Fair and sustainable?

The implications of work intensification for the wellbeing and effectiveness of PGA members

Report of the Prison Governors' Association *Working Time, Workload and Work-life Balance Survey* 2015

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Abstract

This report discusses the findings of the *Working Hours, Workload and Work-life Balance Survey* of members of the Prison Governors' Association (PGA). The survey explores the impact of working hours and workload upon PGA members' work-life balance and their experience of stress and ill health. The potential impact of significant changes to organisation, staffing and working conditions associated with 'fair and sustainable' terms and conditions and prison 'benchmarking' are also examined.

The research was conducted through a web-based survey of PGA members between July and August 2015. In total, 421 members participated in the survey, representing two-fifths of the association's total membership. The key findings highlight:

Increasing hours
- **57.2%** of respondents work, on average, between 38 and 48 hours per week, More worryingly, **41.3%** work, on average, over 48 hours per week;
- **53.2%** state their working hours have increased over the past year; and
- **94.5%** work additional hours to keep up on top of workload.

Increasing workload
- **81.9%** state that their workload has increased over the previous year, while only 1.9% of members have seen a decrease in their workload.

Work-life imbalance
- 56.5% of respondents sometimes experience difficulties in achieving a work-life balance (WLB), but **32.5%** found it difficult to achieve a balance at all; and
- many work-life balance policies are unavailable to PGA members and support policies, such as stress management, are perceived to be ineffective.

Stress
- 19.2% of all respondents suffer stress over half of the time they are at work; and
- **61.0%** claim they have suffered stress-related ill health.

Cultural issues
- **60.3%** of respondents experiencing work-related stress claim their employer has not helped them cope with the causes of stress; and
- members' comments highlight some of the barriers to securing a work-life balance and dealing with stress, linked to a culture of 'getting on with it'.

Demotivation
- **59.9%** of respondents are demotivated by the series of changes affecting their jobs; and
- **42.5%** of respondents state they will consider changing jobs if conditions remain as they are.

While it is important to emphasise that the report focuses upon analysing the overall (aggregate) findings, highlighting the impact of work intensification on a large proportion of PGA members, analysis of disaggregated data indicates that members who are disabled and those who have caring responsibilities are disproportionately affected by current working hours patterns, workload levels, finding it particularly difficult to maintain a work-life balance.

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Section 1: Introduction

This report presents the findings of the Prison Governors' Association (PGA) *Working Time, Workload and Work-life Balance Survey* conducted by Keele University. The survey was a national internet-based survey, which ran between July and August 2015. In total, 421 PGA members participated in the survey. The survey questions (reported in full in appendix 1) were designed to examine the working time, working patterns and workload of PGA members, the impact of these on their attitudes to work, as well as their work-life balance and patterns of stress and ill-health. It also sought to assess the potential impact of the changes to working practices on their jobs. It is important to note that the survey took place against the background of two important developments.

The first is the continually changing role of senior managerial grades within the prison service, as the service has responded to the challenges presented by a series of governmental policies aimed at reform and modernisation. This fits with the adoption of New Public Management practices across the public sector and includes a range of policies in the prison service including, but certainly not limited to, Fresh Start (1987), privatisation and market testing, Fair and Sustainable (2012), benchmarking between private and public prisons, and the application of a common performance management framework (2014). Austerity policies have added impetus to these reforms, with the extension of the benchmarking programme to cut costs of £149 million a year in public sector prisons, cited by Micheal Spurr, head of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), as part of a process of 'fundamentally reforming the way we work'.[1] The impact of these policies on resourcing and, crucially, staffing levels are clear and were identified in the 14th Report of the Prison Service Pay Review Body (2015), with a total reduction in headcount between 2010 and 2014 of 16.6% amongst the remit group of staff, with 15.5% reductions in senior operational management grades (7-11) mirroring this decline.[2]

The issue of reform and, in particular, policies focused upon creating a leaner, more affordable and more flexible workforce raises, secondly, issues of the impact of such reforms upon the staff working in the prison service. This relates directly to topics covered under the remit of the Prison Service Pay Review Body – recruitment, retention and morale - but also to the wider, but related, issues of work-life balance and stress. The issue of stress has been raised in the previous year's report through research conducted for the Prison Officers' Association (POA) by researchers at the University of Bedfordshire, using the HSE Management Standards Indicator toolkit. However, there has also been an increase in attention paid to the circumstances facing prison governors, as reported in *The Guardian* newspaper[3], and this research was commissioned by the PGA as a direct result of the following motion passed at the association's annual conference in October 2014:

> *The excessive hours being worked by PGA members are having a serious impact upon the health of members. This conference instructs the NEC to negotiate with NOMS a strategy to reduce the excessive hours worked by PGA members that requires NOMS to provide a safe working environment and protects the health of PGA members.*

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[1]   *The Guardian* April 29th 2014, *Prisons governors ordered to cut costs by £149m a year.*

[2]   Prison Service Pay Review Body (2015). *Fourteenth Report on England and Wales 2015*, CM9022

[3]   See: *The Guardian* June 12th 2015, *A day in the life of a prison governor: 'I never feel off duty'* and *The Guardian* July 21st 2015, *Why walking into jail fills many prison service colleagues with dread'.*

The Working Hours, Workload and Work-life Balance Survey

The aim of the PGA survey was not to reproduce the survey conducted by the POA, focusing primarily on the HSE stress questionnaire, but to replicate earlier research conducted by researchers at Keele for head teachers and civil servants[4], based upon a questionnaire that aims to examine the links between working hours and workload and the control employees have, or do not have, over their work. Having looked at these developments, the impact of workload is then considered in terms of a work-life balance, stress and stress-related ill health, as well as the delivery of public services. The survey also combines 'closed' questions, where participants were asked to select one of a number of fixed options, with a range of 'open' questions, where participants were asked to write comments about their own experiences.[5] The aim of this approach was to ensure that the survey had not omitted key issues from the questions, but also to provide a set of qualitative responses, reflecting the attitudes of the PGA membership.

It should be noted that as the survey was an internet-based questionnaire, open to all PGA members, care should be taken as to its representativeness. The 421 complete responses to the survey, out of a membership of 1,055, represents a very high response rate (39.9%). Nevertheless, an open survey such as this can be subject to accusations of self-selection, for example, by over-representing PGA members with work-life balance problems. However, the characteristics of the survey sample (see appendix 2 for full details) suggest that it reflects the composition of the PGA membership and, to some extent, the data held by NOMS.[6] The sample would appear to closely reflect the gender breakdown of the PGA membership and is broadly in line with age and grading patterns.

If anything, the survey sample tends to over-represent the younger age groups of PGA members (aged 20-30, 30-40 and 40-50), but this should not necessarily be seen as a problem. Rather it suggests that the survey captures the views of those members who have a significant interest in the future of the prison service, given the potential time in employment they have ahead of them. In terms of grading it appears that the survey under-represents those working in pay-band 7, but it should be noted that the comparative NOMS data is only for senior operational managers in 2014 and, given turnover, staff reductions and the fact that PGA membership is not coterminous with the staff covered by the NOMS data, this is not the most robust basis for comparison. Additional comparative data on ethnicity, disability, contractual status as well as workplace and regional location were not available at the time of writing. However, in terms of the high response rate and the reasonable fit according gender, age and pay-band, there is no reason to question the

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[4] See for example: French, S. (2014), *PCS Workload and Work-Life Balance Survey 2013*, Public and Commercial Services Union, London; French, S. and Daniels, G. (2008), *The NAHT Work-Life Balance Survey 2007-8*. Report for the National Association of Head Teachers; Daniels, G. and French, S. (2007), *The Civil Service 24-7 Survey 2006*. Report for the Council of Civil Service Unions and submitted to the Cabinet Office Review of Civil Service Staffing; Daniels, G. and French, S. (2007) *The PCS 24-7 Survey 2006*. Report for the Public and Commercial Services union. French, S. and Daniels, G. (2007); *The NAHT Work-Life Balance Survey 2006*. Report for the National Association of Head Teachers and submitted to the Workload Agreement Monitoring Group and the School Teachers Pay Review Body.

[5] In order to ensure the confidentiality of the participants, no personal details provided when these comments are reported in the survey for ethical reasons.

[6] It should be noted that publicised statistics about the NOMS workforce (e.g. *National Offender Management Service Workforce Statistics Bulletin* 30th June 2015) do not disaggregate data on gender, contractual status, regional location or ethnicity (diversity) by grade so it is not possible to check the sample data against this source. However, we are grateful to NOMS for supplying dedicated data on senior operational managers to allow some checks of representativeness to be conducted.

representativeness of the data as a basis for generalising the results to the PGA membership as a whole.

It is also worth stressing that only half the survey respondents had caring responsibilities. Whilst data on those with caring responsibilities does allow responses (particularly relating to family-friendly policies) to be analysed in more detail, it is also important to examine the extent to which workload and working hours can impact upon the work-life balance of all members, with or without caring responsibilities.

Finally, in conducting the analysis of the survey, both aggregate and disaggregated data are presented. However, in order to make the data presentation easier to digest, disaggregated data is only reported when the differences between groups are statistically significant (at the 0.05% level). For the purposes of this report, the data are broken down according to personal characteristics (age; gender, disability, ethnicity and caring responsibility) and according to contractual status (length of service, workplace type, region, and whether they have opted, or not, on 'Fair and Sustainable' contracts or have reserved rights under Fresh Start).[7] It is important to stress, however, that the findings strongly suggest that workload and work-life balance problems affect all categories of the PGA membership, as reflected in the findings reported based upon aggregated data. Care needs to be taken when seeking to explain developments by relying primarily on disaggregated data.[8]

The structure of the report.

The second section of the report looks at working patterns. This focuses upon a comparison of PGA members' contractual and actual working time, on call hours, the extent to which working hours are increasing and the main reasons identified by members for working beyond contracted hours. The section also examines the impact of commuting on the extension of the working day.

The third section of the report concentrates on workload. In this section, the extent to which workload has increased is examined along with the main reasons for such increases. Against this background, the report then focuses upon members' views about their current jobs, examining the role that work plays in members' lives; the extent to which workload and working hours are manageable, as well as workplace relationships with managers and colleagues. This section then examines members' views on the extent to which workload and working hours impact upon their lives outside of work and upon their time spent, and their relationships, with family members. The section finally addresses members' views on steps that could be taken to address long working hours and higher workload, examining both substantive and procedural policies.

The fourth section then looks at members' access to employee-friendly flexible working policies and to other support services that may help them control their workload and aid a work-life balance. Where these are not accessible, the report indicates the reasons why members are unable to utilise such policies and support mechanisms. Members' views upon the usefulness of such policies are also evaluated. The section then assesses the extent to which members are able to secure a meaningful work-life balance and the extent to which

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[7] It should be noted that respondents were ask to self-identify themselves as disabled, rather than whether they are registered disabled. Due to the small number of respondents working on part-time contracts, disaggregated analysis was not possible for this contractual status.

[8] It is also important to note that the bivariate analysis presented in the report has not taken account of possible interaction effects of the different disaggregation categories. For example, there is a close correlation between age and length of service.

they suffer work-related stress and ill health. The impact of work-related stress and ill-health upon their work is then examined by considering serious mistakes they make at work, which are accredited by members to stress, as well as the extent to which their employer deals with the issue of stress.

The fifth substantive section then provides an overview of the views of PGA members in respect of a series of wider questions related to the changes to working practices and terms and conditions of service associated with the 'Fair and Sustainable' and benchmarking policies implemented in the prison service. The questions explore the extent to which changes to working practices are perceived to be required, especially in the context of the move towards a common performance management framework and austerity policies focused upon the public sector. The section then focuses upon a range of responses made by the respondents to an open question, which covers the main issues raised in the survey: working hours and workload, control over workload, work-life balance and stress. In light of the high level of participation, the responses provide a more detailed, qualitative account of the problems faced by PGA members.

The main conclusions of the report, provided in the final section, are that PGA members are experiencing excessive working hours and substantial increases in workload. The reasons for these increases are primarily attributed to the staff reductions and introduction of new working practices, so that working beyond contractual hours is required to keep on top of workload and is increasingly perceived to be expected of members.

