

HSU Survey Report February 2021

This survey was distributed to all Guide Dogs NSW/ACT employees who are current Health Services Union members. It was conducted via Survey Monkey and was open from 17th February 2021 through to 8th March 2021.

The survey was in response to questions raised by a previous HSU survey conducted in October 2020. That survey identified issues relating to Occupational Health and Safety, specifically, that 94% of respondents indicated that at times they were stressed at work. Following discussions with senior management, including Dale Cleaver (CEO), it was requested by management, and agreed to, that the HSU would further canvass its members in order to identify more specific concerns that would indicate appropriate responses, and actions to be taken in order to address those issues. Thirty four (65%) members responded, which compares with 35 members who responded to the survey conducted in October 2020. All respondents work in the Client Services department, 33 of whom have client facing roles, either in a part time capacity, dual role capacity, or full time capacity. This group includes assistive technologists, guide dog mobility instructors, occupational therapists, orientation and mobility specialists, and orthoptists.

Based on the previous discussions around the October survey, the HSU has attempted to identify the most important concerns. While we recognise that some issues raised in the previous survey are important to individuals, the emphasis of this current survey was to identify those issues most frequently raised. Based on that, the HSU has identified the most important areas of concern and attempted to identify specific issues within those broader categories.

Those broader areas of concern are as follows, with specific issues identified:

1. Administration tasks in relation to service provision
 - a) Billing Processes
 - b) Carelink Recording / rostering
 - c) Caseload management
 - d) Service Agreement processes
 - e) Provision of admin support
 - f) Other Concerns
1. Adaptation to change
 - a) Carelink / Outlook integration
 - b) Keeping up with changes
 - c) Multiple communication platforms
 - d) Multiple platforms for resources
 - e) NDIS procedures
2. Appraisal and remuneration issues
 - a) Appraisal Process
 - b) Formal feedback
 - c) KPI Fairness
 - d) 70/30 KPI
 - e) Power BI
 - f) Excessive working hours
3. Management structure
 - a) General Comments
4. Additional Comments

The following questions refer to the four key areas identified above, including specific categories within each area. An additional question was asked that would allow for additional comments. The following results include a brief summary. Detailed specific comments provided by respondents are included in the addendums. Any comments that the authors consider would identify respondents have been redacted.

Staff Position

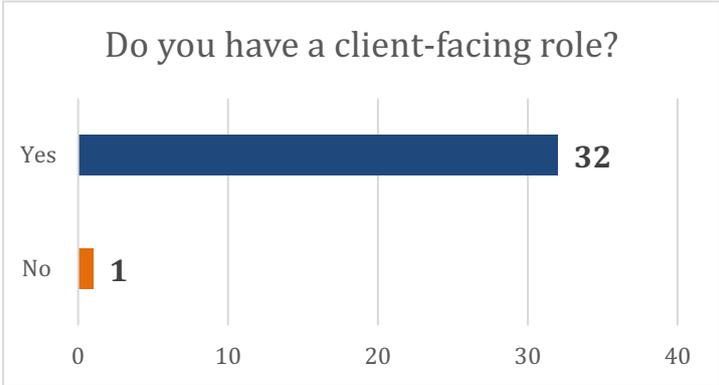
Survey question (role)

Do you have a client facing role? (n= 33)

YES = 97% (32)

NO = 3% (1)

Graphical representation



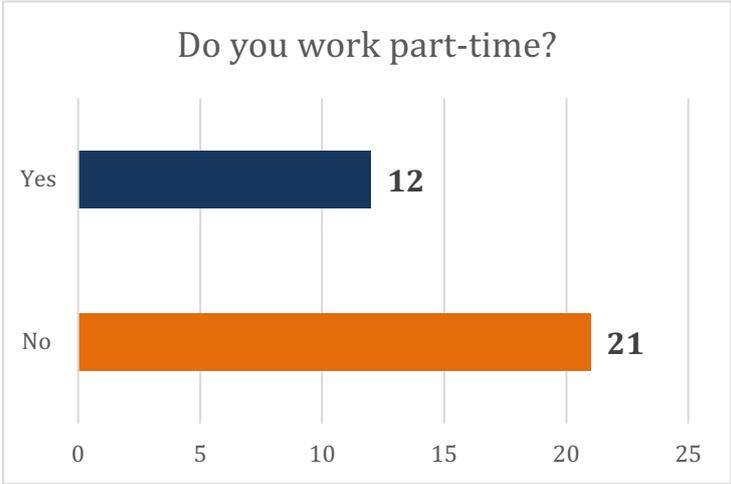
Survey question (hours)

Do you work part time? (n= 33)

Yes = 36.4 % (12)

No = 63.6 % (21)

