S.O.S. STRESSED OUT STAFF IN SCOTLANDS COLLEGES

UNISON F.E. COLLEGES STRESS REPORT 2019

Following the 2016 UNISON survey on stress in Scotland's Colleges UNISON revisited this issue in 2018 to check with members if Colleges had done anything to improve the situation over the last two years and in light of the 2016 findings. At the same time UNISON issued Freedom of Information requests to all NRPA Colleges on similar issues.

The scandalous findings are that the Instead of introducing improvements since 2016 the results suggest that nothing has been done and that things have got worse.

Unison Freedom of Information Request 2018

- *Between April 2014 and March 2017 over 1,500 staff members (majority support staff) listed stress as one of reasons for sickness with a 37% rise in numbers over 3 years up to March 2017.*
- *Numbers of staff specifically listing work related stress has also increased over the same period by almost 25%. This could be even greater as not all Colleges record this.*
- *Over 50,000 days lost to stress by College staff over the last three years, an increase of 40%.*
- *An average of 23 staff members every year in every College are absent due to or partially due to stress. Edinburgh College had 104 staff members in 2017 alone!*
- *Colleges reported that only 10% of the 1,530 staff who suffered stress completed an Individual Stress Risk Assessment when returning to work. Some Colleges do not monitor or record at all.*
- *Only 55% of Colleges in Scotland have a specific avoidance of stress Policy and none have a specific work group.*

UNISON staff survey 2018

- *37% of support staff reported having taken sick leave due to stress or partially due to stress (at least 17% increase since 2016).*
- *60% felt that workloads were high or extremely high, 62% were concerned about their own workload and stress & 56% have suffered stress specifically due to workloads.*
- *Over 60% of respondents were unaware of stress policies at work (almost double figure from 2016).*
- *97% said Managers hadn't spoken to them about Group Stress Risk Assessments and 73% said Managers had never discussed work levels and stress with them.*
- *After returning from stress related sickness 85% of respondents were not advised by Colleges to complete an Individual Risk Assessment form and 90% did not do so (consistent with the FOI).*
- *Almost 69% of respondents felt that their stress issues were not dealt with by the Colleges in a satisfactory way.*

The 2016 UNISON stress and bullying survey with members in Further Education Colleges reported that many members (58%) referred to "too much work" as a reason for stress and almost half said there were not enough resources. Its main findings are detailed below. This led to the UNISON Learning the Hard Way report of 2016.

- *37% of the respondents were unaware of anti-stress or bullying policies at work*
- *85% of staff felt stressed in Scotland's Colleges over the previous two years.*
- *Over 20% had taken sick leave due to stress, bullying, anxiety or depression as a result.*

UNISON calls for..

1. Immediate work to begin nationally with all Unions on a **National Avoidance of Stress Policy and Procedure** with work to conclude by December 2019.
2. Jointly run Union Management Avoidance of stress and overwork forums to be created immediately in every College to address the current situation.
3. A programme of Occupational Group Risk Assessments to be scheduled for all staff group areas beginning in September 2019 and to become a regular development within Scotland's Colleges.
4. Every College to ensure staff who are off sick with a stress related illness complete Individual Stress Risk Assessments with a proper support plan put in place for staff affected by stress.
5. Acceleration of progress on new National Policies for staff which have mainly ground to a halt with no discussions having yet taken place or negotiations falling on others. Specific Policies and Procedures which UNISON believe would address this are Relocation, Work-life Balance, Family Friendly, Bullying and Harassment, Re-deployment and Organisational Change.

UNISON - Freedom of Information Request 2018

1/ Do you have a specific stress Policy and/or Procedure. Do you have a specific avoidance of stress working group?

Despite volumes of recent evidence stating that stress and work related stress are increasing year on year within organisations (*) almost half of Scotland Colleges don't have a specific Avoidance of Stress Policy and none have a specific Avoidance of Stress Working Group or Committee. Some Colleges excused this by stating that stress was dealt with under Absence Management Policies or at Health and Safety Committees. Local workplace steward's feedback and the survey findings suggest that even if this was true it is proving to be wholly inadequate.

(*) 2016 HSE statistical report stating that stress illnesses account for 37% of all work related ill health cases and L.V. insurance company reporting that one in four workers stress had taken time off in last 5 years due to stress.

		Policy	Working Group
1	CLYDE COLLEGE	Yes	No
2	D & G	Yes	No
3	COGC	Yes	No
4	KELVIN	No	No
5	AYRSHIRE	No	No
6	EDINBURGH	No	No
7	FIFE	No	No
8	WEST	Yes	No
9	WEST LOTHIAN	Yes	No
10	NCL	No	No
11	SOUTH LANARKSHIRE	No	No
12	NESCOL	No	No
13	NORTH HIGHLAND COLLEGE	No	No
14	DUNDEE & ANGUS	No	No
15	FORTH VALLEY	Yes	No
16	PERTH	Yes	No
17	BORDERS	Yes	No
18	INVERNESS	No	No
19	LEWS CASTLE	Yes	No
20	MORAY COLLEGE	Yes	No
21	SABHAL MOR OSTAIG	Yes	No
22	NEWBATTLE ABBEY	Yes	No
	Total	12	0
	%	55%	n/a

2/ Please advise over the period (April 2014 to March 2017, the number of staff who listed stress as one of the reasons for sickness?

1,530 staff members listed stress as a reason for sickness over the last 3 years. NESCOL could not supply this information as Managed by Occupational Health and no data has been kept. Support staff were more likely to be affected by this than any other staff group. Figures increased year on year from 426 to 582 an increase of almost 37% over the 3-year period.

The figures are broken down by Support Staff (S.S.), Lecturers (L) and staff earning over £70k per year (S.M.).

Some care should be taken in relation to the staff earning over £70k due to the inconsistency of returns, many failed to provide this.

Stress	2015	2016	2017
Staff off sick	426	522	582
Percentage Increase from 2015	n/a	22.5%	36.6%

	Staff listing stress as reason for sickness	Total S.S.	Total L	Total S.M.
1	CLYDE COLLEGE	82	65	0
2	D & G	39	33	0
3	COGC	16	39	0
4	KELVIN	36	27	0
5	AYRSHIRE	33	23	0
6	EDINBURGH	124	80	44
7	FIFE	88	89	9
8	WEST	44	31	0
9	WEST LOTHIAN	33	15	0
10	NCL	59	46	0
11	SOUTH LANARKSHIRE	14	15	0
12	NESCOL	0	0	0
13	NORTH HIGHLAND COLLEGE	2	2	0
14	DUNDEE & ANGUS	67	30	0
15	FORTH VALLEY	77	46	31
16	PERTH	62	18	0
17	BORDERS	3	6	0
18	INVERNESS	25	16	0
19	LEWS CASTLE	7	6	0
20	MORAY	21	20	0
21	SABHAL MOR OSTAIG	4	0	0
22	NEWBATTLE ABBEY	3	0	0
	Total	**839**	**607**	**84**
	%	**55%**	**43%**	**6%**

3/ How many days were lost as a result of any kind of stress?

Over 50,000 days have been lost due to stress in Scotland's Colleges over the last 3 years. Again the majority of days lost have been in support staff areas. Days lost rose from 13,217 to 18,477 over three years, a rise of 40%.

Due to inconsistencies of returns and due to some College failing to properly gather data specifically on those staff who highlighted work related stress it, is difficult to present a consistent picture, however using the Colleges who do it is clear that there is a similar pattern and an increase in instances of work related stress and days lost over the three years.

	DAYS LOST	SS	L	S.M.
1	CLYDE COLLEGE	3,092	3,134	0
2	D & G	856	653	0
3	COGC	648	1,556	0
4	KELVIN	1,130	689	0
5	AYRSHIRE	1,206	1,040	0
6	EDINBURGH	2,018	1,173	845
7	FIFE	3,066	4,212	16
8	WEST	1,961	1,123	0
9	WEST LOTHIAN	1,158	617	0
10	NCL	2,176	2,613	0
11	SOUTH LANARKSHIRE	356	0	0
12	NESCOL	0	0	0
13	NORTH HIGHLAND COLLEGE	58	10	0
14	DUNDEE & ANGUS	1,751	661	0
15	FORTH VALLEY	2,349	1,707	642
16	PERTH	3,984	1,428	0
17	BORDERS	38	266	0
18	INVERNESS	643	465	0
19	LEWS CASTLE	114	122	0
20	MORAY	313	303	0
21	SABHAL MOR OSTAIG	61	0	0
22	NEWBATTLE ABBEY	296	0	0
	Total	**27,273**	**21,770**	**1,503**

4/ How many individual stress risk assessments have been carried out by the College?