The findings also highlight how few members have meaningful input into the allocation, monitoring and agreement of workload and there is limited availability of many flexible working policies, especially those identified as most useful to members. While some of this relates to the requirements of the job, a worrying finding to emerge from the survey is the identification among members of a culture of 'getting on with it' and that requests for support in relation to work-life balance issues are identified as a weakness by senior managers and perceived to be damaging to members' careers. The survey evidence further indicates that the consequences of these developments for PGA members are negative. The increasing workload, which is impacting upon the work-life balance of members, is also being reflected in work-related stress and levels of stress-related ill health. Again members do not believe that the prison service as an employer recognises and addresses stress, with further evidence of a negative cultural approach to stress, that leads to members not seeking to address stress.

The survey evidence also highlights the knock-on effects of working hours and workload on the ability of PGA members to deliver high quality, essential public services. Crucially it raises a number important issues. In terms of recruitment and retention, a significant proportion (two-thirds) of members are considering changing jobs if conditions remain the same. In terms of morale, there is growing resentment that additional productivity, in many cases reflecting 11 additional unpaid hours a week, is not being recognised or rewarded. Finally, the overall effect of the current changes under Fair and Sustainable, benchmarking and the new performance management systems is seen to be highly demotivating.

Section 2: Working hours and commuting

In order to gain an understanding of the workload and work-life balance of PGA members, it is first important to examine their working patterns. In this section, the actual working hours of members are compared against the established full-time contractual working hours of 37 hours per week. The reasons why members work longer than their contractual hours are explored. The research also examines the extent to which commuting adds hours to the total length of the working day. These findings are then analysed to see whether there are significant variations in working patterns and commuting between different groups of the membership.

Working Hours

Table 1 shows that the vast majority of PGA members (98.5%) work, on average, in excess of the contracted 37 hours. There were no statistically significant differences in working hours between PGA members based upon age, gender, disability, ethnicity, or by caring responsibility. Further, there was no difference according to length of service, whether the member worked in an establishment or elsewhere, whether they were on 'fair and sustainable' terms or the region in which they worked. However, members with 'reserved rights' are less likely to work over 48 hours per week. Significantly, five of the six staff on part-time contracts claimed that they work, on average, over the full time contractual hours of 37 per week. As one survey respondent noted:

> I only work 3 days a week but I have the same workload and responsibility as full time colleagues.

These findings are very disturbing, notably the evidence that suggests that over two-fifths (41.3%) of participants work, on average, in excess of 48 hours a week, in contravention of the 1998 Working Time Regulations.

Table 1: Average actual working hours

	%
16-21 hours	0.2
22-37 hours	1.4
38-48 hours	57.2
Over 48 hours	41.3
Total responses (n)	**421**

It should also be noted, that PGA members also have a significant period when they are classed as being 'on call'. The vast majority of members (85.5%) are on call in excess of ten hours per week, while almost one fifth (19.0%) are on call for over 40 hours per week. This is undoubtedly a contributory factor to the high working hours, but this should not detract from the consistently high weekly hours reported by all survey participants. PGA members were also asked where they worked these additional hours on top of their contractual hours. Over half (55.7%) work the additional non-contracted hours at their place of work, with a further two-fifths (42.6%) working them both at home and work, and only a few members (1.7%) working them exclusively at home. Only those aged over 60 are more likely to work at home, while those working in an HQ role (nationally or in the regions) are more likely to be able combine working the additional hours at home and at work.

The picture that emerges from the first few questions relating to working time is one of

excessive working hours, reinforced by the need to be on call. It is also the case that the overwhelming majority of PGA members also have to work at least some, but for a majority all, of these additional hours at their place of work. This is reinforced by the responses given by members when asked to compare current working hours with those from the previous year. Again over half the respondents (53.2%) state their working hours have increased, while for a further two-fifths (43.0%) they have stayed the same. In this case, women were less likely to state that their working hours have increased (47.0%)

The data presented in table 2 provide an overview of the main reasons that PGA members work additional hours on top of their contractual hours. While there is some evidence that the survey participants work additional hours through choice (17.1%), enjoyment (12.6%) and the sense of achievement (9.3%), the overwhelming reason for working additional hours is to address the issue of workload (94.5%). It is also important to note that working in excess of contractual hours (and in many cases in excess of the 48 hour working week) is also perceived by three-fifths of PGA members (60.1%) to be expected of them, with almost a fifth (18.3%) also stating they feel under pressure from managers to work these additional hours.

Table 2: The main reasons for working additional hours[9]

	%
To keep up with my workload	94.5
It is expected of me	60.1
Pressure from managers	18.3
I choose to work extra hours at times	17.1
I enjoy my work	12.6
I like the sense of achievement I get at work	9.3
I am afraid of losing my job	9.0
Pressure from colleagues	5.5
To gain promotion	3.8
The hours I work are planned	3.6

There are a few significant differences that emerge when the responses are examined by specific characteristics of the PGA membership:

- Members aged 21-30 (40.0%) and over 60 (60.0%) are more likely to work additional hours because they enjoy their work;
- Members who are not on 'Fair and Sustainable' contracts are more likely (9.3%) to state that they feel under pressure by colleagues to work additional hours;
- Members with less than 10 years of service (27.2%); those aged 21-40 (12.3%); and those from black and minority ethnic backgrounds (25.0%) are more likely to work additional hours to gain promotion;
- Members working in a HQ post in London (70.0%) and those with contractual reserved rights (83.0%) are less likely to identify workload as a reason for working additional hours, and
- Members considering themselves disabled are more likely to work additional hours for fear of losing their job (30.3%) and due to pressure from managers (36.4%).

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[9]   It should be noted that members could provide more than one response to this question, so the percentages reported do not add up to 100%.

The extent to which workload and working hours are related is identified by two of the survey respondents:

> *In order to keep on top of workload and perform at the required level, working over and above 37 hours is inevitable..*

> *I enjoy my work, the only thing I would say is I'm guessing 99% of Governors work over the 37 (contracted) hours* [and] *there should be something to recognise this. When doing a duty… that's 12-13 hours on one day. If you have 2 of these in a week it only leaves you another 13 hours to do. I bet the 99% are not able to work a 4 day week!*

Commuting

The length of time an employee spends travelling to and from work can greatly add to the duration of their working day. The results indicate that almost two-fifths of PGA members (38.2%) spend up to 30 minutes travelling to work; 45.6% between 30 minutes and one hour; 14.0% between 61 minutes and two hours and only 2.1% over two hours. Finally, members were also asked if they have to travel to a workplace (other than their usual work location) more than once per week, and whether this added additional commuting time. Four-fifths of members (81.2%) stated they do have to travel to another workplace. Of these (n=342), over two-thirds (68.1%) faced no additional journey increase, but almost one fifth (17.3%) stated these journeys add over one hour to their journey time. In respect of commuting there were few statistically significant differences based upon the personal and contractual characteristics of PGA members. However, members working in an HQ role (nationally or regionally) are more likely (25.4%) to have a commute of over 60 minutes. These members are also more likely to commute (71.4%) for over one hour to visit additional workplaces.

Summary

The findings reported in this section highlight the high working hours of PGA members, with nearly all working in excess of their contracted hours and 41.3% of all members claiming to work, on average, over 48 hours a week. It appears that the working hours of members are increasing or remaining at high levels, with few members (3.8%) indicating any decrease in their working hours over the previous year. Adding to the high levels of working time are additional factors such as being on call as well as commuting to work and to different work-related locations. Furthermore, the scope for managing workload through working at home is also limited, with most members having to work some or all of their additional hours at their workplace. The impact of this working time regime is expressed by one of the survey respondents as follows:

> *I arrive at work at 0600hrs and leave at 1800hrs each day, not to mention travelling an hour to and from work each day. Yet we do not receive appropriate pay or recognition for this work.*

In exploring why members work in excess of their contractual hours, the overwhelming explanation given by members is to keep up with workload, followed by an expectation of working these hours associated with the job. In light of these findings, highlighting the association between longer working hours and keeping on top of workload, the next section of the report examines members' perceptions of their jobs and the impact of workload on their lives, as well as their views on policies that could address workload pressures.

Section 3: Workload

Having examined working time patterns, highlighting what appears to be an overall shift within the prison service toward longer working hours, and having identified that PGA members work additional hours to keep up with their workload, the following section examines workload in more detail. Firstly, it assesses the extent to which workload has increased across the jobs undertaken by PGA members and seeks to explain, where workload has increased, the main reasons for these increases. Secondly, it examines how members view their jobs, their control over their workload and their relationships at work. The impact of workload is investigated further by establishing the extent to which work 'spills over' and affects the lives of members. Thirdly, the section reports the views of members in relation to the policies that would have the greatest positive impact on their work.

Workload

Members were asked to assess their workload in relation to the previous year. In total, over four-fifths (81.9%) state that their workload has increased, while only 1.9% of members have seen a decrease in their workload. Members working in an HQ role (nationally or regionally are less likely (56.4%) to claim that their workload has increased.

Table 3: The reasons for increased workload (ranked)[10]

	%	n
Introduction of new working practices	79.1	273
Reduced staffing levels	71.6	247
Introduction of new work systems (e.g. IT)	44.3	153
Increased personal targets (e.g. through PM)	31.0	107

Table 3 reports the responses of those members who indicated an increase in their workload (n=345) to a range of explanations for the increasing workload. Almost four-fifths of these members (79.1%) attribute it to new working practices, while over two-thirds (71.6%) identify reduced staffing levels as the main reason for workload increases. Increased personal targets under Performance Management systems (31.0%) and the introduction of new work systems (44.3%) are also identified as important reasons for increases in workload. There were no statistically different responses in relation to these questions in respect of members' personal and most contractual characteristics.

However, the extent to which increased workload reflected reduced staffing levels varied significantly by region. While members in Scotland (11.1%) and South Central (58.3%) regions are less likely to identify reduced staffing levels as a reason for increased workload, those in the North West (91.7%), South West (86.4%), Northern Ireland (84.6%), Wales (83.3%) and Yorkshire and Humberside (81.8%) are more likely to do so. Regional variations also existed in relation to the impact of introduction of new working practices on workload. While members in Scotland (50.0%), the West Midlands (50.0%) and Northern Ireland (69.2%) are less likely to identify new working practices as a reason for increased workload, those in South Central (91.7%), Yorkshire and Humberside (87.9%) and the South West (86.4%) are more likely to do so.

In order to understand the reasons for these responses, participants were also invited to

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[10]   It should be noted that members could provide more than one response to this question in both surveys, so the percentages reported do not add up to 100%.

complete an open question explaining the reason why their workload has increased. Of the 73 responses to this question, many members identified issues which would necessarily impact on workload, such as promotion, changing establishments and new roles. The following quotes are indicative of other reasons for increased workload and how they relate to the additional pressures faced by PGA members at work.

The expectation that when subordinate managers are not available, their workload will be picked up and delivered to a comparable standard.

Staff Sickness amongst my managers in my department means I am also picking up their workload and HR issues.

Reduced staffing levels at lower grades (and in some cases a lack of skills and knowledge), creating unrealistic expectations of managers at B7 and ensuring the achievement of performance measures including audits, and safety and security of prisons. The introduction of regional models applied to skilled areas, such as HR, finance and H&S, results simply in managers within those models distributing their workload to managers retained within establishments through the default setting of allocating the risk associated to non-delivery to those persons in the prisons who do not have, or have not been provided with, the knowledge, specialised skills, training or guidance.

The pressures of the current prison population and increase in incidents.

An expectation that I pick up the slack from the grade immediately below me as well as above me because their numbers have also been reduced but the Functions workload remains the same.

I have been working beyond 37 hours for the last three years. Reduced staffing levels and trying to deliver my functional duties alongside high demands of an operational nature all impact.

Due to increased pressures at all grades, a significant part of my day is providing one to one support to staff that are struggling and picking up work that should be completed by lower grades who seem to have unachievable workloads themselves.

Increased work due to lack of Custodial Managers' availability due to nights rotation; therefore supporting staff in their area. Nights can mean a line manager being away for up to 4 weeks from their allocated area.

Assessing members' jobs

Having established the issues surrounding workload, this subsection of the report now analyses members' views on their current jobs. Table 4 reports the responses to a number of questions relating to work.