Graphical representation



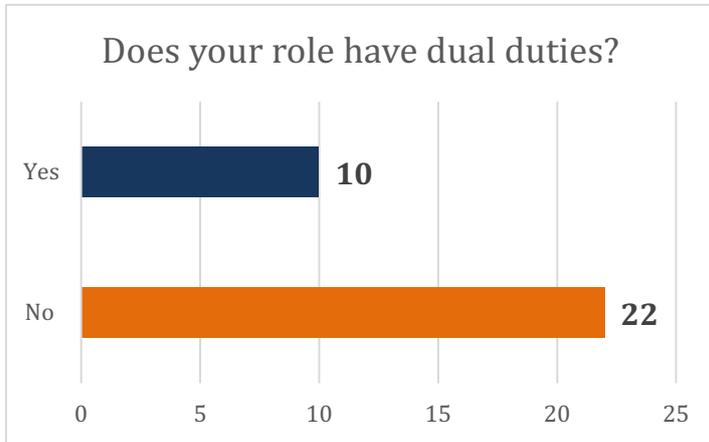
Survey question (duties)

Does your role have dual duties? (n=32)

Yes = 31.3 % (10)

No = 68.7 % (22)

Graphical representation



Key Areas of Concern

Survey question (administration)

Please choose the most appropriate response to the below statement: The volume of administration tasks and duties related to service delivery make it difficult to complete my core duties. (n= 33)

Strongly Agree = 63.5 % (21)

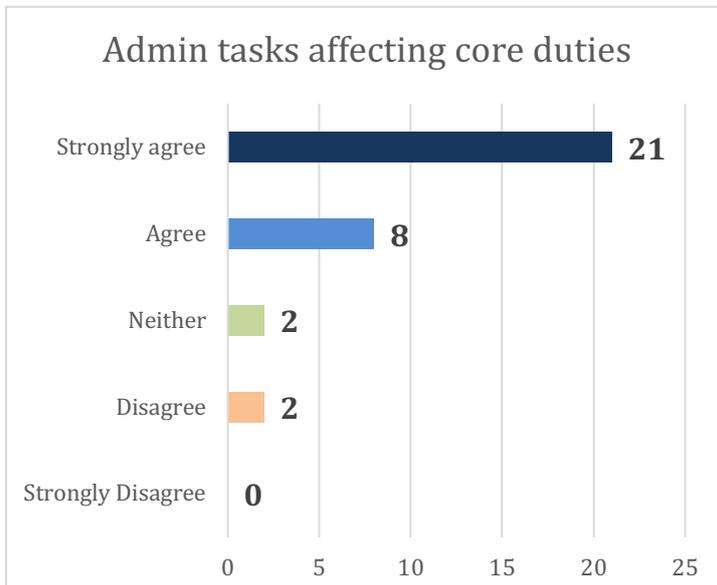
Agree = 24.3 % (8)

Neither/Unsure = 6.1 % (2)

Disagree = 6.1% (2)

Strongly Disagree = 0.0% (0)

Graphical representation



Specific Areas of Concern

Respondents were asked to rank each specific area as either of high importance / low importance, or a non-issue in terms of its effect on their work.

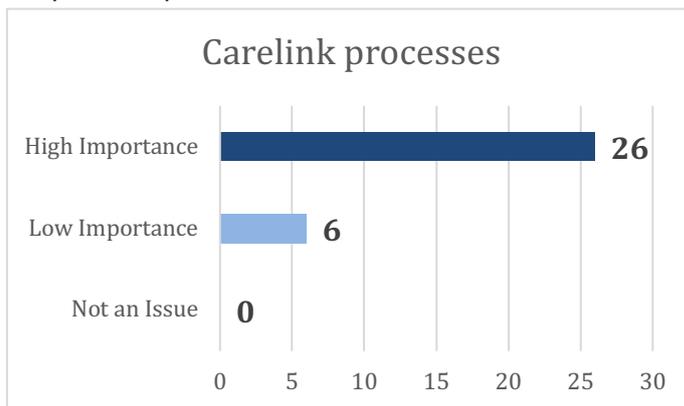
Carelink Rostering and Recording of Information (n=32)

High Importance = 81.3% (26)

Low Importance = 18.7% (6)

Not an Issue = 0% (0)

Graphical representation



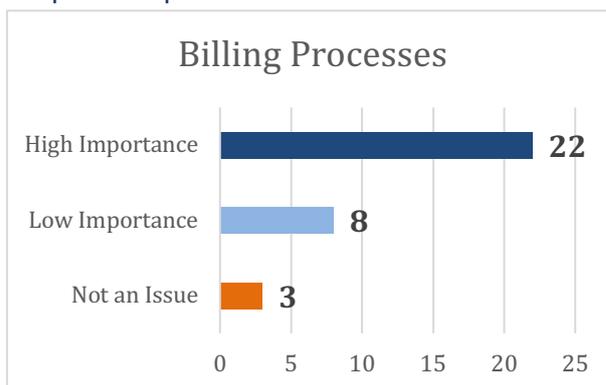
Billing Processes (n= 33)

High Importance = 66.7 % (22)

Low Importance = 24.2 % (8)

Not an Issue = 9.1 % (3)