Despite HSE recent advice on creating a preventative culture in relation to work related stress only 10% of staff ill due to stress have completed ISRA's (151) over three years. Colleges have a legal duty to assess the risk of stress-related ill health arising from work activities and to take practical measures to control the risk.

Despite UNISON highlighting this problem in 2016 Colleges have failed to act.

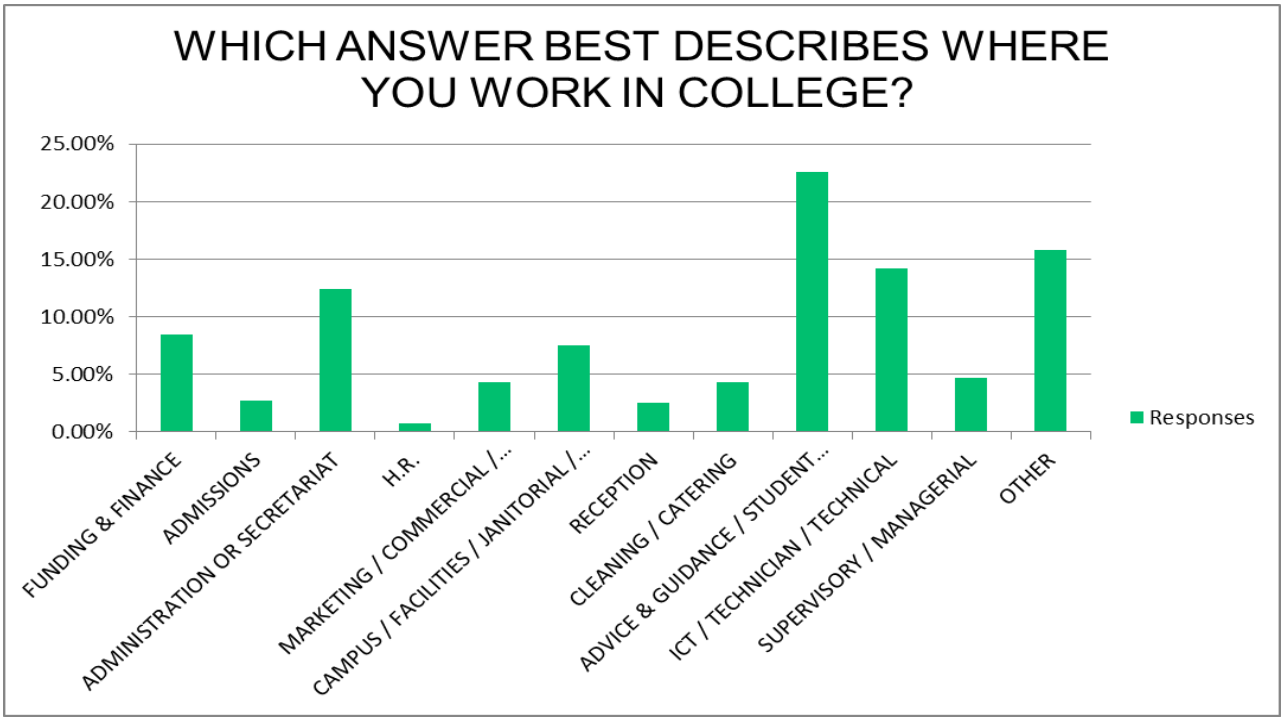
	COMPLETE ISRA	Total	Total	Total
		S.S.	L	S.M.
1	CLYDE COLLEGE	0	0	0
2	D & G	1	2	0
3	COGC	0	0	0
4	KELVIN	14	4	0
5	AYRSHIRE	10	4	0
6	EDINBURGH	0	0	0
7	FIFE	0	0	0
8	WEST	32	14	0
9	WEST LOTHIAN	0	3	0
10	NCL	0	2	0
11	SOUTH LANARKSHIRE	1	5	0
12	NESCOL	0	0	0
13	NORTH HIGHLAND COLLEGE	0	0	0
14	DUNDEE & ANGUS	2	0	0
15	FORTH VALLEY	12	8	4
16	PERTH	0	0	0
17	BORDERS	0	0	0
18	INVERNESS	0	0	0
19	LEWS CASTLE	0	0	0
20	MORAY COLLEGE	27	0	0
21	SABHAL MOR OSTAIG	4	0	0
27	NEWBATTLE ABBEY	2	0	0
	Total	**105**	**42**	**4**
	RETURNED %	**13%**	**7%**	**5%**

UNISON – Members survey

Survey question 1 & 2 – Which College and which area do you work in?

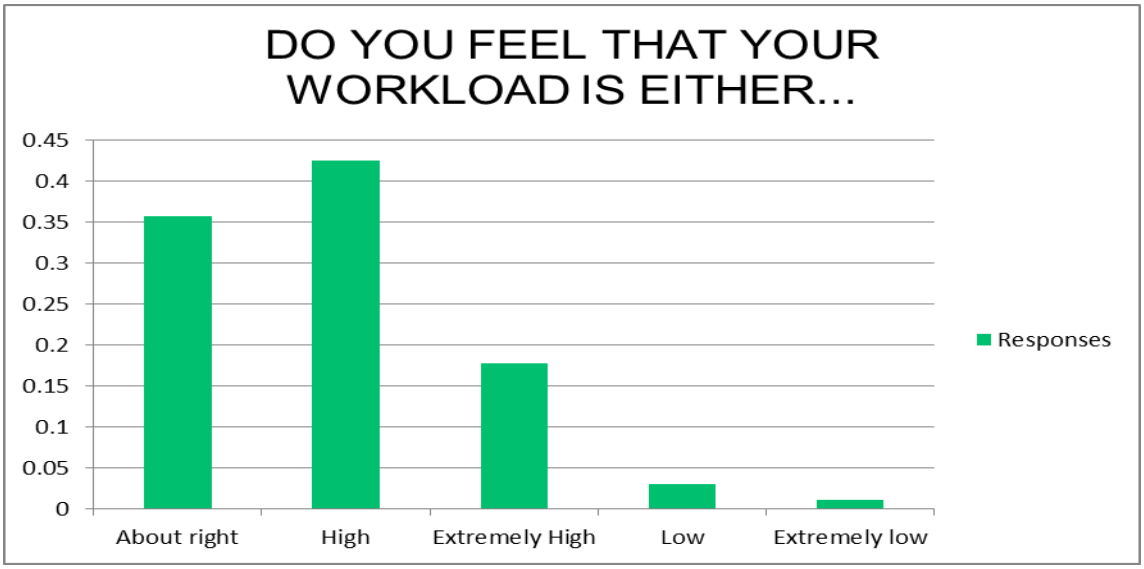
566 members of support staff from 22 different Colleges in Scotland responded to the survey. Respondents worked in a variety of different areas in Colleges which is broken down in detail below. 66% of respondents were female and 87% were over the age of 35.