The results demonstrate the importance PGA members attach to their work and the sense of achievement they feel through it. Over fourth-fifths all respondents (82.9%) claim that work played an important part of their lives and that they enjoy the challenges associated with their jobs (84.5%), while over two-thirds feel fulfilled when busy (66.9%) and find their job rewarding (66.5%). Despite the strains of additional working hours and increasing workload, the vast majority (90.8%) stress that their working relationships with colleagues are good and few believe their relationship with their manager to be poor (12.6%).

Table 4: Members' views on their current job

	Agree %	Disagree %
My working relationship with my colleagues is good	90.8	3.1
I enjoy the challenges of my job	84.5	9.5
Work is an important part of my life	82.9	7.1
I feel more fulfilled when I am busy	66.9	17.4
I find my job very rewarding	66.5	19.2
I make sure work does not dominate my whole life	52.3	38.1
My working relationship with my manager is poor	12.6	76.5
When I take time off I miss my work	7.6	84.3
When I am not working I do not know what to do with my time	3.8	92.1
I am so busy that I come in to work even when I am ill	79.3	11.7
I would like to control the hours I work but do not know how	42.8	37.8
If conditions remain as they are I will consider changing jobs	42.5	38.2
I am in control of the role work plays in my life	40.8	49.2
My workload is generally well planned and under control	34.4	50.2
I feel my job here is insecure	33.5	48.0
I have had medical advice to cut down my working hours	21.1	60.3
Total (n)	**421**	

While the majority of members try to make sure that work does not dominate their lives (52.3%) and few miss work when they take time off (7.6%), it should be noted that almost two-fifths (38.1%) disagree when asked whether work dominates their lives. Further, while two-fifths claim to be in control of the role that work plays in their lives (40.8%), almost half disagree (49.2%). Similarly, while one-third (34.4%) claim their workload is under control, half (50.2%) state this is not the case. The impact of workload is also related to members' perceptions of working hours, with over two-fifths (42.8%) claiming that they would like to control the hours they work, but do not know how to do so.

These disturbing findings are exacerbated by the findings that almost fourth-fifths (79.3%) of members attend work, even when they are ill, because they are so busy and a significant proportion, one fifth (21.1%), claim to have received medical advice to cut down on their working hours. An important contributory factor to members' negative assessment of their workload would appear to be job insecurity, with over one-third of all respondents feeling insecure in their jobs (33.5%). More worryingly, especially given that the survey sample is slightly skewed towards younger PGA members and data from NOMS suggests turnover rates of 4.0%, over two-fifths of participants (42.5%) would consider changing jobs if conditions remain the same.

There were few differences in responses between PGA members depending upon personal or contractual characteristics. However the following statistically significant differences should be noted:

- Members working in the West Midlands (91.2%), East Midlands (88.4%) and North West (87.8%) are more likely to come into work when ill, while those in Scotland (60.0%) and the South Central (61.5%) are less likely to do so;
- Members identifying themselves as disabled are more likely to come to work when ill (84.8%) and are more likely to miss work when they take time off (9.1%);
- Female members are more likely to claim to be fulfilled when busy (78.4%) than men (64.1%); and
- Members aged 21-30 and over 60 are more likely to find work rewarding (90%).

Workload and life outside of work

Following the analysis of workload and its impact on members' jobs, survey participants were then asked a series of questions about the impact of working hours and workload upon their lives outside of work. In this set of questions, participants were given the option to indicate whether the issues covered in the question were applicable or not and, if so, the extent to which they affect them.

Table 5: Members' views on the 'spill over' of work into private life

	Frequently %	Sometimes %	Never %	Not applicable %
When I go on holiday, it takes me several days to 'wind down'	62.2	30.4	6.9	0.5
Friends and family have commented on the hours I work	58.9	36.8	4.3	0.0
I do not see my family as much as I would like	42.3	45.1	9.7	2.9
When I return to work after a holiday, I do not feel rested	34.0	51.1	14.7	0.2
My partner/spouse has to take an unfair share of domestic work	32.3	36.8	16.4	14.5
I do not take all of my annual leave or Time off in Lieu entitlements	30.4	37.3	29.9	2.4
My partner/spouse has to take an unfair share of caring commitments	27.1	31.8	27.8	13.3
Work has affected my relationship with my partner/spouse	22.3	51.8	20.7	5.2
I have missed family and social occasions through work	18.8	72.2	8.6	0.5
I resent the hours I spend at work away from family and friends	17.1	58.4	21.1	3.3
Working so hard has affected my relationships with my children	16.4	42.3	20.2	21.1
I have cancelled holidays or cut them short through work	10.7	55.8	33.0	0.5
I have pretended to be ill in order to take a day's break	0.2	4.0	92.9	2.9
Total (n)				**421**

The results reported in table 5 indicate that work has an impact on members' leave and holidays. While a small proportion of members are frequently unable to take all of their leave entitlement (30.4%) or have cancelled or cut short holidays because of work (10.7%), two-

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thirds of members are affected by these issues (67.7% and 66.5% respectively). Perhaps, more importantly, holidays do not appear to provide members with opportunities to rest and recuperate with almost two-thirds (62.2%) claiming that they frequently need several days to unwind when they go on holiday and one third (34.0%) stating that, frequently, holidays do not provide enough rest before returning to work. When those sometimes experiencing these difficulties are included, over four-fifths of the members surveyed are affected (92.6% and 85.1% respectively). For a very small proportion of members (4.2%), the intensity of work has led them to pretend to be ill, at least sometimes, to gain some respite.

Further evidence of the impact of workload and working hours can be found in relation to questions which look at how work spills over into family and non-work settings. Around three-fifths of members (58.9%) state that family and friends frequently comment on the hours they work, increasing to almost all participants (95.7%) when those who sometimes receive such comments are included. For around one fifth of members (18.8%) work has caused them to frequently miss family and other social occasions, while, on top of this, almost three-quarters (72.2%) claim that this happens sometimes.

The impact of work upon family life is also pronounced, with two-fifths of members (42.3%) claiming that frequently they do not see their family as much as they like, and with well over four-fifths (87.4%) of all members claiming this to be the case at least sometimes. Members state that domestic work (32.3%) and caring arrangements (27.1%) are unfairly distributed to their partners frequently, with just under three-fifths (58.9%) and over two-thirds (69.1%) of all members affected, respectively, by this at least sometimes. Further, members claim that work has frequently affected their relationship with their partner (22.3%) and children (16.4%), increasing, respectively, to almost three-quarters (74.1%) and three-fifths (58.5%) of all members at least sometimes. It is perhaps, not surprising, therefore that three-quarters of members (75.5%) resent the hours spent at work away from their family, at least some of the time.

While it is important to stress the importance of these findings across the respondents as a whole, further analysis of these questions highlights the following significant differences:

- Compared to an overall response of 87.4% (frequently and sometimes), members with caring responsibilities for an adult relative (91.1%), child under 16 (90.8%) or an adult relative *and* child under 16 (100.0%) are more likely to state they do not see their family as often they would like;
- Compared to an overall response of 58.9% (frequently and sometimes), men (64.4%), members with caring responsibilities for an adult relative (75.6%), child under 16 (78.9%) or an adult relative *and* child under 16 (88.9%) are more likely to believe that their partner has taken on unfair share of caring commitments;
- Compared to an overall response of 69.1% (frequently and sometimes), those aged 41-50 (77.2%) and men (75.2%) are more likely to claim that their partner has taken an unfair share of domestic work. By contrast those aged under 40 (50.0%) are less likely to believe this to be the case;
- Compared to an overall response of 58.7% (frequently and sometimes), men (65.4%), those with caring responsibilities for child under 16 (79.6%) or an adult relative *and* child under 16 (94.4%) and those aged 41-50 (65.3%) are more likely to state that working so hard has affected their relationships with their children. By contrast, those aged under 40 (47.4%) are less are less likely to believe this to be the case. Men are also more likely than women (76.5% compared to 68.1%) to claim that their relationship with their partner has been affected by working so hard;

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- Compared to an overall response of 92.6% (frequently and sometimes), those aged 21-30 and over 60 (80%) and those with less than 6 years' service (83.3%) are less likely to believe that it takes several days to 'wind down' when going on holiday; and
- Compared to an overall response of 85.1% (frequently and sometimes), members working in the East of England (95.5%), Northern Ireland (93.3%) and the North East (91.3%) are more likely to claim that they do not fell rested when the return to work form holiday, while those in the South West (77.3%) are less likely to claim this.

Identifying policies which would lead to improvements at work

Having considered the impact of work on their lives, members were then presented with (a further) twenty statements about changes that might lead to improvements at work. They were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with these statements.

Table 6: PGA Members' attitudes to work-related improvements

	Agree %	Disagree %
Additional resources and/or staffing	89.5	5.9
Less cost cutting	88.3	3.6
Having more time to spend with my family	85.1	5.5
Being able to control my workload	76.2	12.6
Higher pay levels	76.1	10.5
More positive attitudes towards managing workloads and solving problems	75.1	11.0
More effective managers	70.0	15.7
More effective colleagues	67.7	14.7
Flexible working options	65.3	12.1
Better training in using technology	58.7	24.7
Option to work from home	58.4	21.4
Better promotion prospects	56.6	16.7
Better planning of workload	55.6	25.6
Better communication between management and staff	51.6	33.0
Improved support services (e.g. counselling)	43.7	21.2
More holidays	41.1	28.3
More sympathetic responses to complaints	39.5	23.6
Being given clearer objectives	38.7	39.6
Being given clearer deadlines	31.3	40.4
Better policies against bullying	20.7	47.7
Total (n)	**421**	

Table 6 reports the aggregate responses to these questions. The results indicate that members attribute many of the problems to levels of staffing and resourcing as well as cuts, and would also seek to address these through clear improvements in substantive terms and

conditions. Almost nine in every ten members agree that additional resources and staffing would help them in their current job (89.5%) and that a reduction in cost cutting would be beneficial (88.3%). This again reflects the concerns about additional working hours related to reductions in staffing levels raised above. Members also identify a range of material improvements to terms and conditions that would be beneficial to them in their job, notably higher pay (76.1%) and better promotion opportunities (56.6%). Members also identify with more flexible working options (65.3%); more options to work from home (58.4%); more holidays (41.1%); and, in particular, policies that provide more time to spend with the family (85.1%), reflecting the impact of workload and working hours on private life and family relationships.

However, of equal importance to members are procedures to provide greater influence and control over workload. Over three-quarters of members want policies to help them to control their workload (76.2%) and over half want better planning of workload (55.6%), reflecting the difficulties in controlling workload identified earlier in this section. While a proportion of members agree that clearer deadlines (31.3%) and objectives (38.7%) are important, it should be noted that members place a higher value on better communication between managers and staff (51.6%); on more positive attitudes toward managing workload and dealing with problems (75.1%); more effective management (70.0%) and colleagues (67.7%). Similarly, while policies on bullying (20.7%) and support services (43.7%) are also valued by some members, better training in using technology (58.7%) is more valued, reflecting the additional hours attributed to the introduction of new work systems (above).

Again there were few differences in the responses between PGA members depending upon personal or contractual characteristics. However the following statistically significant differences should be noted:

- Women are more likely than men (59.5% to 53.7%) to agree that they would like to see better planning of workload;
- Compared to an overall response of 85.1%, members with caring responsibilities for an child under 16 (91.5%) or an adult relative *and* child under 16 (88.9%) are more likely to agree that they want to have more time to spend with their family; and
- Compared to an overall response of 45.1%, members working in the Wales (61.5%) South Central (57.7%) and East Midlands (55.8%) are more likely to support more holidays as a policy, while those in Northern Ireland (13.3%) and the North East (17.4%) are much less likely to do so.

Summary

The survey results give a clear indication of how the workload of the vast majority of PGA members is increasing. This reflects, in particular, staff reductions, but also changes to working practices and new working systems with their link to performance management. While it is important to stress that PGA members still gain enjoyment and fulfilment from their jobs, providing a vital public service, and identify the need to ensure that work does not dominate their life, current workload and working practices are having a negative impact on their experience of work. A significant proportion of members have difficulties planning and controlling their workload and even come to work when they are ill. The increases in working time and workload are also impacting on members' lives, as they find it hard to take, and benefit from, holidays and have experienced work encroaching on time spent with family and friends, leading in a small number of cases to frequent problems in their relationships with partners and children. This appears to be creating a growing resentment, at least some of the time, among members about the time they spend at work.