Graphical representation



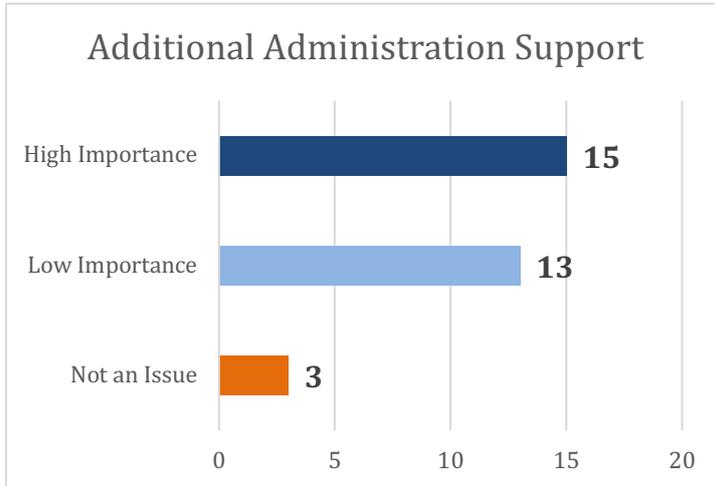
Provision of Additional Administration Support (n=31)

High Importance = 48.4 % (15)

Low Importance = 41.9 % (13)

Not an Issue = 9.7 % (3)

Graphical representation



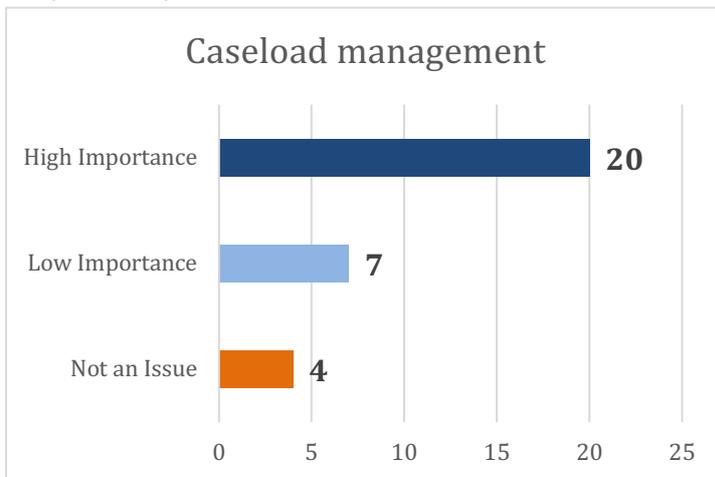
Caseload Management (n=31)

High Importance = 64.5 % (20)

Low Importance = 22.6 % (7)

Not an Issue = 12.9 % (4)

Graphical representation



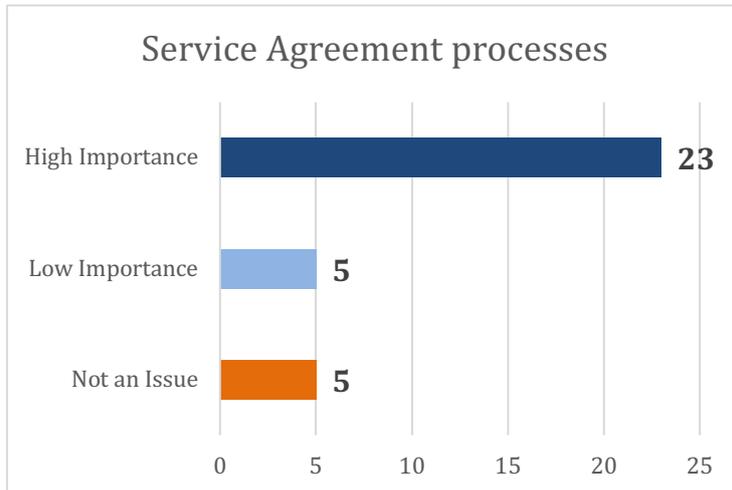
Service Agreement Processes (n=33)

High Importance = 69.6% (23)

Low Importance = 15.2% (5)

Not an Issue = 15.2 % (5)

Graphical representation



Other Concerns – see Addendum 1A.

The comments as stated in Addendum 1A generally reinforce the concern that client facing staff are being overwhelmed by activities not previously in their job description: – added administration; issues around data recording in Carelink; added concentration on funding arrangements rather than program development; initiatives being driven from the top; and constant ongoing change.

Summary

Responses in this area highlighted that many pressures resulting from an increase in the administration of service provision were affecting the capacity to deliver core services – that is the ability to concentrate on direct, and indirect service provision to clients. 87.8 % of respondents either agreed, or strongly agreed that the volume of administration tasks and duties related to service delivery make it difficult to complete their core duties.

As a general comment, the administration tasks involved in current service delivery are time consuming, add to the tasks that have previously been expected of client facing staff, and slow down service delivery. Much of this role should be handled by administration staff, and not by client facing staff who should focus on the skills they have been trained in. See addendum 1 for specific comments.