ARGYLL COLLEGE	0.00%
AYRSHIRE COLLEGE	8.66%
BORDERS COLLEGE	0.35%
CITY OF GLASGOW COLLEGE	16.96%
DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY COLLEGE	4.06%
DUNDEE & ANGUS COLLEGE	5.30%
EDINBURGH COLLEGE	5.48%
FIFE COLLEGE	7.77%
FORTH VALLEY COLLEGE	1.77%
GLASGOW CLYDE COLLEGE	7.24%
GLASGOW KELVIN COLLEGE	6.36%
LEWES CASTLE COLLEGE	0.18%
MORAY COLLEGE	0.88%
NEW COLLEGE LANARKSHIRE	9.72%
NEWBATTLE ABBEY COLLEGE	0.35%
NORTH EAST SCOTLAND COLLEGE	2.30%
NORTH HIGHLAND COLLEGE	2.30%
ORKNEY COLLEGE	0.00%
PERTH COLLEGE	4.77%
SABHAL MÒR OSTAIG	0.00%
INVERNESS COLLEGE	1.06%
SHETLAND COLLEGE	0.00%
SOUTH LANARKSHIRE COLLEGE	3.53%
WEST COLLEGE SCOTLAND	7.77%
WEST HIGHLAND COLLEGE	0.35%
WEST LOTHIAN COLLEGE	2.83%



Question 3 Workloads

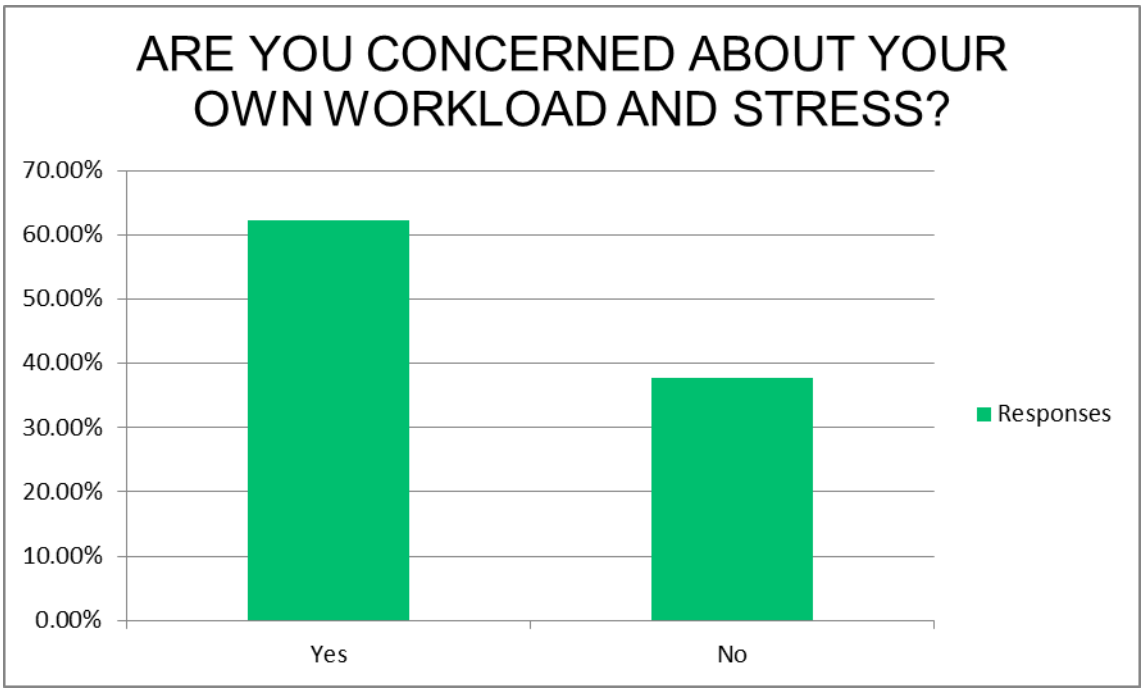
Over 60% of respondents felt that workloads were either high or extremely high.



About right	35.71%
High	42.50%
Extremely High	17.68%
Low	3.04%
Extremely low	1.07%

Question 4 Workloads and stress

Correspondingly almost two thirds of respondents (62.2%) confirmed they are concerned about workloads and stress.



Yes	62.28%
No	37.72%

Question 5 Workloads & Stress

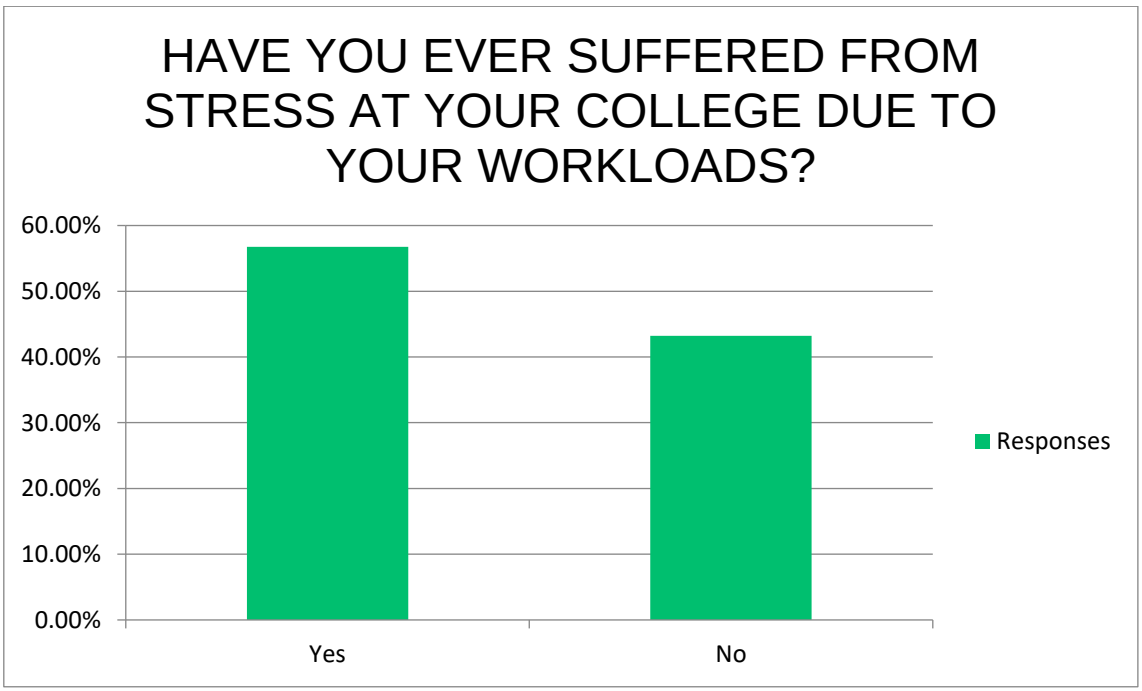
Despite mergers, never ending College restructures, Voluntary Severance, changes to Colleges and roles often resulting in significantly increased workloads for staff 97% of respondents had never been spoken to about a group stress risk assessment for their team to establish whether changes to duties and workloads had impacted on stress levels.



Yes	3.02%
No	96.98%

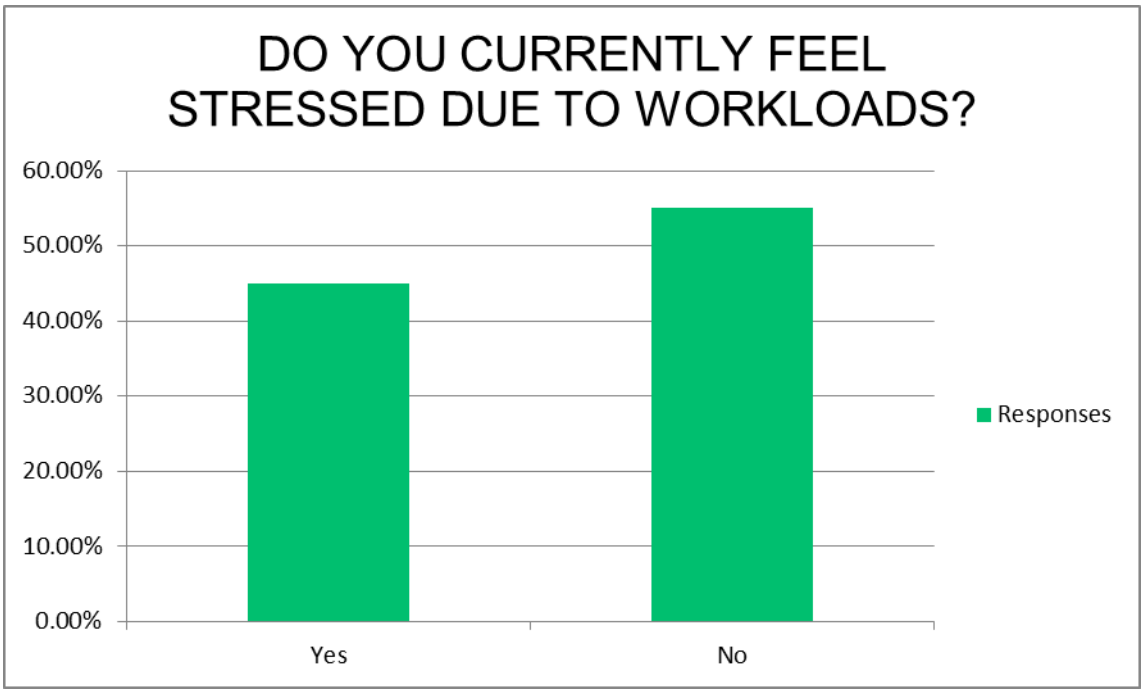
Question 6 Stress

57% of respondents have reported suffering work related stress due to workloads with many currently feeling stress as a result.