To address these issues, there are two main sets of policies that members would like to see implemented. In terms of *substantive* material improvements, reducing the extent of cuts and providing additional resources are identified as the main policies which address the problem of escalating working time and workload, while the additional work taken on by members should be reflected in improvements to pay and, to a lesser extent, better opportunities for promotion. Securing and improving holiday entitlements and providing more scope for working at home are policies also identified, not least to secure more time with the family. A second set of policies centres on better *procedures* to manage and influence workload, ensuring that managers take workload issues seriously, address problems and complaints more effectively, and provide training to allow members to use new work systems more effectively. Linked to this is the perception that improvements are needed to make the work of managers and colleagues more effective.

When looking at the disaggregated data, the impact of working hours and workload on family relationships is, not surprisingly, felt to be more acute by those with caring responsibilities, notably for children, and men are more likely to feel that relationships with partners and children have been affected by work. There is some variation in the responses between members depending upon which region they work in, though given the relatively small numbers under consideration in each region, this requires further investigation. Finally, it is concerning that members who consider themselves to be disabled are more likely to come into work when ill.

Having looked at the issue of workload and its impact upon members' jobs and their lives outside of work, the next section looks in more detail at members' work-life balance: at their access to, and use of, policies to address work-life balance problems and the negative effects of workload upon stress, health and performance.

Section 4: Work-life policies, stress and ill-health

This section focuses in more detail upon the practicalities of members' work-life balance. It begins by analysing the extent to which members need, and are able to access, policies that may help them address increasing workload and working hours, as well as provide them with more flexible working opportunities to help address their work-life balance. The section then assesses the extent to which members secure a balance between the demands of work and their life outside of work, and the extent to which the increasing working hours and workload impact upon this, notably through examining work-related stress and ill health and the management of sickness absence. The section ends by exploring the extent to which a combination of workload and work-related stress impacts upon the performance of PGA members by examining the serious mistakes, attributed to stress, they have made at work.

Work-life balance policies

Members were asked questions related to a range of workplace policies that could be associated with providing employee-focused flexibility and support. These were grouped broadly into flexible working policies (working from home, term time working, job share and part-time working and flexible start and finish times); policies aim directly at supporting those with caring responsibilities (help with childcare or elderly care, maternity, paternity and adoption schemes); policies aimed at providing participation in managing workload (workload discussion and planning, processes of agreeing objectives, targets and deadlines) and support mechanisms for those experiencing difficulties at work (counselling and training in stress and workload management). Members were asked whether: they were *aware* of such policies; these policies were *available* to them at their workplace; they had *used* such policies and these policies were *useful*. The results are reported in table 7.

Table 7: Availability and success of work-life balance schemes[11]

Which of the following are available in your workplace and which do you feel have been the most successful?	Do not know %	Not Available %	Available %	If available, have used %	If available and used, found useful %
Option to work from home at times	7.6	54.6	37.8	58.5	72.0
Term time only working	15.9	81.0	3.1	7.7	0.0
Job-share / Part Time working	13.8	40.4	45.8	6.2	66.7
Flexible start and finish times	6.2	20.7	73.2	47.1	54.5
Help with childcare or elderly care	27.8	45.6	26.6	16.1	72.2
Maternity/paternity/adoption leave	7.6	3.1	89.3	19.4	58.9
Discussion of workload planning/allocation	22.6	25.2	52.3	23.6	25.0
Agreeing objectives and targets	7.6	9.3	83.1	38.6	31.1
Agreeing clear and attainable deadlines	11.4	15.0	73.6	39.7	32.5
Employee counselling schemes	8.8	5.5	85.7	11.1	32.5
Stress management training	22.8	16.6	60.6	10.2	11.5
Training / support in managing workload	30.4	31.1	38.5	20.4	24.2
Total (n)			**421**		

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[11]   In table 7 the 'available' column includes **all** members who indicated that policies are available, while the 'used' column shows the proportion of members (for whom a policy is available) using that policy, while the final 'found useful' column indicates the proportion, from among those who use policies, who find them useful. Responses for the whole sample are provided in the table presented in appendix 1.

The data reported in the table show a range of responses to each of the questions of availability and use of work-life balance policies. The issue of availability highlights a relatively high lack of awareness in respect of the availability of some policies: help with care (27.8%); discussion of workload and planning (22.6%); stress management training (22.8%); and training and support in managing workload (30.4%).

It is also the case that some of these policies are more likely to be unavailable to members in their workplaces: help with care (45.6%); training and support in managing workload (31.1%); and discussion of workload and planning (25.2%). Term time working is the policy least available in the workplaces of members (81.0%), while job-share or part time working is unavailable in two-fifths of members' workplaces (40.4%) and the option to work from home is also unavailable in over half the members' workplaces (54.6%). The high proportion of members (58.4%) listing the option to work from home as a policy which would improve their work (see section 3 above) would appear to be reflective of the lack of opportunities available to members in this respect.

Moving on from the availability of policies to their *use* and perceived *usefulness*, table 7 indicates that there is, again, variation in the use of policies. Where available, almost half of the participants used flexible start and finish times (47.1%) and three fifths the option to work from home at times (58.4%). The next set of policies used the most relate to workload allocation, with around two fifths having sought to agree objectives and targets (38.6%) and clear and attainable deadlines (39.7%) and one quarter holding discussions aimed at planning workload (23.6%). By contrast, most policies aimed at providing support mechanisms for those experiencing difficulties at work have a lower level of use: employee counselling (11.1%); stress management training (10.2%) and workload management training or support (20.4%). Again these results should be considered in light of the responses by members to the policies they would like to see at work, notably flexible working policies and home working, as well as improved procedures for addressing workload (identified in section 3 above).

There are a range of more selective, family-friendly policies, which have been used by PGA members: term time working (7.7%); job-share or part-time working (6.2%); maternity and paternity policies (19.4%); and help with childcare or elderly care (16.1%). Not surprisingly these policies are used more by specific groups of the membership:
- Compared to an overall usage (where available) of 6.2%, women (11.9%); members with caring responsibilities for a child under 16 (8.3%), or an adult relative *and* child under 16 (23.7%) are more likely to have undertaken job share or worked part-time;
- Compared to an overall usage (where available) of 19.4%, women (30.4%); members aged 31-40 (32.7%) or 41-50 (21.3%) and those with caring responsibilities for a child under 16 (43.5%) or an adult relative *and* child under 16 (22.2%), are more likely to have used maternity, paternity or adoption leave policies; and
- Compared to an overall usage (where available) of 16.1%, members with caring responsibilities for a child under 16 (32.4%) or an adult relative (26.7%) are more likely to have availed themselves of policies providing help with child or elderly care.

Finally, Table 7 also shows how PGA members evaluate the usefulness of such policies. One of the issues frequently ignored in surveys of work-life balance and family friendly policies relate to the extent to which such policies are not simply available or used but, crucially, perceived to be useful.

Examining the aggregate data indicates that the policies available which cover substantive terms and conditions appear to be the most useful. In this respect, the option to work from home at times (72.0%); child or elderly care (72.2%) part-time working and job share (66.7%); maternity, paternity or adoption leave (58.9%); and flexible start and finish times (54.5%) are perceived to useful to a large majority of members who have used these policies. By contrast, those policies which relate to procedures to address workload are less likely to be perceived to be useful: discussion of workload planning and allocation (25.0%); agreeing objectives and targets (31.1%) and clear and attainable deadlines (32.5%). Finally, while employee counselling schemes are perceived to be useful by one-third of members (32.5%) who have used them, the effectiveness of stress management training (11.5%) and support in managing workload (24.2%) is quite limited. Due to the relatively small number of members who have actually found these schemes useful, disaggregated analysis has not been undertaken.

When looking at the reasons why members may not have used the policies available, the most frequent response is that such policies were not required (36.1%), while over a quarter of members also claim to be able to manage their work-life balance without these options (25.9%). However, members also highlight a number of barriers that stop them using such policies. One fifth (20.0%) would not use these policies because they could not afford the associated pay cut, while 28.0% claim that the policies are not available to their grade. More worryingly, over a quarter of members (28.5%, n=120) believe that taking up these policies would harm their career; 5.2% (n=22) have applied to take up a policy but been refused by their manager; and (12.1%, n=51) are simply too frightened to ask their manager.

When analysing the disaggregated data in relation to their need for, or failure to be covered by, a policy, the following significant differences emerge:

- Members who consider themselves to be disabled are more likely to state that they are frightened to ask their manager (30.3% compared to 12.1% overall) and that asking for work-life balance policies would harm their career (51.5% compared to 28.5%);
- Members with caring responsibilities for an adult relative *and* child are more likely to claim that they have been refused work-life balance policies by their manager (22.2% compared to 5.2% overall); and
- Members who are not on 'Fair and Sustainable' contracts are less likely to say that work-life balance policies are not required (24.5% compared to 36.1%).

In order to understand the reasons for these responses, participants were invited to complete an open question explaining the reasons why they have not used the listed flexible working policies. Of the 32 responses to this question, the following quotes are indicative of the reasons for members not seeking to use flexible working practices. In the first instance there are PGA members who either question the usefulness or applicability of these work-life balance polices, or highlight their limitations in practice:

I don't believe they are beneficial

Not often conducive to getting work done

The training options that are supposed to help are rubbish. On-line training is a joke. You can't ask questions about anything you don't understand, so you finish feeling more angry and frustrated than when you started. I stay away from such training unless I have to do it and then just do it and get it over with.

[The] quality of stress management training is poor, perfunctory. Same with counselling schemes. Objective setting is flawed, in part due to inadequate annual staff reporting scheme.

Have asked to work from home 1 day a week, [this] has been agreed but no laptop supplied for 4 months so unable to start.

Agreeing objectives is available and does take place. However, workloads are increased by ad-hoc work being piled on by managers and carrying out the Duty Governor role, which can create a massive workload in its own right if you have a busy day with incidents etc.

However, more worryingly, there are also a number of comments that point to an underlying culture that sees recourse to such policies as a sign of personal weakness. These issues will be returned to in the final section of the report:

The response to any suggestion of an excessive workload is to just 'get on with it'.

The expectation [is] that everybody is in the same position and you cannot complain about it, as it's not the corporate thing to do.

There is an atmosphere of, 'if you can't manage, you are not trying hard enough'. This comes from my manager who is working in excess of 12 hour days to keep up and expects subordinates to do the same.

It feels like you are saying you can't do your job.

[My] manager is unapproachable.

Working from home [is] an option that I have used on two separate days. However, this method of managing your workload is not seen favourably by colleagues or managers…[Further] requesting help or admitting that your workload is high, when you are striving to achieve promotion is not considered favourably and does affect career progression opportunities.

Work-life balance, stress and illness

Having examined members' responses to working patterns, workload and policies to address these, the following sub-section now explores work-life balance and the implications of a work-life *imbalance*, in terms of work-related stress and stress-related illness.

Members were asked to evaluate the extent to which it is possible to balance work with their family or private lives and their experience of management's responses to requests for time off to reschedule work around family or caring commitments. One tenth of the participants (10.9%) had few, if any, problems in achieving a work-life balance, but over half (56.5%) sometimes experienced difficulties in achieving this. More worryingly, one third (32.5%) of members found it difficult to achieve a balance at all. Members aged 41-50 (36.6%) and those with caring responsibilities (42.4%) are more likely to state that they find it difficult to achieve a work-life balance all, or nearly all, of the time.

Almost three-fifths of the members surveyed did not usually experience problems in scheduling work around family or caring responsibilities (59.3%), but over one third (36.1%) sometimes experience difficulties doing so and, worryingly, 4.5% (n=20) claimed their employer was never sympathetic when they tried to reschedule work for these reasons.

Those working in an HQ role in London are more likely to state that their employer was usually sympathetic (88.8%).

Longer working hours and increased workload, combined with the limitations of current procedures for workload regulation (see sections 2 and 3 above), are reflected in the work-life balance problems faced, at least sometimes, by 89.0% of members and raise important questions about the impact of work upon PGA members' health.