Survey Question (Adaptation to Change)

Please choose the most appropriate response to the below statement: Results of the October 2020 survey of members suggested that changes in systems and processes over recent years have been rapid, difficult to adapt to, poorly communicated/managed and at times, lacking apparent purpose. These changes in systems and processes are impacting negatively on my ability to complete my core tasks. (n= 33)

Strongly Agree= 63.6 % (21)

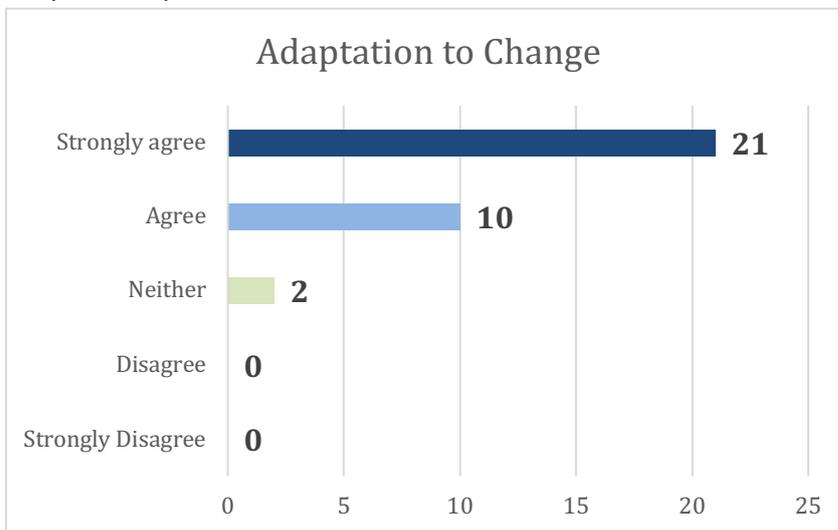
Agree = 30.3 % (10)

Neither/Unsure = 6.1 % (2)

Disagree = 0.0 % (0)

Strongly Disagree = 0.0 % (0)

Graphical representation



Specific Areas of Concern

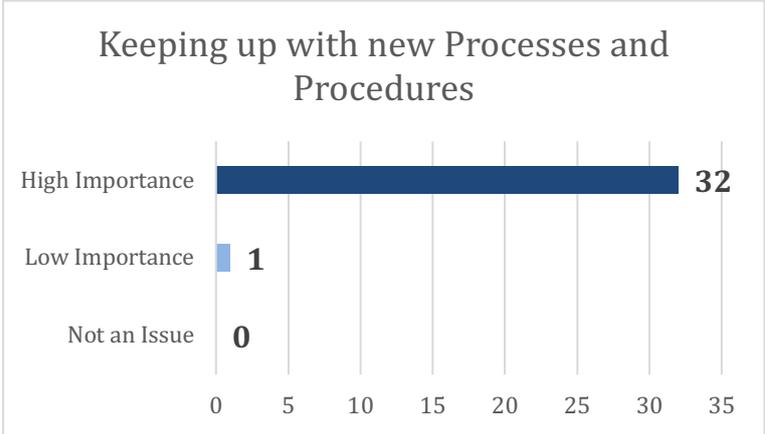
Keeping up with new processes and procedures (n=33)

High Importance = 97.0 % (32)

Low Importance = 3.0 % (1)

Not an Issue = 0.0 % (0)

Graphical representation



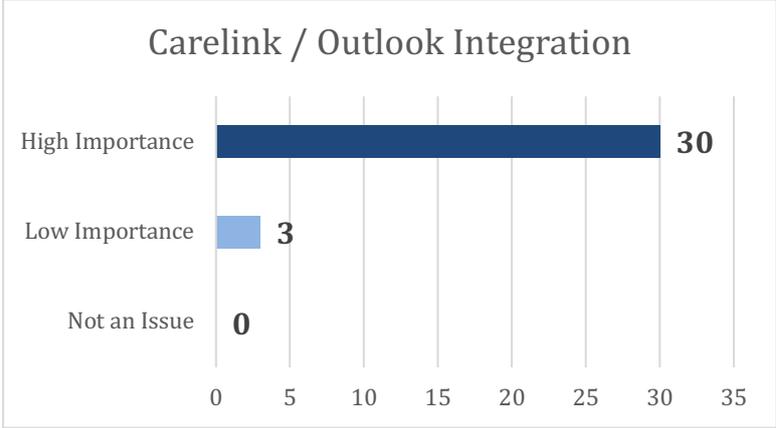
Lack of integration between Carelink and Outlook (n= 33)

High Importance = 90.9 % (30)

Low Importance = 9.1 % (3)

Not an Issue = 0.0 % (0)

Graphical representation



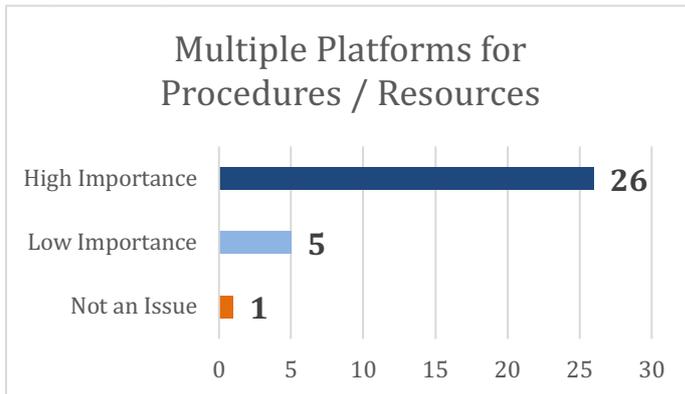
Multiple Platforms for Policies, Procedures, and Resources. (n=32)