Yes	56.76%
No	43.24%

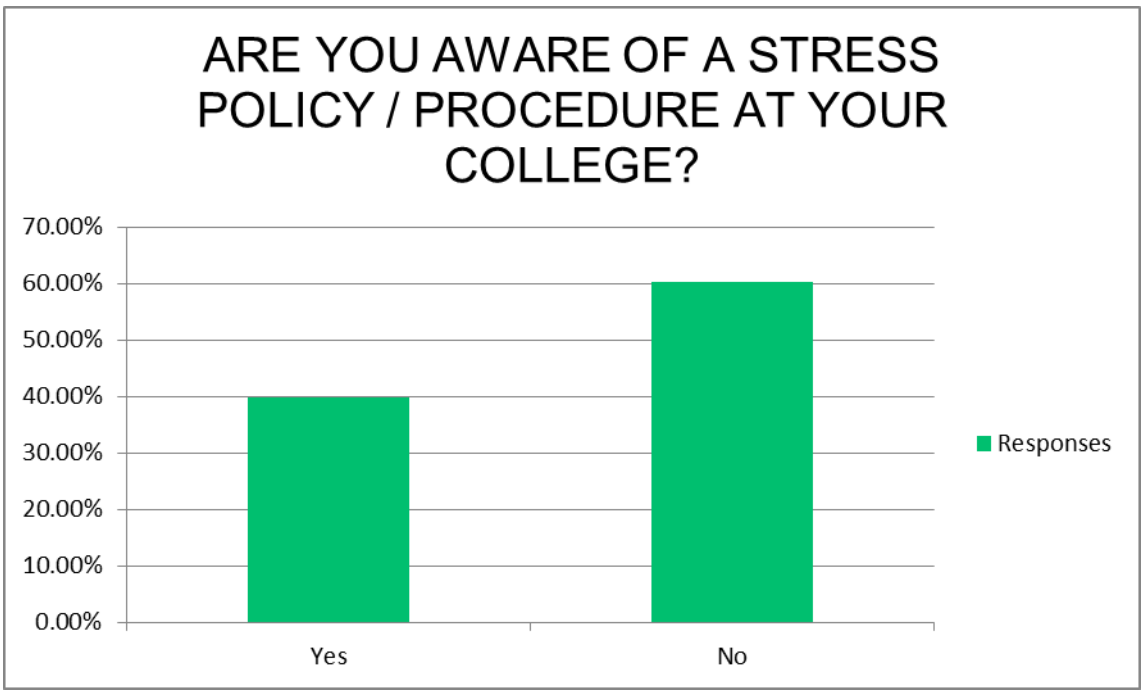
Question 7 Workloads and Stress



Yes	45.00%
No	55.00%

Question 8 Existence of specific College Polices

Despite increasing workloads and incidents of workplace stress increasing significantly in Colleges over 60% of respondents had never heard about a Stress Policy or Procedure in the College. This is a significant increase on the figure of 37% who were unaware of anti-stress or bullying policies at work in 2016.



Yes	39.75%
No	60.25%

Question 9 Stress and Line Management

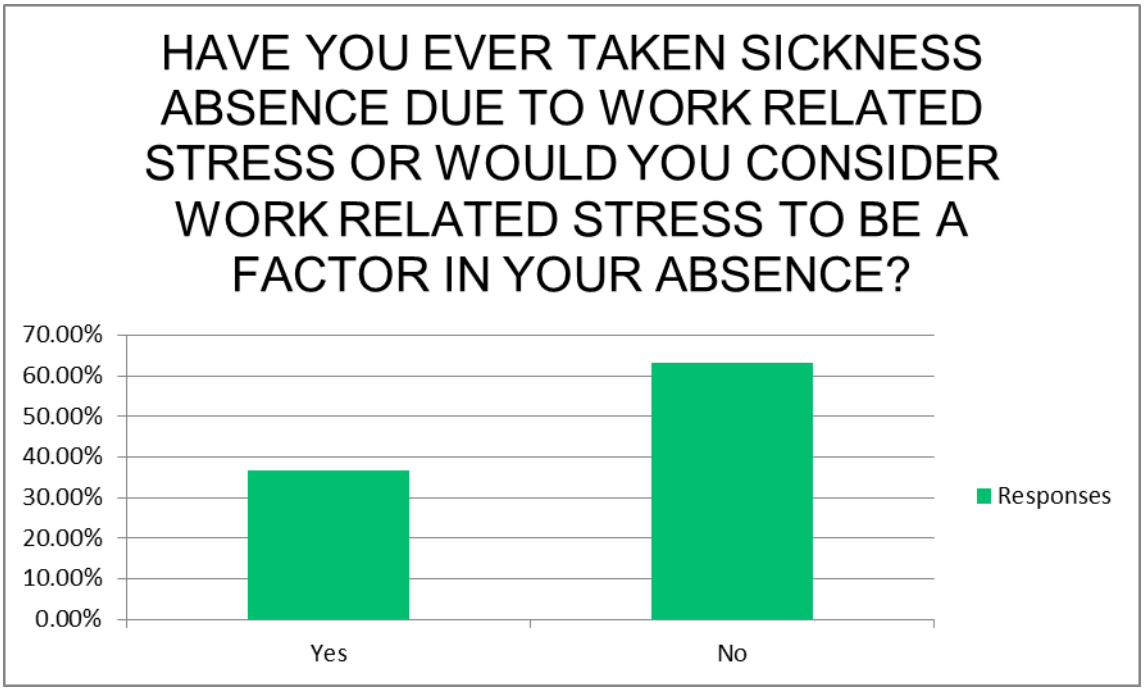
Similarly despite the findings in 2016 few Managers appear to be discussing issues of stress with staff members with 73% of respondents reporting a failure of College Managers to do so.



Yes	26.77%
No	73.23%

Question 10 Stress and absence

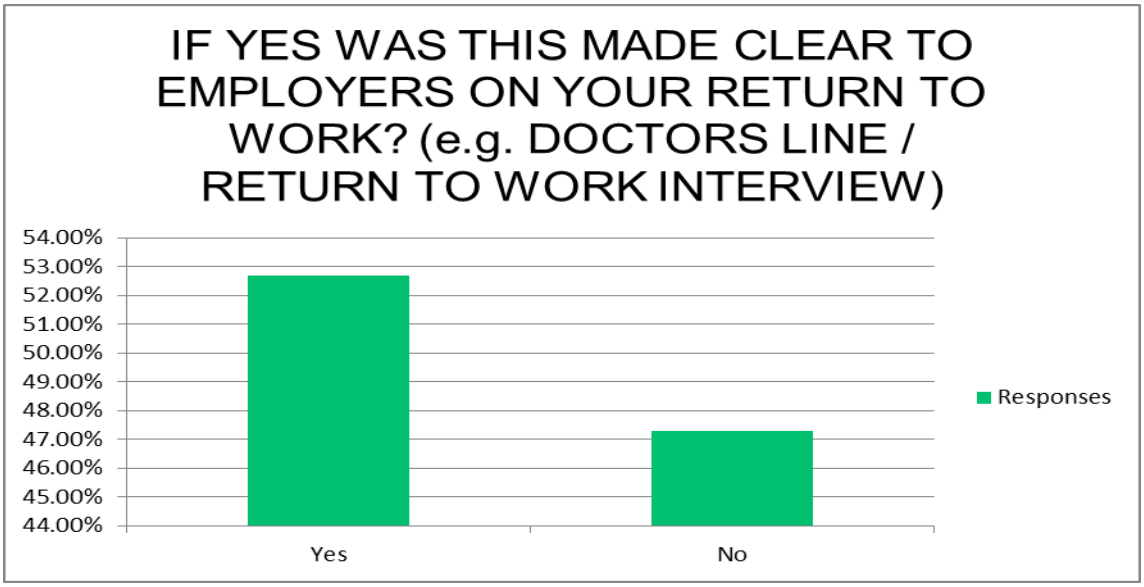
In 2016 20% of respondents reported that they had taken sick leave due to stress, bullying, anxiety or depression. Our survey shows that this has increased significantly in 2018 with the number of staff having been off sick with stress alone or felt it was a factor in their absence almost doubling to 37%.