Members were, therefore, asked about the extent to which they experience stress at work, based upon a definition of stress as one where 'demands placed on you exceed your ability to cope and endanger your health as a result.' One tenth (10.5%) of PGA members claimed not to suffer from work-related stress. A further two fifths (43.2%) claimed to be stressed up to 25% of the time and, on top of this, over one quarter (27.1%) up to 50% of the time. Disturbingly, 12.8% (n=54) of members experienced stress up to 75% of the time and a further 6.4% (n=27) claim to be stress for more than 75% of the time. It should be noted here that members who consider themselves to be disabled are more likely to be stressed over half of the time at work (36.4% compared to 19.2% overall)

Members were then asked about stress-related ill health. Over three fifths of members (61.0%) stated they had suffered from ill health as a result of stress at work. Of those members who had suffered ill health (n=257), over two-thirds (62.3%) had taken stress related sick leave in the last two years. Of these (n=160), three-quarters (75.0%) have been absent for less than 5 days, 8.1% had taken between 5 and 10 days and a further 4.4% had taken between 11 and 20 days off work. More worryingly, one eighth of these members (12.5%) claim they have taken 21 or more days off work as a result of stress-related ill health. When analysing the disaggregated data to examine whether there are significant differences between members in relation to their absence from work for stress-related reasons, women were found to be more likely to have taken 5-20 days off (22.2%), but less likely to have taken less than 5 days off (66.6%). Those members who consider themselves to be disabled are more likely to have taken both 5-20 days off sick (21.4%) and over 20 days off sick (35.7%).

As the survey asked members to select from a range of options (covering a range of days which is categorical rather than continuous data), this makes it impossible to calculate a total of number of days lost to stress related ill health. However, NOMS sickness data for senior operational managers (2014-5) shows that 1,450 working days were lost to sickness due to 'mental and behavioural disorders', while a further 3,090 working days were lost to other forms of sickness. This equates to 1.5 days lost per full-time equivalent post (FTE) in these grades for 'mental and behavioural disorders' and 4.7 days per FTE for all sickness absence.

Among those members who claim to experience stress at work (n=267), three-fifths (60.1%) do not believe that their employer has helped them to cope with the causes of stress while over a quarter (29.6%) felt that their employer had only provided a little help. This was explored further by asking members about their experiences of both the sickness monitoring and capability procedures. Around one eighth of the membership (13.1%) had been subject to sickness monitoring procedures and participants provided a range of views about their experiences. For some the process had been seen positively:

No problem in my case.

Positive and proactive.

Supportive.

> *I was off work for 8 months with a serious illness and was treated very sympathetically by Personnel.*

However for others the experience was mixed or negative:

> *Was well supported by my manager, but pressure applied to get back to work earlier than sick note given by Hospital.*

> *My manager was useless, but this was compensated for by his manger being effective, reasonable and compassionate.*

> *Initially very intimidating as the person managing me also wanted to put me on poor performance measures. However, a replacement manager could not have been more supportive and without their help and that of a new Governing Governor I would not be back at work now.*

> *Confusing as the two managers involved had varied opinions as to how to manage it and contradicted each other, and what I understood of the absence management policy.*

> *Not supportive, a threatening experience to get you back to work without actually dealing with the possible root cause of the stress.*

> *Patronising, intrusive, uncaring, unprofessionally managed, [with a] lack of confidentiality.*

> *Uncomfortable and uncaring due to cause of absence - anxiety through bullying by Senior Manager (DDC).*

By contrast, very few members (4.0%) had been part of a capability hearing, with most noting they also conducted hearings as well as potentially facing a hearing. Again there were examples of capability hearing being 'very supportive for all involved', but a number of concerns were also raised:

> *Very stressful.*

> *I felt very scared and intimidated.*

> *I have observed others going through this process and it is very unnerving, even from an observer's point of view.*

> *I have managed the process and felt frustrated as HQ does not support us to manage staff effectively.*

> *I have answered yes as I conduct and hear capability hearings, but have not been required to attend one as a staff member under investigation. These can be very stressful circumstances not only for the person who is subject to the hearing, but also to hose that conduct them, and have to make decisions about the staff member.*

Again it is difficult to contextualise the issue of sickness absence monitoring and capability procedures, as the survey sought to ask members about *any* experience of these procedures, rather than limit respondents to a particular period. By contrast NOMS data indicates a relatively low number of cases in the 2014-5 with only 14 'discipline and conduct cases', although it is noted that capability hearings are not recorded centrally, unless they result in a decision to dismiss or downgrade or regrade. Nevertheless, the proportion of members indicating that they do not believe the employer to be sympathetic and the poor experiences of some members within these procedures is a cause for concern.

Finally, in this section of the survey members were asked whether they had made a serious error at work as a result of feeling tired or pressured in their jobs. Perhaps it is not surprising, against a background of longer working hours, increased workload, limited access to flexible working policies and opportunities to influence workload, as well as significant levels of stress and stress-related ill health, that 10.5% of members claimed to have made such an error. In order to understand the nature of these errors, participants were invited to complete an open question outlining the error they had made. The following quotes are indicative of some of the stress-related mistakes made by members at work and the impact of these on the delivery of public services.

> *I had so much on I took my eye off the ball and did not check what one of my managers was doing in terms of compliance with an audit. This resulted in a formal investigation.*

> *Failed to correctly sign a safety algorithm and was subject to a formal disciplinary investigation and threatened with a demotion of 3 bands. The investigation concluded it was an accidental error and did not recommend disciplinary action. The case took in excess of 3 months to resolve and hung like the sword of Damocles. An exceptionally stressful time.*

> *Angry outburst to colleague. Grievance procedure [followed].*

> *I never use expletives, but I was just finishing a 10 day period at work. Therefore, due to the length of time at work, the pressure and workload over the protracted working period, I swore during an adjudication at an offender. I immediately apologised and thankfully my error did not materialise into a complaint. I am concerned that other errors may occur during operational incidents due to the need to work long periods to keep up with the constant drive for delivery with limited resources.*

> *Made an accounting error during an audit, caused by pressure of the audit - the actual figures were correct but the record was wrong because I made a mistake due to stress.*

> *Made a wrong decision on categorisation due to pressure of work and time to research correctly and he later absconded and re-offended.*

> *Routinely whilst undertaking Duty Governor and managing a very high workload, with ridiculously short deadlines for new work coming thick and fast, I have made decisions too quickly when managing incidents when, in retrospect, I should have taken the time to find out more information and support the less experienced newly promoted staff in their direct management of the incident. However, because you are always juggling a thousand things at any one time, sometimes I am being put in the position where I am barking a quick response to a question from a newly promoted CM and the incident escalates and in retrospect it's because my decision was a crappy one, but one I didn't have time to think through properly.*

The quotes illustrate the serious types of error that can occur, affecting the delivery of the essential public service conducted by PGA members, and how these are linked to the increasing workload that these members have to address. They also indicate how under workload pressure such mistakes often escalate to further procedures or investigations which, in turn, take up more time and create additional pressures. It is argued, in light of the evidence of increases to working time and workload, the limited impact of effective work-life balance policies and the resultant levels of work-related stress, that there will be a significant impact on the quality of public service provision.

Summary

This section has highlighted a number of worrying issues that result from the increases to working hours and workload. In terms of policies aimed at facilitating a work-life balance, one of the issues to emerge is the lack of availability of some key work-life balance and flexible working policies. While the non-availability of some, such as term time working, may reflect problems of matching flexible working policies to operational demands, the provision of others, notably the option to work at home, support with caring responsibilities and part-time working, could be expected from a progressive employer.

It is, however, worrying that policies are also not being taken up by members because: of the cost in terms of pay; they are not being made available; or requests are being refused by managers; and they would, if asked for, have a detrimental effect on career advancement. Indeed, these are the most disturbing findings in the report, where it appears that, for many members, there is a strong workplace culture in which you are expected to 'get on with it', not complain and not request additional support. The views reported of members around this correspond to the earlier finding that a significant majority of members work additional hours because it is expected of them and this will be explored further in the next section. It is also worth noting that family-friendly and flexible working policies are deemed to be more effective than other workload policies. By contrast, and following on from members highlighting the importance of procedures to provide more meaningful participation in the discussion and setting of workload, it is disappointing to note that policies linked to workload allocation are found to be far less effective by members.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find that almost nine-tenths of members surveyed experience some problems achieving a work-life balance and one third experience difficulties almost all the time. A third of the members surveyed also experience difficulties scheduling work around family commitments at least some of the time.

The final part of this section explored the extent to which workload and problems securing a work-life balance lead to work-related stress and ill health. While only one-tenth of members never suffer from stress as work, around one fifth are stressed more than half of the time at work. A key finding to emerge from the survey is the high proportion of members (60.1%) who had suffered ill health as a result of work-related stress, while a further three fifths of these have taken time off work sick as a result in the last two years. Again it should be noted that three-fifths of members suffering work-related stress did not believe their employer had helped them to cope with the causes of stress, and this is supported, in part, by the experiences of members facing sickness absence monitoring procedures.

It should also be noted, following on from the findings in the previous section, that while there are not many significant differences to emerge from the findings, members who consider themselves to be disabled are are more likely to be frightened to ask their manager for work-life balance policies and to believe that asking for such policies would damage their career. They also experience higher levels of stress and have taken more time off sick in comparison to other members. This suggests that treatment of disabled staff needs careful policy consideration.

Finally, tangible evidence of the problems that arise from increasing working hours and workload, the limited impact of work-life balance policies and work-related stress, can be found from members' reports of the serious errors made at work, directly as a result of stress, with 10.5% of members admitting to having made such errors. This highlights how attempts

to simultaneously reduce staffing and resources and increase productivity can be counter-productive, an issue worth considering when examining the potential impact of the development of new working practices in relation to the 'Fair and Sustainable' and 'benchmarking' policy processes.

Section 5: New working practices and members' working experiences

Having looked at the impact of current working hours and workload, the limited availability and use of work-life balance policies (particularly in relation to workload management) as well as the issues of work-life imbalance, stress and ill-health faced by PGA members, this section of the report examines their views in relation to the current changes in working practices associated with the Fair and Sustainable working structure agreed in 2012 and the subsequent focus on reform as part of the 'benchmarking' of public sector prisons against those in the private sector. The section then examines the views of PGA members provided in an open question at the end of the survey about their overall views on working conditions.

The perceived aims and effect new working practices

Table 8 presents members' views on changes to terms and conditions associated with restructuring in the prison service, focusing upon the necessity for these changes in a period of austerity and the aims of such reforms.

Table 8: The aims and effect of changes to working practices

	Agree %	Disagree %
The proposed changes to the terms and conditions are simply a means of getting more done for less	87.0	6.8
I expect the changes applied to new recruits to be extended to all jobs in due course	75.9	8.4
Performance management practices will be used to hold down pay	70.1	12.5
These changes will make it harder for me to provide a good service to the public	60.7	21.2
These changes will demotivate me in my job	59.9	23.2
Any changes to terms and conditions of service following promotion will deter me from seeking to be promoted	59.5	26.8
The introduction of new performance management practices are needed to deal with new working practices	54.2	27.2
Performance management practices are being introduced to intensify work	52.3	23.6
In a time of austerity such measures are needed to maintain public services	51.3	36.1
Total	**421**	

The results show that a large majority of members agree that these changes are an attempt to 'get more done for less' (87.0%), with performance management perceived by over half the participants (52.3%) as being used to intensify work (52.3%) and, by over two-thirds (70.1%), to hold down pay. However, there is also a majority (54.2%) who believe that the use of performance management is also necessary given the nature of the new working practices.

Responses to a further set of questions on the impact of reforms on terms and conditions also provide a clear indication that a large majority of members see them as detrimental. Three-fifths of members (59.5%) agree that the application of new terms and conditions on securing promotion would act as a deterrence in seeking promotion, and that the overall impact of reforms will be to demotivate members at work (59.9%). It is also anticipated that (weaker) terms and conditions applied to new recruits will be, in time, extended to all employees (75.9%). While over half of those surveyed do agree that the changes are necessary in the name of austerity (51.3%) there is also a recognition that such changes will impact on their ability to deliver an essential public service (60.7%).