High Importance = 81.3 % (26)

Low Importance = 15.6 % (5)

Not an Issue = 3.1 % (1)

Graphical representation



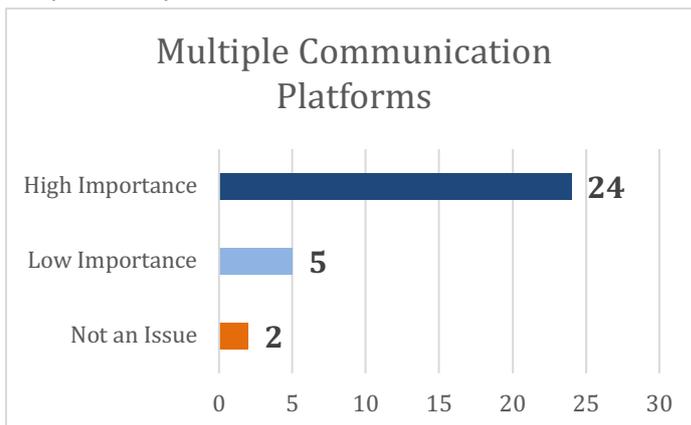
Using and Following Multiple Communication Platforms (n=31)

High Importance = 77.4 % (24)

Low Importance = 16.1 % (5)

Not an Issue = 6.5 % (2)

Graphical representation



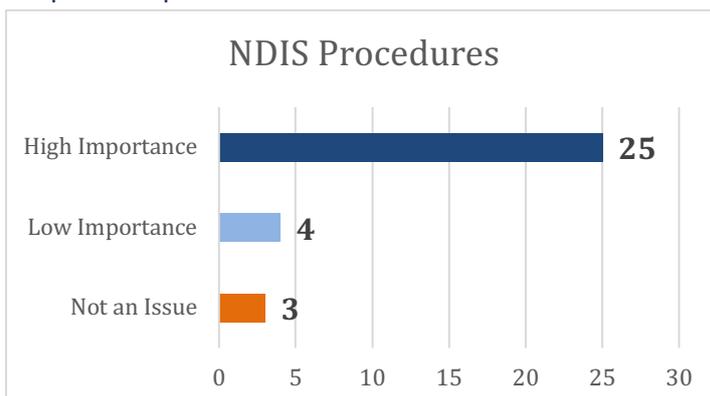
NDIS Procedures (n= 32)

High Importance = 78.1 % (25)

Low Importance = 12.5 % (4)

Not an Issue = 9.4 % (3)

Graphical representation



Summary

Responses in this area highlighted that many pressures resulting from the degree and pace of change were affecting the capacity to deliver core services to clients. The comments indicated that employees operating in the client facing area were experiencing stress and ongoing confusion while attempting to keep up. 93.9 % of respondents either agreed, or agreed strongly with the statement: changes in systems and processes over recent years have been rapid, difficult to adapt to, poorly communicated/managed and at times, lacking apparent purpose.

The main theme derived from the comments listed in Addendum 2 are:

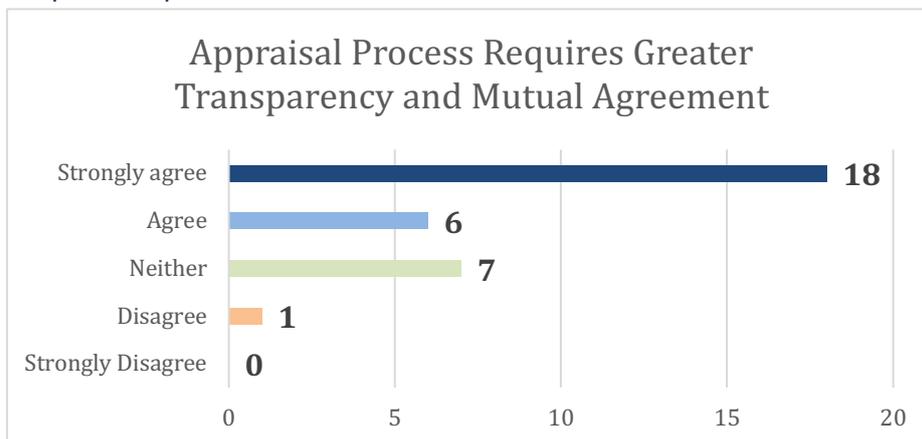
Constant change is occurring across a range of administrative tasks including changes to policies, platforms, procedures and processes. This often occurs without apparent purpose or reason. The duplication of the above across multiple platforms is resulting in wasted time, loss of productivity, and the general effect of overwhelming employees surveyed.