Yes	36.67%
No	63.33%

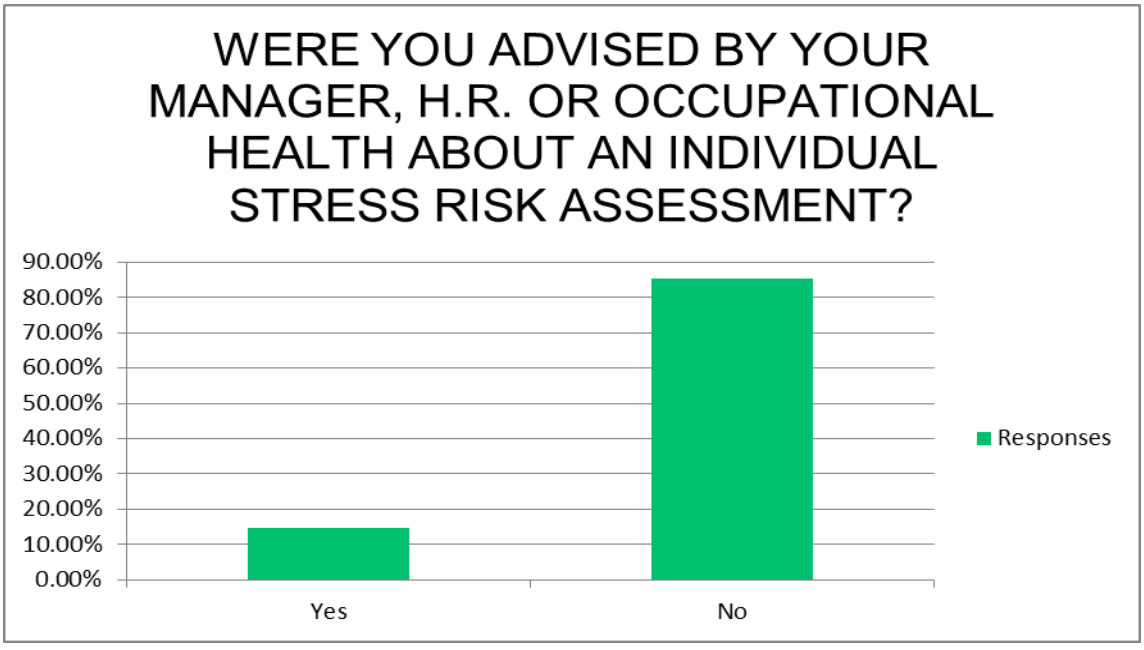
Question 11

Almost 53% of respondents who were off sick made clear to College Employers that stress was a factor yet 85% were not advised about having an individual stress risk assessment. The fact that 47% didn't shows the need for Colleges to have specific Policies and Procedures which properly address stress in the workplace and to re-assure employees that if they are feeling stressed they no longer need to hide it.



Yes	52.69%
No	47.31%

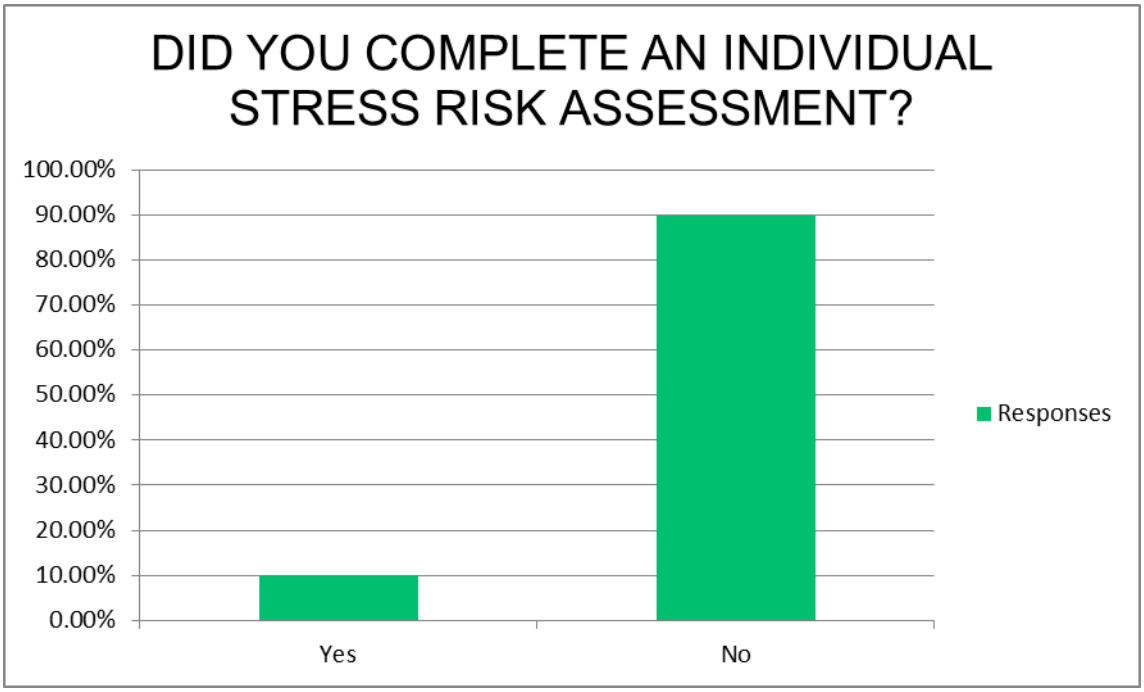
Question 12 Stress and Management



Yes	14.71%
No	85.29%

Question 13 Stress and Absence

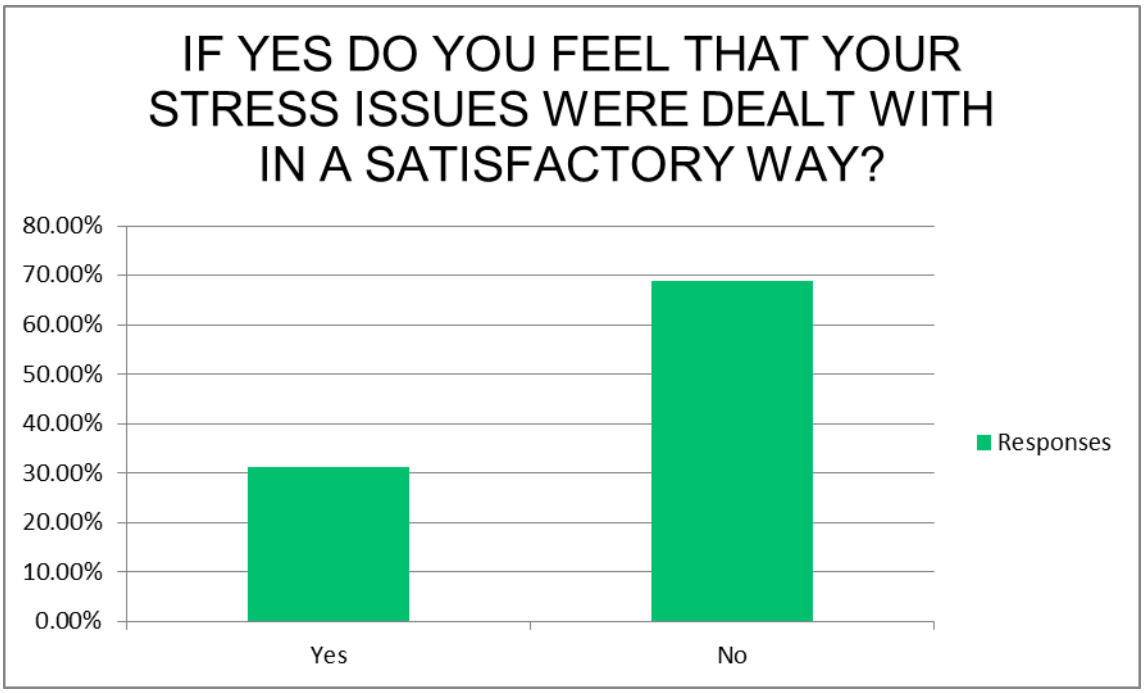
Unsurprisingly 90% of respondents who had been off sick and cited stress did not complete a stress risk assessment after returning to work.



