.7 Regions of concern
The results of the survey indicate that for certain issues – mainly workload pressure, stress and morale – the same three regions stick out: Wales, the South West and the North East. This may indicate the geographical impact of staff cuts and/or inconsistencies in employer practices such as less management support, poor work planning and organisation – although more research would be required in this area to confidently confirm this point.

9.8 Concerns over privatisation
Given the political and economic climate at the time of the membership survey, it is perhaps not surprising that fighting privatisation was ranked by members as some way behind the top-level priorities of job security, protecting pay increments and cost-of-living pay rises. Although privatisation is still considered an issue
among members, fears over job losses and cuts in employers’ paybills are of greater concern.

9.9 Workforce modernisation
The harmonisation of working hours and more flexible working arrangements are key issues in discussions on a modernisation package for the probation service. The survey has shown that certain occupations are more affected by these issues than others, particularly when it comes to unsocial hours working. Over the last few years there has been a greater emphasis on staff having to work unsocial hours in certain areas of probation work. This indicates that as the service’s approach to crime and rehabilitation changes, so do workforce needs, with greater flexibility required.
Appendix

Methodology

In 2009 UNISON’s national probation committee commissioned an attitude survey of its membership in the national probation service. The aim of the research as identified by the committee was to:

- inform the negotiating agenda
- assist in workforce recruitment and organisation
- raise UNISON’s campaigning profile.

Survey method

The probation service membership survey was designed jointly by UNISON and IDS. The survey was sent to UNISON members as a postal questionnaire, with a covering letter which set out the purpose of the research project and details of how to participate. Individuals could respond either by returning the survey in the pre-paid postal envelope provided, or by following a link to submit a return electronically.

In order to access the electronic questionnaire, each member in the sample was assigned a unique user name and password. To avoid sampling issues, only one response was accepted per recipient, whichever survey method was received first, either the postal version or a version submitted via the web link. In the end just 4% of respondents completed the survey online.

Sampling

The questionnaire was sent in January 2010 to 3,298 UNISON members working in the probation service across England and Wales. In total 1,048 individuals responded, which means we achieved a response rate of 32%. IDS subsequently analysed the questionnaire responses and wrote up the results.

The sample represents around 5% of the national probation service workforce. There are smaller sample sizes for some of the occupational groups, notably ancillary and maintenance staff, corporate services staff, probation officers and approved premises supervisors. The results for ancillary and maintenance staff and approved premises supervisors in particular should be treated with caution.

In order to present the findings as clearly as possible, all figures have been rounded either up or down to the nearest whole number. This rounding may mean that not all the percentages presented in this report add up to 100%.

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5 Based on the number of FTEs reported in the Workforce Information Summary Report Q4 2008/09, as published by the National Offender Management Service Probation Workforce Planning Team.

6 The survey received responses from 15 ancillary and maintenance staff and 27 approved premises supervisors in total.
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