Survey Question (Performance reviews and remuneration)

In relation to performance reviews and remuneration, please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement: The appraisal process for client-facing staff requires greater transparency and mutual agreement. (n=32)

Strongly Agree	56.3 % (18)
Agree	18.7 % (6)
Neither/Unsure	21.9 % (7)
Disagree	3.1% (1)
Strongly Disagree	0.0% (0)

Graphical representation



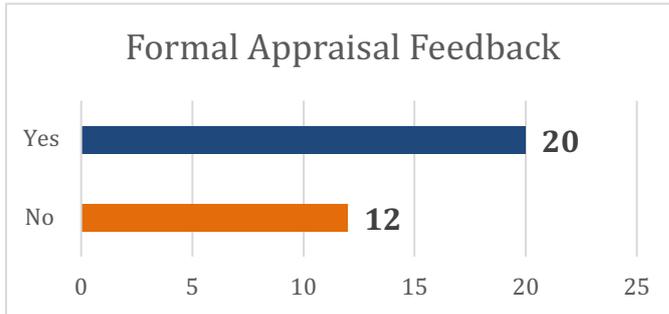
Specific Areas of Concern

I have received formal feedback that clarifies my appraisal outcomes for 2020. (n=32)

Yes = 62.5 % (20)

No = 37.5 % (12)

Graphical representation



My KPIs are Fair and Objectively Assessed (n=33)

Strongly Agree = 3.0 % (1)

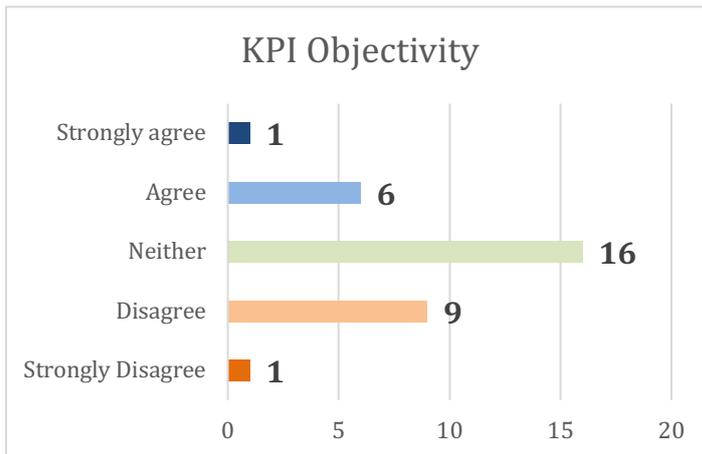
Agree = 18.2 % (6)

Neither/Unsure = 48.5 % (16)

Disagree = 27.3 % (9)

Strongly Disagree = 3.0 % (1)

Graphical representation



I Believe the 70/30 KPI Target for Client-Facing Staff is Reasonable. (n=33)

Strongly Agree = 3.0 % (1)

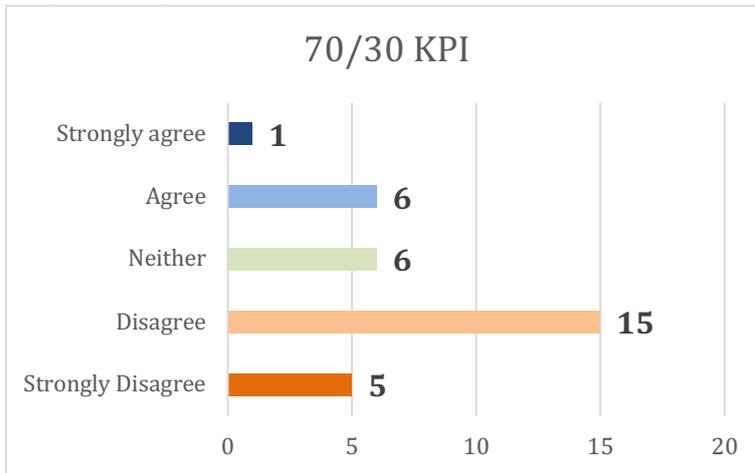
Agree = 18.2 % (6)

Neither/Unsure = 18.2 % (6)

Disagree = 45.5 % (15)

Strongly Disagree = 15.1 % (5)

Graphical representation

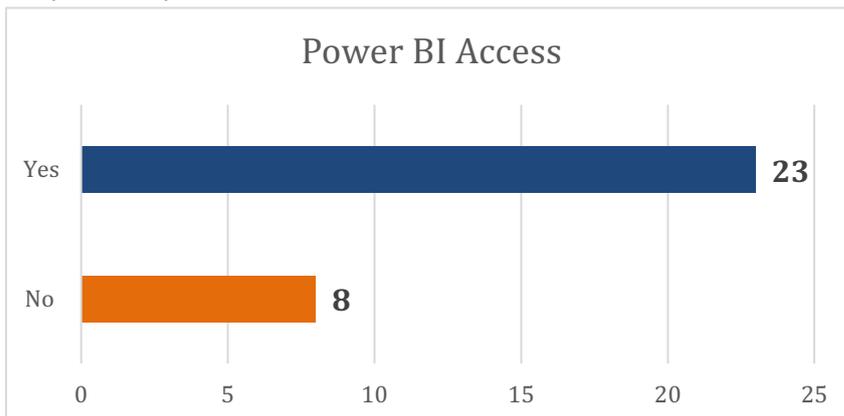


I Have Access to My Current KPI Ratio via Power BI. (n=31)