Yes	10.08%
No	89.92%

Question 14 Stress Overall

Overall more than two thirds of respondents do not believe their College dealt with their stress issues in a satisfactory way.



Yes	31.16%
No	68.84%

Question 15 If no, what happened next?

60 of the respondents said nothing happened, other comments are detailed below.

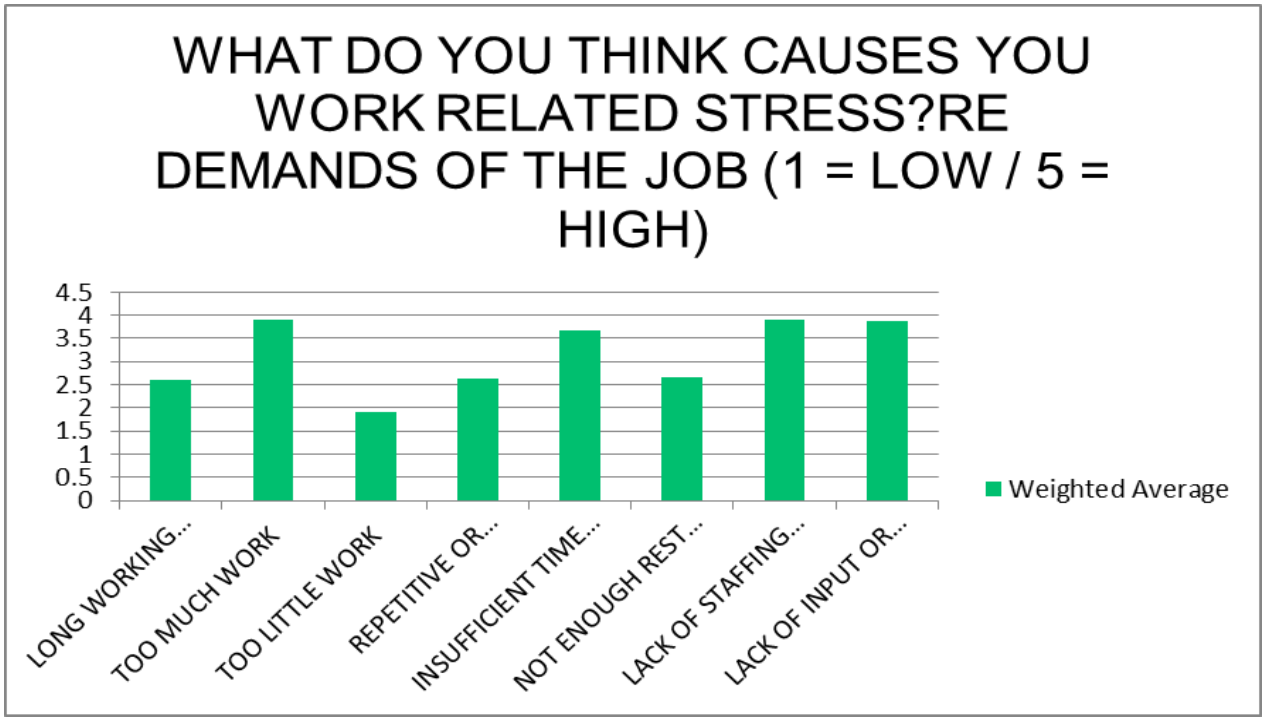
Referred to Occupational health
indirect stress
phased return then moved to new build - different stresses
At the time, a supportive line manager. Changed since.
Haven't taken time off due to stress yet but could see it becoming an issue in future if things don't change
No stress risk assessment
I managed myself
Nothing, just been on phased return and back in same situation as before
Given more work, and staff have left but they have not been replaced. Plus one staff member off long term sick, but nobody to cover his absence.
I wasn't removed from the area that caused me stress I was offered an alternative which wasn't acceptable due to the location.
I was told there was no-where else on the campus for me to go
Was told I would have an HR meeting, 5 months later, still no meeting. I asked to be referred to occupational health, still not happened.
Returned to work
HR witnessed me being bullied on my return to work but did nothing
Made me feel more incompetent to do my job as I shouldn't have been stressed at all from all managers above me
It was managed locally in a satisfactory way
This is still ongoing, support has been promised but has never materialised.
moved work station
Union assisting me with problem with VS
Related to a personal family matter as well
Nothing, it was left unresolved as the person who decided what was to happen with survey was the person who caused the stressful situation.
Returned to work on phased return then everything was forgotten about, and basically left to carry on the way things were before I went off
I returned to work after 2 weeks and had a back to work interview with my line manager and HR to ensure
I was told to phone a helpline, which I did not want to do as I didn't want to talk to someone in a call centre. students have the option to talk to someone
on campus but Staff do not which i feel is wrong for a large organisation.
Nothing, twinkly nobody cares about stress in my workplace, other than it being viewed as a statistic they don't want to record.
The issue was only removed temporarily and everything returned to the same point after 3-4 month of my return to work
Ignored when explained situation
Situation is still current, so nothing has been resolved yet.
Didn't complete a risk assessment
HR Manager ignored issue
It's not been officially recognised
Previous job within college - left this position
Nothing it was arranged for me to do a phased return - suggested by person representing me then left to it, no more meetings/informal chats were arranged