Analysis of the disaggregated data highlight that gender provides the main explanation for significant differences between respondents based on personal characteristics;

- Men are more likely than women to agree that changes to terms and conditions were about getting more done for less (90.2% compared to 78.4%); that performance management is used to intensify work (58.9% compared to 34.5%) and to hold down pay (75.7% compared to 55.2%); that any changes to terms and conditions would deter them from seeking promotion (63.7% compared to 48.3%) and be de-motivating (64.4% compared to 47.0%). By contrast, women are more likely than men to agree that austerity requires such reforms (65.5% compared to 45.8%); and
- Members aged 51-60 (71.25%) are more likely to agree that changes to terms and conditions would deter them from seeking promotion, while those aged 40 and under are less likely to agree (33.3%).

Focusing upon the different contractual status of members surveyed, it is noticeable that few differences emerge between those on Fair and Sustainable contracts or not and none between those with reserved rights under Fresh Start and those without. However, the following statistically significantly differences did emerge:

- Members who have not opted in to Fair and Sustainable contracts are more likely than those who have to believe changes to terms and conditions would deter them from seeking promotion (67.8% compared to 54.8%). They are, however, less likely to believe that the changes are making it harder for them to deliver a good public service (67.5% compared to 52.3%).

While the findings highlight that a large majority of members believe that the changes reflect attempts to intensify work and will have further negative effects upon their jobs and delivering their public service, there is also a recognition that some degree of reform is required on the grounds of austerity or in line with new working practices. However, to get a fuller understanding of the view of members, they were asked to complete one further open question about their working conditions, in regard to working hours, workload, work-life balance and stress. It is important to note that over one quarter of all respondents (n=110) took the time to complete this question, highlighting the importance of this topic to PGA members. The following quotes provide an overview of the key issues that the members want to be reported. Firstly, the position of workload is looked at, in terms of reductions in staffing and resources, increases to workload and working time and their consequences:

> *My main cause of stress is [the] volume of work and unrealistic deadlines. There is also nowhere to delegate where there is spare capacity so, although occasionally I could delegate work, I am unable to do as this would simply over burden someone else.*

It is very difficult at the moment trying to get a reasonable balance. Work that is coming the way of Operational Managers in becoming unmanageable and causing high levels of concern in respect of non-delivery, and the consequences that may arise as a result.

There has been a serious reduction in staff resource and no reduction in work expected. We are a people organisation that is now process driven….. [This] takes me away from my core work as a governor - managing the prisoners and staff.

In order to stay afloat at my previous prison I had no option but to complete significant additional hours including regularly working weekends and evenings outside my hours and completing work at home. If I did not do this I would not have been able to sustain my job.

The demands are far greater with less staff, work is always being added never taken away. You never have enough time to get your work done regardless of how long you remain in work.

Once Duty Governor, Adjudications, 2 day checks, HDC boards, Rule 45 reviews and so on are taken into account, I have very little time left in the week to operate as a functional head and manage and develop teams.

The levels of work output expectations have reached ridiculous levels. Prison operational staff are working in dangerous conditions [and] staffing levels have been reduced to unsafe proportions. Workloads are not achievable in the 37 hours working week. They are unrealistic and based clearly on finance and reducing the on-costs in a service that has, clearly, been neglected for many years in [terms of] both investment and modernisation

There is an expectation placed upon us that we are responsible for managing our own workload. But if we work extra hours it is frowned upon if we actually take the additional hours off. You, therefore, end up working many extra hours to keep on top of everything with no time off. There are other pressures and work which is not specifically related to my actual job which is additional pressure. [I] End up working early, staying late and this impacts upon family time

As Duty manager over a weekend, you are on duty and 'on call' for approx. 72 hours (Friday am to Monday am). This adds to the levels of stress you experience. With greatly reduced resources to manage incidents, this places greater stress upon you as your performance/ability is criticised.

Stress is caused by the volume of work we are asked to do and the reduced numbers of staff to do it. Local managers are sympathetic, but can do little to change the new structure which is simply wrong for the job I do. The lack of staff available to do the volume of work required means that much is not done, most not done properly, and stress is caused by the constant fear of being 'caught out' and knowing that you are not doing the job well. You can always see what you should be doing rather than just 'getting by' and the temptation is to remain at work to do more and reduce this stress. However, one can only do that for so long and I am trying to work fewer hours ...but the work remains undone.

It is not only the length of time spent at work but the unrelenting pressures that exist while there. It is possible to work under pressure for short, time-bound periods but not for months on end, and not without any improvement in sight.

The role of reform and changes to working practices are clearly linked to these developments in the prison service:

Work pressure is hard for all managers. we were told as the staff were slimmed down, so would processes. This is not the case and workloads are on the increase with different departments asking for more and more reports which don't seem a lot on their own but add up when put alongside each other. I don't expect this to change or improve.

Delivery of national initiatives, savings, and new working structures/practices has increased stress dramatically, not only through increased workloads, but also the stress associated with change itself, which has required longer hours and in turn put pressure on the WLB.

New ways of working, whilst understanding the need to re-structure and [to] encourage officers to take more responsibility and be accountable, in turn leaves Governor grades completely expose., I manage Custodial managers that are often 4 weeks out of the system. How can that be right, fair or sustainable?

With the reduction in staffing the service hasn't reduced the procedural workload to go with it. Functional Heads also now have to spend half their time covering for managers doing nights / leave in terms of HR issues which, with up to 20% of your work force not at work, is meaning other important work is not being done or rushed to a poor standard.

As per Prison Service Instruction 26/2013, by virtue of the role I am permanently on call. This is accepted as part of the role in a senior position, but nevertheless, it does not detract from the fact that it exists and has been considered a significantly extensive and far reaching occupation that seeps into external life more so than other senior roles in other occupations would. Accepting, acknowledging and appreciating this is crucial for both the individual and organisation to ensure long term accomplishment.

Having been an operational manager for 8 years, I have always worked additional hours both at work and home. However, prior to Fair & Sustainable and benchmarking, this was my choice as I enjoyed my work and would try to ensure my department was performing highly. Since Fair & Sustainable and benchmarking I work additional hours due to being involved in the management of incidents, or for the purpose of trying to attain an adequate level of performance. To summarise; previously the extra work was so the prison would be exceptional, now it is to improve from being below average.

The prioritisation and deadlines are unmanageable as there is little or no resource to delegate to, added to by a series of releases of additional systems and processes driven by the centre.

Staff structures have been redesigned, but the work has not reduced so I am forced to do more work or miss deadlines, which are then seen as indications of poor performance.

The issue of how workload pressures and work-life balance policies are addressed was subject to a range of responses from PGA members. Some highlighted that difficulties lay above their immediate management, because of the general increase in workload:

To be fair to my Governor, he was incredibly supportive when I went through my divorce. The issue isn't about unsympathetic managers. It's about the volume of work with no staff support.

The biggest issue is not unsympathetic managers… but sheer workload. More and more work gets added [which] along with constant organisational change means work life balance is very difficult to achieve.

I have a WLB arrangement but this not make the work load any easier as the work is still there when you come back.

Have been lucky that my manager has been sympathetic when my daughter goes in and out of hospital, but feel that I have to work twice as hard nowadays just to stand still. I work through every single lunch and tea break as I cannot afford to take time off as my workload is so big.

Underpinning many of the responses, however, were claims of a culture which appeared to ignore, or even penalise, those who tried to address workload and work-life balance issues:

There is an absolute and unwritten expectation that you manage your work within the hours you have available. There is no sign of any managerial effort to interpret whether what is being demanded exceeds the amount of hours you are contracted to work - which invariably it does!

Because I do not have children, I am seen as not having family responsibilities, though I am carer for my house bound mother. To date I have used my [annual] leave to facilitate when necessary. I feel my manager treats my responsibility as an excuse.

I would return to part time working in a flash, however I do not feel this is encouraged or offered because workloads are very challenging and whilst managerial grades have been slashed delivery expectations remain high and often unrealistic.

WLB schemes are available but I have sat in meetings with HRBPs, the DDC and governors who talk about the 'special people' who have managed to get themselves onto reduced hours or part time. They refer to it as a huge hindrance to the organisation. As somebody who has caring responsibilities for both of my young children and my partner I find it quite disgraceful that the senior leaders within the organisation quite openly behave in this way towards staff that are juggling and trying to achieve WLB.

Currently have a WLB in place (compressed hours and fixed rest day) which was agreed and 3 other Governors have this in place as well at the same prison. However, I have been told I am moving prisons as part of the talent strategy and have to re-apply for WLB. I have re-applied and have been refused even though no other Governor has a WLB in place there. This means I will be spending less time with my son and increased childcare costs.

Similarly, members highlighted the difficulties addressing stress both in organisational terms and when dealing with management:

Stress is a dirty word in the Prison Service and yet it is becoming more common. The danger is that individuals do not recognise it until it is too late and managers cannot afford to spend the time dealing with it because of their own workload. The management of stress in the service is ineffective and will continue to be so until it is taken seriously and given the time, attention and resources it should have.

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The Prison Service does not provide good or realistic support for those suffering from stress. From personal experience, when there is a recognised issue you are not then allowed to continue with the support due to the service being restricted to 6 sessions of counselling!

Occupational Health is simply not available anymore, each region and HQ should have a dedicated senior manager responsible for stress and staff management as it would seem most Governors are no longer interested in the health of their staff or they feel it is someone else's responsibility.

Lip service is paid to Stress Management and providing tools to "staff" to manage stress and when you are open and honest enough to admit to stress and/or depression it is used against you, damages your career prospects and you are regarded as a weak manager/team member.

I do not honestly think stress is allowed as a senior manager. All services to reduce stress seem to be aimed at supporting staff below manager grade. Stress in management grades is not recognised, ignored or assumed that we will just deal with it. To be honest I am scared to say that I am at times stressed and more often than not prioritise work over family and home life… Rightly or wrongly, I believe that as new Governor admitting that you feel stressed or even hinting that you might not be coping will damage your career.

My line manager is so autocratic in his approach that it is impossible to say how I feel or think as it would be classed as 'weakness'. I feel unsupported, constantly challenged unnecessarily, and strongly believe that I am just a number.

The stress is not only from the volume of work, it is also the fear of making an error and the heavy handed consequences that have been evident during the tenure of the current Governor who has thrived on a reputation for dismissing and regrading individuals.

Consequently, some members highlighted what they perceived to be a lack of interest or action from the highest management levels in the service:

Higher Management are aware of the pressures, demands and workloads on Operational Managers and 6 members have had stress related absences/illnesses in the past 2-3 years. Despite this nothing has improved, in fact the situation has got worse.

The service is fully aware of the stresses and balance at work but don't want to recognise it or do anything about it. To admit it would be viewed as a weakness.

NOMS/HMPS Senior Management fail to voice such concerns [over the demands placed upon staff] and merely enforce the demands in a manner which makes it clear that any suggestion that they are unreasonable or unrealistic is a failure on behalf of the individual raising them… This approach is mirrored at establishment level, with the Governor and Deputy Governor unwilling to challenge any directive from HQ as unreasonable or unachievable, merely imposing it down the management chain without recognising the impact the new process has on existing workloads.

Three personal stories in particular appear to provide evidence of significant problems with the management of work-life balance and stress:

I feel so stressed and take medication for anxiety. I am on WLB but have to cope with bad feelings from my colleagues regarding this, yet I have a four and a five year old. My time at home is spoilt by worrying about work. I am unable to speak to my manager about this … she told me she is not interested in people's private lives and they should not bring it to work. I would love the option to work from home one day a week, but it is only the governor and deputy that are allowed to do that despite the long journeys that the rest of us face. I have to take medication the night before I am due at work or I cannot sleep due to worrying about work. If I could afford to leave I would….. I used to love this job and I still love the people but cannot cope with the pressures….Such a shame that the service has gone this way.

I had a break-down due to stress at work and I was not offered any help other than a period on restricted duties [and a] progressive return to work after being off for three months. My Governor visited me at home just after I had the break-down and he asked me with a straight face if I had considered taking a VEDS package (leaving the organisation) and I threw him out of the house! There is no understanding at senior level of the pressures operational managers are under and we are all expendable.