Yes = 74.2 % (23)

No = 25.8 % (8)

Graphical representation

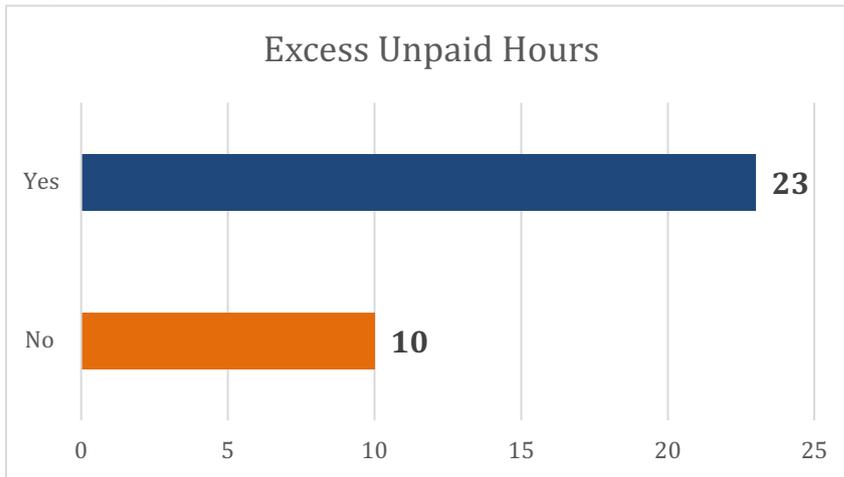


To keep up with my tasks, I regularly work hours that exceed my paid hours (that are not being compensated with TIL or flexible working arrangements). (n=33)

Yes = 69.7 % (23)

No = 30.3 % (10)

Graphical representation



Summary

Responses in this area highlighted that the appraisal system of affected employees is neither transparent, nor arrived at through mutual agreement, with 75 % of respondents having either agreed, or strongly agreed that the appraisal process needs greater transparency and mutual agreement.

The responses suggested that a substantial portion of staff were either unsure of, or in the dark about their appraisal outcome for the previous year, and how this linked with pay advancement.

More concerning, was the introduction of the 70/30 KPI. Sixty percent of respondents either disagreed, or strongly disagreed that this KPI was reasonable. Comments suggested that 70/30 was a difficult target in the current confusing environment, and also that it does not apply equally to all staff, Some staff, by the nature and specifics of their roles, will find it more or less difficult to achieve. Additionally, concerns were raised that part time staff would be disadvantaged by the expectation of having to complete the same set activities as others, such as attending to emails, training, meetings, etc. making it more difficult for that cohort to achieve this target.

In addition, almost 70% of staff reported that they were working regular unpaid hours. While some level of give and take regarding hours is understandable in client facing roles, that such a proportion of affected staff are regularly working extra hours conflicts with the terms of the Enterprise Agreement, which states clearly that additional hours worked are either compensated by Time in Lieu arrangements, or formal paid overtime. Comments made by staff in this area infers that staff are conflicted between the desire to deliver services to clients and coping with the additional administrative tasks previously referred to. When staff are routinely working additional hours it impacts negatively on personal time in the work-life balance.

The question asked around access to Power BI, and the comments attached revealed that of the 19 comments received, 6 had achieved the 70/30 KPI (one of those noted that this was because administration tasks were completed out of hours), four fell below the KPI. Five respondents reported they didn't know (3 saying they were unable to understand/ access their KPIs) the remaining 4 comments didn't indicate their KPI ratio. See addendum 3 for further/specific comments.

Survey Question (Management/ Organisational structure)

Management/organisational structure was another area raised in October's survey results as a significant factor contributing to the stress and difficulties experienced by members at GDN.

Which area of management do you feel is best able to address the concerns mentioned in this survey? (n=33)

Practice Lead = 0.0 % (0)

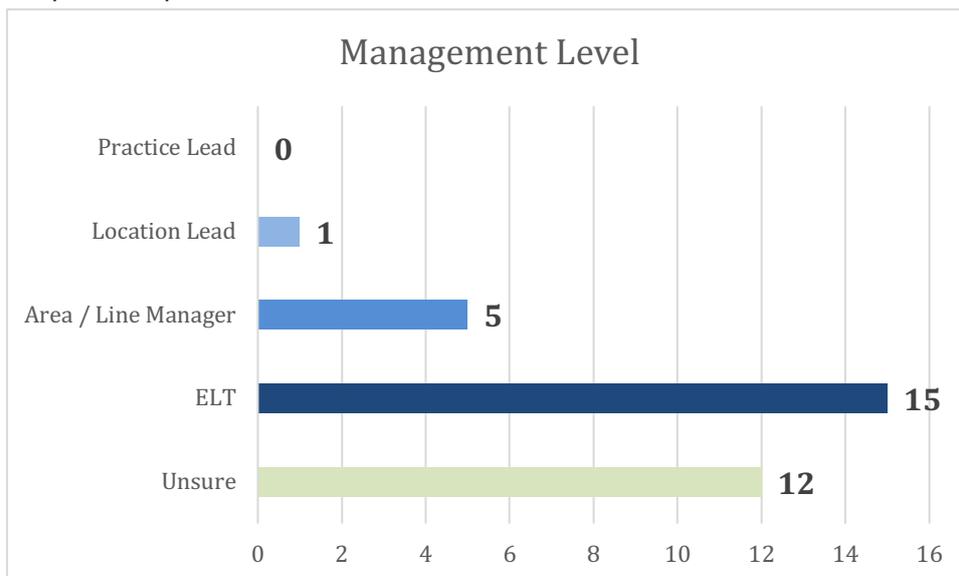
Location Lead = 3.0 % (1)