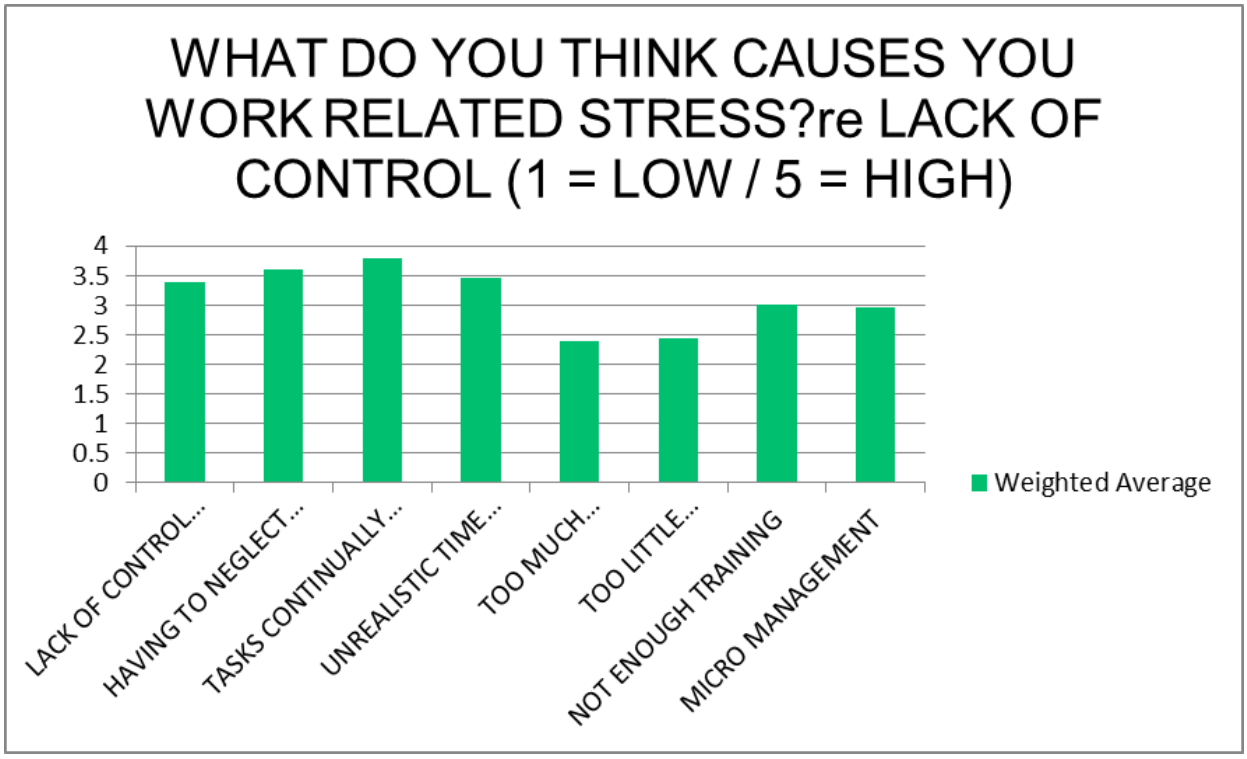
Discussed stress at return to work interview
Nothing - other health issues more important
nobody spoke to me at all
Nothing. The individual wasn't dealt with. I was redeployed.
I dealt with it myself through my doctor and medication. Advised my line manager and OH accordingly. Offered telephone assistance via PAM.
had a meeting but was not happy with outcome
I spoke to HR who gave me a counselling leaflet, but did nothing to help resolve the issue or follow up my concerns
I was monitored by HR
Ongoing situation
ISRA results & policy were not facilitated by the college.
I have never heard about stress risk
Nothing RA was carried out by manager involved
I haven't highlighted stress levels
Q 8 was No so the past 4 Q's are badly structured.
Nothing, i changed jobs.
still waiting
Continued to see O/H
Management listen sympathetically then nothing done about it.
Just ignore it
Issue were identified clarification was request on job description and duties, however this was never clarified.
Simply arises through a lack of staff so cannot be rectified as posts are not being advertised
No follow up was given
Varying degrees and inconsistent standards of support from immediate line management, Occ Health to senior managers to HR but in all honesty
got the impression that most of them thought I was the problem with the exception of maybe Occ Health and my immediate line manager.
Terminated employment
OH decided that my doctor was wrong regarding my ability to return to work.
I am still off with stress. Attempts to raise the risk of stress I was feeling prior to going off were ignored.
went back to work as normal
HR don’t deal with issues
Very little. Manager and HR provided little or no support.
Things just went back to normal and no procedures were put in place to stop it happening again. The stress was placed on the capabilities
of the individual rather than the expectations of the organisation.
I did not disclose it was stress related as this may be seen as weakness in my role
A PHASED RETURN
Risk assessment was made about my office but no changes regarding the office have been made
Issues were supposed to have been resolved prior to returning to work. In reality, this did not happen
Nothing was done and circumstances that led to my absence did not change.
Return to work with adjustment to work load that has since reverted back to before with add on's
Facilitated conversations were held with line manager to try and work things out. This then led to slightly better working however asked for additional support

and guidance and got given a work plan with 6wk and 12wk deadlines. This then led me to feeling no support was actually being given and due to complaining
About lack of support I was the one now under scrutiny. Left the organisation on 4th may as a result. Did not want to make that decision but felt I had no other option.
no change kept head down, poor relationship with managers, they have unrealistic expectations and just push for more no understanding of manual labour, construction
manufacturing, disciplines , as construction Technician I am expected to prepare materials using machines, maintain machines, raise all joinery orders,
control 3 stores and man tool store, repair equipment, liaise with teaching staff, manufacture joinery jobs, sweep down machines. etc,etc
on return to work no follow up
I contacted my union. The issue was eventually resolved.
When I was still recovering from stress caused by doing two separate jobs (quality and exams) I was asked by my manager to do additional tasks.
This situation caused me additional stress and my health worsen. When I complained I have been relocated to different campus and given different role against my will.
I refused to sign official paperwork naming the causes of my stress as I felt this was a method to make it official. As my issue was personal with a colleague
I worked with my Manager, HR and Occupational Health for another way to resolve the issue with less conflict.
My phased return was less than one week.
I am not sure if this has been introduced to me.
Bullied by management
Questions 12 & 13 not relevant to me at this moment in time.
Went to counselling
I resigned my post
I did see occupational health and it seemed better on my return although I was not overly happy with the outcome and I was not given any further support
or advice if the issue were to crop up again, I wished to move on.
Was just ignored by management and basically just told to get on with it.
i was pointed to the staff support website
Still off due back soon
Did not know anything about this, however have discussed the stress levels of the post with HoD.
remain under supported, so if they don't care neither do I.
Was ignored for a while and it cause friction between work colleagues. Cause me a lot of ill health and loss of earnings.