For Q.26 I said that my employer is not sympathetic when I need time off around child care responsibilities. [The] truth is I would not ask and when I have needed last minute time off for childcare I have lied about it, as my experience when hearing other staff being discussed is that I will be mocked and thought less of for childcare leave… Whilst off on maternity leave my Governing Governor and Dep[uty] changed and on my first day back and for the length of my time at that prison it was made clear to me that I was thought less off because I had had 'time off'. Previous SPDRs [had reported] about my ability to develop and progress, but once I returned from maternity leave I was being told I required significant development to be 'satisfactory in my current grade'. I felt that I was continually undermined, bullied and humiliated just because I had the 'cheek' to take maternity leave even though I was on full operational duties up until I took maternity leave at 38 weeks. I feel that taking maternity leave has damaged my career and set me back.

Summary

This section has highlighted the views held by PGA members about some of the changes to working practices and terms and conditions that have developed under 'Fair and Sustainable' and benchmarking'. While there is a recognition of the need for some measures due to austerity, the impact of these changes are demotivating and, in the opinion of a majority of PGA members, affect their ability to deliver an essential public service.

The comments written by members highlight how the high levels of working hours and workload are becoming unsustainable as a result of staff reductions and these new working practices, but also highlight the acute problems that affect members in relation to trying to manage workload, promote a work-life balance and address stress. The apparent failure of management at establishment and higher levels of the service to accept the need for flexible working and account for stress has created a dangerous culture of acceptance of workload pressures, with identifying stress or requesting flexible working perceived to be weaknesses and a threat to careers. The consequences of this, in terms of members with caring responsibilities, those suffering work-related stress and those simply wishing to spend more time with their families, have been reflected in the findings presented in earlier sections, but are 'bought to life' by some of the stories told by members in this section of the survey.

Section 6: Conclusion

The PGA *Working Hours, Workload and Work-life Balance Survey* findings present a depressing picture of increasing working hours and workload across the prison service, with few opportunities for PGA members to benefit from their increased productivity in terms of pay, promotion or improvements to substantive employment conditions, and an absence of effective procedures to provide members with a mechanism to effectively regulate their workload and the associated targets and deadlines. This weak and ineffective regulation of workload and working time creates problems for many members in securing a meaningful work-life balance, with work increasingly encroaching upon private lives and, in the worst cases, causing work-related stress and ill-health.

The findings reported in the first section indicate that virtually all PGA members work, on average, in excess of their contract hours, with two fifths working in excess of 48 hours a week, and that the main reasons for these hours to keep on top of workload and because additional hours are increasingly seen to be 'expected'. When on call hours, commuting and travelling between locations are considered, then the scope for excessive working time is evident, while relatively few members are able to work these hours exclusively at home.

This last point is highlighted in the second section of the report where increasing hours and increasing workload are associated with problems in members' private lives. While members still gain enjoyment and fulfilment from their jobs and try to ensure that work does not dominate their life, current working practices are having a negative impact on their experience of work. Half the members do not believe that their workload is planned and under control and four-fifths come to work when they are ill. The increases in working time and workload are also impacting on members' lives, encroaching upon their holidays, on time spent with family and friends, and leading, in a small but important number of cases, to frequent problems in relationships with partners and children. Members identify both material improvements (reducing the extent of cuts, providing additional resources and improving pay and conditions, and introducing flexible working practices) and better procedures to manage and influence workload, (ensuring that managers take workload issues seriously, address problems and complaints more effectively and provide training to allow members to use new work systems) as the way to improve the problems they experience with workload.

The reasons why these measures, particularly flexible working and procedural policies, are identified by members becomes apparent in section three of the report, where members report the limited availability of many flexible working, workload allocation and support policies, as well as the limited usefulness of others. It is important to highlight that members deem family-friendly and flexible working policies to be more effective than most other workload allocation and support policies. However, it is worrying that such policies are not being taken up by some members because of the cost in terms of reduced pay, through unavailability to certain grades or because requests to utilise such policies are refused by their managers. Indeed, the comments made by members in relation to why they do not take policies to address workload and improve their work-life balance, provide evidence of a culture of 'getting on with it' within (parts of) the prison service, with a lack of understanding and tolerance amongst some senior managers in relation to the pressures of workload. It is, therefore, not surprising to find that over half of members surveyed experience some problems achieving a work-life balance, while one third experience difficulties almost all the time. In addition, over one third of the members surveyed sometimes experienced difficulties scheduling work around family commitments.

Perhaps some of the most disturbing survey findings relate to the impact of working hours and workload on PGA members in terms of work-related stress and ill health. Around one fifth of members are stressed more than half of the time while at work, while over three-fifths have suffered ill health as a result of work-related stress. Of those taking time off work due to stress in the last two years, one eighth have taken over 20 days' absence as a result of stress. Unfortunately, three-fifths of the PGA members experiencing stress did not believe that their employer helps them to cope with the causes of stress. Some members' comments also reflect a similar negative culture to that identified in relation to workload, while others have poor experiences from participating in sickness absence monitoring and capability procedures.

Finally, tangible evidence of the problems that arise from increasing working hours and workload, the limited impact of work-life balance policies and work-related stress, can be found from members' reports of the serious errors made at work as a result of stress, with 10.5% of members admitting to have made such errors. As the comments presented in the report illustrate, these errors can be attributed to the increasing workload of members and how this has affected their ability to carry out their work. This highlights how attempts to simultaneously reduce staffing and resources and increase productivity can be counter-productive and undermine the delivery of essential public services and this is reflected in members' assessment of the impact of 'Fair and Sustainable', 'benchmarking' and the move toward an encompassing performance management system. While (some) changes are recognised as necessary as part of the government's austerity programme, the current policies are seen to be detrimental to their jobs, demotivating and hindering the effective delivery of public services.

While analysis of the disaggregated data does not provide substantive evidence of significant differences in views between PGA members, and should not detract from the importance of the overall (aggregate) findings, two areas appear to raise particular concerns. Firstly, given that, overall, members have limited time to spend with their family, the impact of workload and limited work-life balance policies do disproportionately affect those with caring responsibilities, who are more likely to state that: they do not see their family as often they would like; their partner has taken on unfair share of caring commitments; and working so hard has affected their relationships with their children. It is also the case that they are more likely to report that they have been refused work-life balance policies by their manager. Secondly, there are a number of worrying findings reported by members who identify themselves as disabled. These members are more likely to: work additional hours out of the fear of losing their job and due to pressure from managers; come to work when ill; state that they are frightened to ask their manager for work-life balance policies and believe that asking for work-life balance policies would harm their career. Finally, they are more likely to be stressed over half of the time at work. These findings highlight the need to carefully review the position of these employees with protected characteristics and rights under law.

In summary, the survey provides an important snapshot of members' views, revealing significant concerns about the management of working hours, workload, work-life balance and stress in the prison service, as reflected by the numerous (open) comments made by members, which are reported in the final section of the report. One central concern that arises from the findings relates to evidence of a culture of ignorance or intolerance among senior management levels that is either unsympathetic to the detrimental impact of workload and working hours on PGA members, echoing the findings of the Blaxendale

report into the senior civil service[12], or unable to respond to these due to the constraints imposed by the systematic and unrelenting reforms implemented in the service. However, it also raises important questions of the efficacy of such an approach to the management of labour in the service, particularly in terms of long term sustainability. Given that the survey sample is skewed towards younger PGA members, it is particularly worrying that two-fifths are considering changing jobs if these conditions stay the same, while the lack of substantive recognition for the (additional) work undertaken by committed PGA members also raises concerns about turnover and staff morale. It is perhaps, apt, to end the report with four further comments that relate to the issue of sustainability.

If Governor grades all collectively worked their 37 hours, the Prison Service would cease to operate. Managers are now leaving the service, (see the number of Governing Governors that have resigned) [and] this will increase as the economy recovers. Many managers no longer want promotion for fear of increased pressure/workload (see number of [grade] 9, 10 and 11 jobs that have struggled to be filled). It's time to make a change, reduce Governor hours, ensure WLB. 50 hours a week on a 37 hour contract is unacceptable.

There is no financial recognition of the additional work carried out by many PGA members in establishments where there is an increased need for operational commitment and the additional hours worked in covering and supporting B3 roles, whilst trying to complete existing and increasing, functional workloads. I regularly work at home in the evenings and at weekends, in addition to excessive hours at work, just to have a level of control over my workload to enable me to enjoy my time with my children without worrying about work.

Increasing workloads due to resourcing issues are creating more stress in the workplace and this, coupled with a line manager who has unreasonable expectations and a lack of understanding results, in an untenable position. Of my current SMT half are looking to leave The Prison Service including myself.

*Personally I am looking to leave the service as I feel it is now the worse it has ever been. I have been in the service 25 years and I was Prison Service through and through, [but] now I am looking forward to leaving the service. **All** staff are under massive and increasing pressures that require more time spent in work just to cover the basics and the increasing demands made due to new initiatives and reductions in staffing. This leads to higher sick rates, therefore, increasing managers' workloads because the work still has be completed.*

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12   *The Independent October 11th 2015, Senior Civil Service is like a 'snake pit' that isolates and rejects outsiders.*

Appendix 1: PGA survey questions and responses

Section 1

In this section of the survey we would like to find out about your working hours

Q.1 On average, how many hours do you actually work per week (including time spent working from home, but not hours spent "on-call")?

	Actual %
16-21 hours	0.2
22-37 hours	1.4
38-48 hours	57.2
Over 48 hours	41.3
Total responses (n)	**421**

Q.2 How many hours are you "on-call" per week?

	Actual %
0	8.6
1-10 hours	5.9
11-20 hours	42.8
21-30 hours	18.3
31-40 hours	5.5
41-70 hours	7.1
71-100 hours	10.9
Over 100 hours	1.0
Total responses (n)	**421**

Q.3 If you have indicated that you work over your contracted 37 hours per week (excluding "on-call" hours), what are the main reasons for any additional hours you work? **Responses ranked**

	%	n
To keep up with my workload	94.5	398
It is expected of me	60.1	253
Pressure from managers	18.3	77
I choose to work extra hours at times	17.1	72
I enjoy my work	12.6	53
I like the sense of achievement I get at work	9.3	39
I am afraid of losing my job	9.0	38
Pressure from colleagues	5.5	23
To gain promotion	3.8	16
The hours I work are planned	3.6	15
I enjoy being with colleagues	1.0	4
For overtime payments	1.0	4
I do not work additional hours	1.0	4
I want to extend my contractual working hours	0.2	1

Q.4 If you work over your contracted hours, where are these additional hours worked?

	%
At my place of work	55.7
At home	1.7
A combination of both	42.6
Total responses (n)	**413**

Q.5   How long is your journey to your normal place of work (work location)?

	%
Up to 30 minutes	38.2
31 to 60 minutes	45.6
61 to 120 minutes	14.0
Over 120 minutes	2.1
Total responses (n)	**421**

Q.6   If you are expected to travel (more than once per week) to a workplace away from your usual work location, by how much is your journey increased?

	%
No journey increase	68.1
Up to 30 minutes	5.8
31 to 60 minutes	8.8
Over 60 minutes	17.3
Total responses (n)	**342**

Q.7   Compared to a year ago, have your average weekly working hours?

	%
Decreased	3.8
Remained the same	43.0
Increased	53.2
Total responses (n)	**421**

Section 2

In this section of the survey we would like to find out about your workload, how hard you feel you are working and any impact this may have upon your work and your life

Q.8   Compared to a year ago, have your workload?

	%
Decreased	1.9
Remained the same	16.2
Increased	81.9
Total responses (n)	**421**

Q.9   If you have indicated in the last question that your workload has increase over the previous year, to what would you attribute this increase? **Responses ranked**

	%	n
Introduction of new working practices	79.1	273
Reduced staffing levels	71.6	247
Introduction of new work systems (e.g. IT)	44.3	153
Increased personal targets (e.g. through PM)	31.0	107
Other *(open question)*		
Total responses (n)		**345**

Q.10   To what extent do you agree with the following statements in respect of your current job?