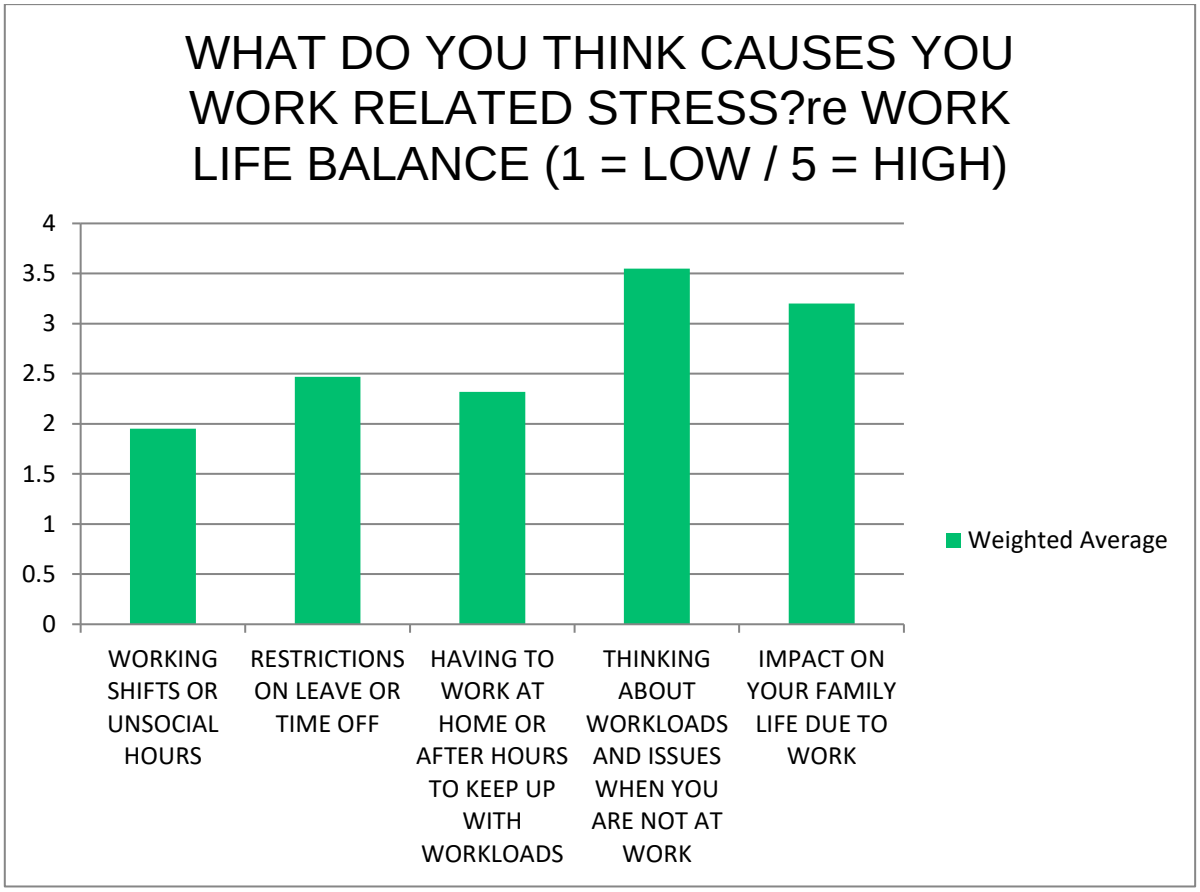
Question 16 & 17

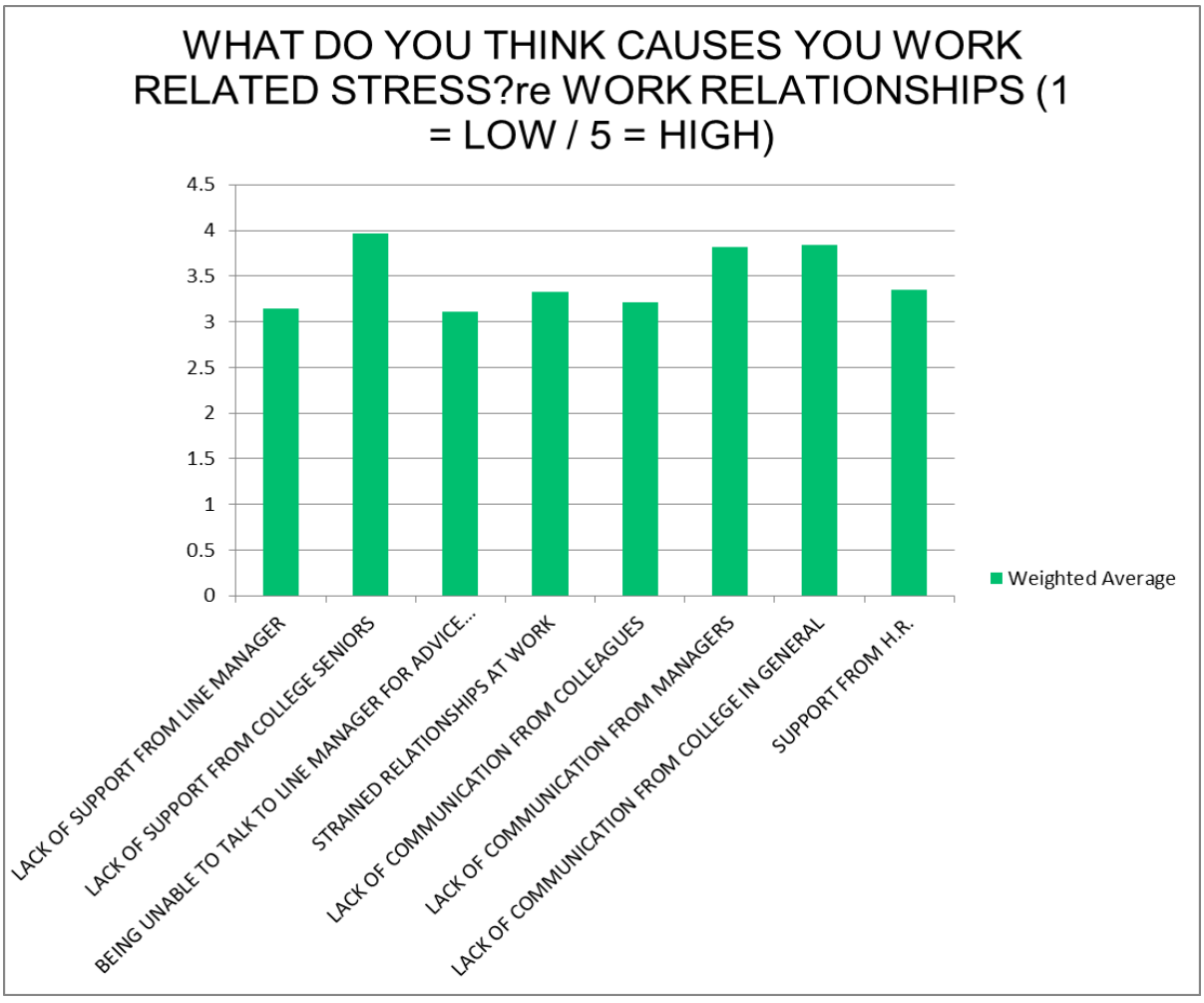
As was highlighted in UNISON's previous reports the most commonly cited reasons for work related stress by respondents in 2018 was too much work, insufficient time, a lack of staffing and lack of consultation or input into how they do their jobs. Additionally tasks being continually added to workloads, unrealistic time pressures and having to neglect tasks due to workloads cited as main stressor. Notably a number of these issues can be traced to restructures and re-allocation of tasks following V.S. yet no staff are asked about the impact of this on their health.

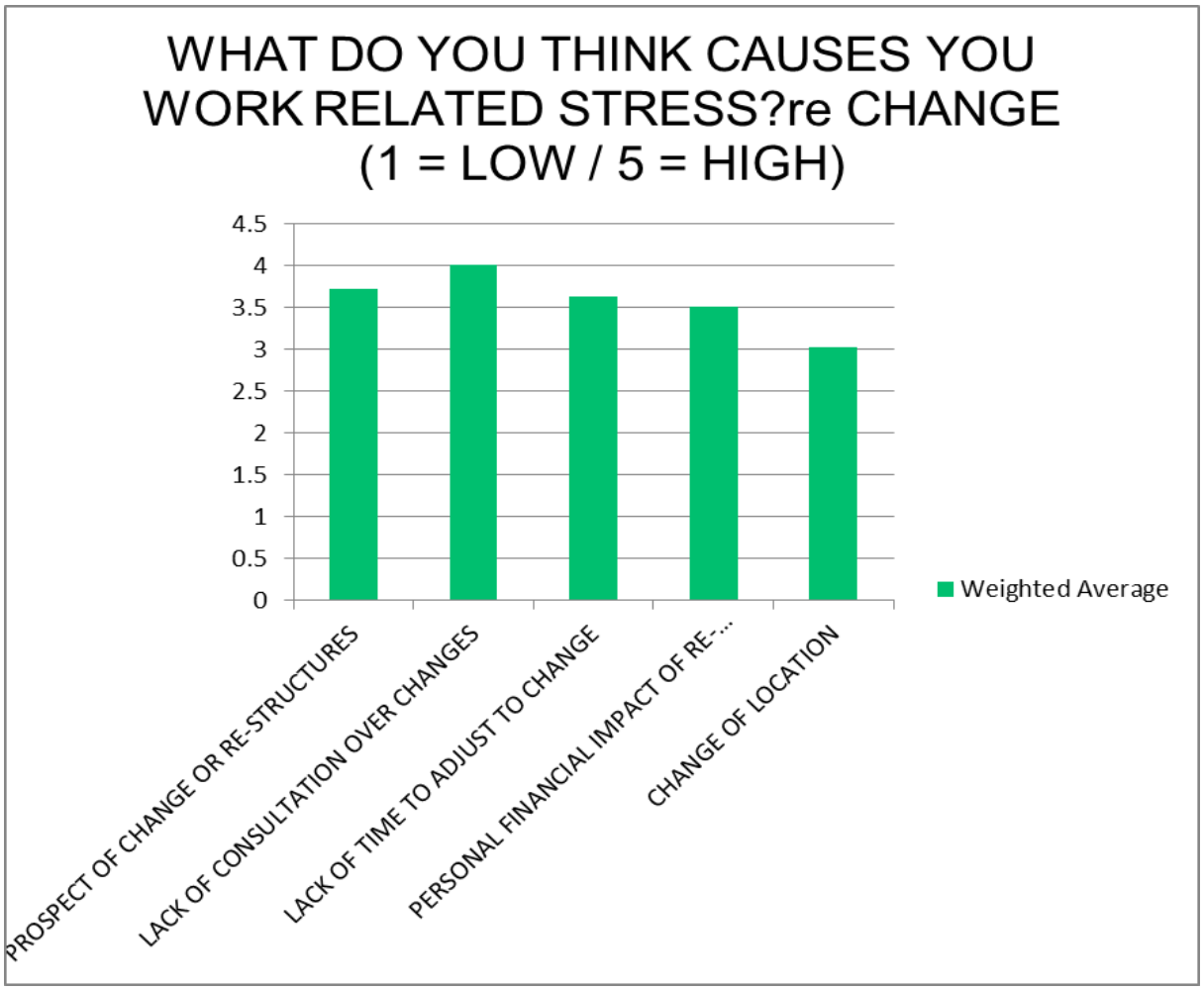




Questions 18 & 19 & 10







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