	Strongly agree %	Agree %	No view %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %
I enjoy the challenges of my job	24.2	60.3	5.9	8.3	1.2
I am so busy that I come in to work even when I am ill	30.4	48.9	9.0	10.5	1.2
I am in control of the role work plays in my life	2.1	38.7	10.0	41.8	7.4
I feel more fulfilled when I am busy	5.9	61.0	15.7	16.9	0.5
I feel my job here is insecure	7.1	26.4	18.5	38.5	9.5
I find my job very rewarding	14.0	52.5	14.3	17.3	1.9
I have had medical advice to cut down my working hours	5.7	15.4	18.5	32.3	28.0
I make sure work does not dominate my whole life	5.7	46.6	9.7	33.3	4.8
I would like to control the hours I work but do not know how	10.0	32.8	19.5	31.6	6.2
If conditions remain as they are I will consider changing jobs	15.2	27.3	19.2	28.5	9.7
My working relationship with my manager is poor	4.0	8.6	10.9	39.0	37.5
My workload is generally well planned and under control	1.4	33.0	15.4	39.7	10.5
When I am not working I do not know what to do with my time	1.4	2.4	4.0	34.4	57.7
When I take time off I miss my work	0.2	7.4	8.1	35.4	48.9
My working relationship with my colleagues is good	29.5	61.3	6.2	2.6	0.5
Work is an important part of my life	14.0	68.9	10.0	5.9	1.2
Total (n)	**421**				

Q.11   To what extent do you agree with the following statements in respect of your current job?

	Frequently %	Sometimes %	Never %	Not applicable %
Friends and family have commented on the hours I work	58.9	36.8	4.3	0.0
I do not take all of my annual leave or Time off in Lieu entitlements	30.4	37.3	29.9	2.4
I do not see my family as much as I would like	42.3	45.1	9.7	2.9
I have pretended to be ill in order to take a day's break	0.2	4.0	92.9	2.9
I have cancelled holidays or cut them short through work	10.7	55.8	33.0	0.5
I have missed family and social occasions through work	18.8	72.2	8.6	0.5
My partner/spouse has to take an unfair share of caring commitments	27.1	31.8	27.8	13.3
My partner/spouse has to take an unfair share of domestic work	32.3	36.8	16.4	14.5
I resent the hours I spend at work away from family and friends	17.1	58.4	21.1	3.3
When I go on holiday, it takes me several days to 'wind down'	62.2	30.4	6.9	0.5
When I return to work after a holiday, I do not feel rested	34.0	51.1	14.7	0.2
Work has affected my relationship with my partner/spouse	22.3	51.8	20.7	5.2
Working so hard has affected my relationships with my children	16.4	42.3	20.2	21.1
Total (n)	**421**			

Q.12   What do you feel would make the biggest improvements to your work?

	Strongly agree %	Agree %	No view %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %
Additional resources and/or staffing	49.6	39.9	4.5	4.5	1.4
Being able to control my workload	24.7	51.5	11.2	11.6	1.0
Being given clearer deadlines	6.4	24.9	28.3	37.5	2.9
Being given clearer objectives	9.5	29.2	21.6	36.3	3.3
Better communication between management and staff	10.5	41.1	15.4	30.6	2.4
Better planning of workload	8.6	47.0	18.8	23.5	2.1
Better policies against bullying	11.2	9.5	31.6	38.0	9.7
Better training in using technology	21.4	37.3	16.6	21.1	3.6
Higher pay levels	39.0	37.1	13.5	9.5	1.0
Improved support services (e.g. counselling)	12.8	30.9	35.2	20.0	1.2
Flexible working options	25.2	40.1	22.6	10.9	1.2
Having more time to spend with my family	36.6	48.5	9.5	5.0	0.5
Better promotion prospects	24.5	32.1	26.8	13.8	2.9
Less cost cutting	53.9	34.4	8.1	3.1	0.5
More effective managers	28.7	41.3	14.3	13.8	1.9
More effective colleagues	25.4	42.3	17.6	13.5	1.2
More holidays	15.4	25.7	30.6	26.4	1.9
More sympathetic responses to complaints	15.7	23.8	37.1	20.7	2.9
More positive attitudes towards managing workloads and solving problems	29.7	45.4	14.0	10.5	0.5
Option to work from home	21.6	36.8	20.2	16.2	5.2
Total (n)					**421**

Section 3

In this section of the survey we would like to ask you about work-related stress

Q.13   One way of defining stress is when the demands placed on you exceed your ability to cope and endanger your health as a result.   Do you often feel stressed in this way?

	%
None of the time	10.5
25% of the time or less	43.2
Up to 50% of the time	27.1
Up to 75% of the time	12.8
More than 75% of the time	6.4
Total responses (n)	**421**

Q.14   Have you ever suffered from ill health that you felt was related to stress at work?

	%
Yes	61.0
No	39.0
Total responses (n)	**421**

Q.15 If you have taken time off work as a result of stress *in the last two years*, for how many working days were you absent from work?

	%
Less than 5 days	75.0
5-10 days	8.1
11-20 days	4.4
21-40 days	5.0
Over 40 days	7.5
Total responses (n)	**160**

Q.16 Do you feel that your employer helped you to cope with the causes of stress?

	%
Yes	10.1
A little	29.6
No	60.3
Total responses (n)	**267**

Q.17 Have you ever been so tired or pressured at work that you have made a serious error?

	%
Yes	10.5
No	89.5
Total responses (n)	**421**

Q.18 If yes, give a brief description of your most serious error and its consequences *(open question)*

Q.19 Have you ever experienced being managed under the sick monitoring procedures?

	%
Yes	13.1
No	86.9
Total responses (n)	**421**

Q.20 If yes, how did you find the experience? *(open question)*

Q.21 Have you ever experienced a capability hearing?

	%
Yes	4.0
No	96.0
Total responses (n)	**421**

Q.22 If yes, how did you find the experience? *(open question)*

Section 4

In this section of the survey we would like to find out about your access to, use and usefulness of various management policies that may help you manage your workload and your work-life balance.

Q.23 Which of the following are available in your workplace and which do you feel have been the most successful?

	Do not know %	Not Available %	Available %	Available and have used %	Available, used and found useful %
Option to work from home at times	7.6	54.6	15.7	6.2	15.9
Term time only working	15.9	81.0	2.9	0.2	0.0
Job-share / Part Time working	13.8	40.4	43.0	1.0	1.9
Flexible start and finish times	6.2	20.7	38.7	15.7	18.8
Help with childcare or elderly care	27.8	45.6	22.3	1.2	3.1
Employee counselling schemes	8.8	5.5	76.2	6.4	3.1
Stress management training	22.8	16.6	54.4	5.5	0.7
Maternity/paternity/adoption leave	7.6	3.1	72.0	7.1	10.2
Discussion of workload planning and allocation	22.6	25.2	39.9	9.3	3.1
Agreeing objectives and targets	7.6	9.3	51.1	22.1	10.0
Agreeing clear and attainable deadlines	11.4	15.0	44.4	19.7	9.5
Training / support in managing workload	30.4	31.1	30.6	5.9	1.9
Total (n)					**421**

Q.24 If any of the above options are available but you have not used them, what are your main reasons for doing so? **Responses ranked**.

	%	n
Not required	36.1	152
Would harm my career	28.5	120
Not available to my grade	28.0	118
Manage my work life balance without such options	25.9	109
Cannot afford the associated cut in pay	20.0	84
Frightened to ask manager	12.1	51
Refused by manager	5.2	22
Other (open question)		

Q.25 Do you find it difficult to balance your family/private life with work?

	%
Rarely or almost never	10.9
Only sometimes	56.5
All or almost all the time	32.5
Total responses (n)	**421**

Q.26 Is your employer sympathetic when you need time off or have to reschedule work around your family or caring responsibilities?

	%
Usually	59.3
Sometimes	36.1
Never	4.5
Total responses (n)	**418**

Q.27   Are there any other comments that you would like to make regarding stress and work life balance at work? *(open question)*

Section 5

In this section we are asking for your views on the impact or potential impact of Benchmarking and Fair and Sustainable on your work

Q.28   To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree %	Agree %	No view %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %
The proposed changes to the terms and conditions are simply a means of getting more done for less	60.7	26.3	6.3	5.8	1.0
In a time of austerity such measures are needed to maintain public services	7.0	44.3	12.5	28.4	7.7
The introduction of new performance management practices are needed to deal with new working practices	14.9	39.3	18.6	22.4	4.8
Performance management practices are being introduced to intensify work	15.7	36.6	24.1	22.4	1.2
Performance management practices will be used to hold down pay	34.2	35.9	17.3	10.1	2.4
I expect the changes applied to new recruits to be extended to all jobs in due course	30.6	45.3	15.7	7.2	1.2
Any changes to terms and conditions of service following promotion will deter me from seeking to be promoted	32.9	26.6	13.6	22.0	4.8
These changes will demotivate me in my job	27.5	32.4	16.9	19.1	4.1
These changes will make it harder for me to provide a good service to the public	25.8	34.9	18.1	17.3	3.9
Total responses (n)				**415**	

Section 6

Q.29   How old are you?

	%
21-30	1.2
31-40	12.5
41-50	46.5
51-60	38.6
Over 60	1.2
Total responses (n)	**415**

Q.30   What is your gender?

	%
Female	28.0
Male	72.0
Total responses (n)	**414**

Q.31   How would you define your ethnicity?

	%
Asian: Bangladeshi	0.0
Asian: India	0.5
Asian: Pakistani	0.0
Asian: Other	0.2
Black: African	0.5
Black: Caribbean	0.2
Black: Other	0.0
Chinese	0.0
Mixed Ethnic Background	1.5
White	97.1
Total responses (n)	**412**

Q.32   Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?

	%
Yes	8.1
No	91.9
Total responses (n)	**406**

Q.33   How would you define your sexuality?

	%
Asexual	0.7
Bisexual	0.5
Gay/Lesbian	4.0
Heterosexual	94.8
Total responses (n)	**404**

Q.34   Do you work?

	%
Full-time	98.5
Part-time	1.5
Total responses (n)	**401**

Q.35   How long have you worked for NOMS and its predecessors?

	%
Between 1 and 3 years	0.2
Between 3 and 6 years	1.2
Between 6 and 9 years	3.9
10 years and over	94.6
Total responses (n)	**407**

Q.36   Where do you work?

	%
In an establishment	86.3
In an HQ post in London	2.4
In an HQ post in the regions	7.0
On secondment to another agency	1.4
Other	2.9
Total responses (n)	**416**

Q.37   In which region do you work?

	%
East of England	10.8
East Midlands	10.6
Greater London	9.6
Kent and Sussex	7.1
North West	10.1
North East	5.7
Northern Ireland	3.7
Scotland	6.1
South Central	6.4
South West	6.6
Wales	3.2
West Midlands	8.4
Yorkshire and Humber region	10.1
Other	1.7
Total responses (n)	**407**

Q.38   Where do responsibility of care for?

	%
A child under 16	34.7
An adult relative	11.0
Both	4.4
Neither	49.9
Total responses (n)	**409**

Q.39   Have you opted in to "Fair and Sustainable" terms and conditions?

	%
Yes	62.5
No	37.5
Total responses (n)	**403**

Q.40   Do you have pre-Fresh Start "reserved rights"?

	%
Yes	11.6
No	88.4
Total responses (n)	**406**

Q.41 and Q42 Members' pay bands.

	Current %	**Substantive %**
Pay band 6	0.8	1.0
Pay band 7	33.3	38.2
Pay band 8	39.6	36.2
Pay band 9	9.8	10.1
Pay band 10	8.3	5.8
Pay band 11	8.0	8.3
SCS grade	0.3	0.5
Total responses (n)	**399**	**398**

Appendix 2: Comparison of survey sample with PGA and NOMS data

This table provides a comparison of the survey sample in relation to PGA membership records in August 2015 and NOMS data from 2014.

		Survey sample %	PGA membership (2015) %	NOMS Data (2014)%
Gender	Female	28.0	27.0	n/a
	Male	72.0	73.0	n/a
Age	Under 21	0.0	0.0	n/a
	21-30	1.2	0.6	n/a
	31-40	12.6	9.5	n/a
	41-50	46.6	38.7	n/a
	51-60	38.4	46.4	n/a
	Over 60	1.2	4.8	n/a
Grading	Payband 6	1.0	n/a	-
	Payband 7	38.2	n/a	45.3
	Payband 8	36.2	n/a	34.7
	Payband 9	10.1	n/a	7.4
	Payband 10	5.8	n/a	4.2
	Payband 11	8.3	n/a	8.4
	SCS grade	0.5	n/a	-
Total		**421**	**1055**	**950**