Area/Line Manager = 15.2 % (5)

Senior/ELT = 45.4 % (15)

Unsure = 36.4 % (12)

Graphical representation



Summary

The numerical results suggest that respondents consider that the ELT is best able to address the concerns raised in this survey.

Comments provided suggest that Area Managers are generally well regarded. The comments indicate that there are questions around the organisational structure, who is responsible for what and a feeling that upper levels of management are somewhat disconnected from the staff providing one-on-one services to clients. See addendum 4 for comments.

Survey Question (Final Additional Comments)

A final question was asked of respondents to add any further comments. Those comments are listed below as extracted from SurveyMonkey

If you have any additional comments, please add them here:

1. An increase of salary will provide better credit to the profession of O&M.
2. Generally speaking I feel we have good management and executive governance, board, a stable organization and dedicated workforce. I don't expect anything to be perfect! I am not perfect! Frankly I am not sure about the appropriateness of a survey from the union and maybe problems should be just sorted out within company channels, however I offer my feedback here as I would in a company forum, and appreciate there may be other union

members with differing experience and views. I have endeavoured to provide constructive feedback in both this survey and the company/staff surveys. An opportunity to connect on a more informal level with whole team (regional at least?) I believe may have benefit in a multitude of ways. I recognize that may be a challenge for the organization to enable in a financial sense, as it may be indulgent, excessive, or may be perceived as indulgent. However the benefits for staff and ultimately our service in terms of staff mental health, communicative, networking and informal problem solving opportunity may be worth it. Is there a way this can be delivered on a low budget? We don't need an expensive party, maybe a breakfast or lunch in a park? Perhaps canvass staff about this for ideas? There may be a silent minority suffering out there who'd benefit, and maybe we'd actually all benefit from a sort of group social! Thank you.

3. I love my job when I work with clients but I find the demands beyond that too often be overwhelming and consider leaving at times.
4. What has happened to Guide Dogs? Where are we heading? I think we have lost our way, without client's and client services we have no purpose, so then there is no need for donors. I am still mystified as to why only Specialist's need to roster (Redacted), which I am refusing to do. I roster my (redacted) hours for which I am paid for. I currently use at least six systems for client management. 1. Outlook (my actual calendar) 2. Carelink 3. Excel for Guide Dog follow ups etc 4. Teams to waste my time trying to locate information 5. Guide Dog Intranet (see above) 6. CRM to locate dog info 7. (Redacted) for reliable assistance and unwavering support.
5. Pay advancement for client facing staff has been a long standing issue that has not been addressed in the current EA. This group of staff, particularly those with relevant university level qualifications are not adequately reimbursed when compared with similar professions in the labour market. Advancement can, and has been stalled, by the artificial and arbitrary determination of what it means to work at expected/exceeded performance levels.
6. Received notification letter of 2% increase 14.7.20. Letter stating my current level after performance review only received after 2 requests, many months after reviews, for why my pay had not been adjusted up according to EA. Otherwise I would not have received anything related to salary and performance reviews.
7. I am finding that with all the constant changes and continual evolving of Carelink, and the consequent stress that I'm not enjoying my job as I did previously. I still enjoy helping clients, but the roster completion is just way too time consuming and repetitive and is not a helpful diary tool for we practitioners as it doesn't show anything. Outlook is far more easier to read and stores relevant info that can be viewed easily for appointments. As such, like many others, I am keeping two calendars upto date, Carelink and Outlook, very time consuming. Management should walk a week in our shoes(like the CEOs who sleep on the streets for a night to raise funds) and they might get a better appreciation of the administration burden we deal with daily. Thanks so much HSU for continuing to raise member concerns, your efforts are much appreciated.
8. Greater transparency for the pay scale – access to looking at it. I have done a supervision course along side a number of other people but it is not taken into account and with my (Redacted) years of experience in the field. I do not wish to have monetary compensation but this should be reflected in the level we are on – this used to be the case but it does not seem to be any longer.

9. Sadly I was a very motivated employee who worked more hours and stepped up in to a role when asked. I didn't feel recognised or valued for my efforts and it's affected my work ethic now where I do the minimum

Conclusions and Recommendations

Systems and Processes

1. Form a working group of affected staff to properly consider the impacts of any system changes. This includes impact to staff, clients and the direction of the organisation.
2. Develop an ethics committee to ensure the changes are not just financially/ fundraising/ marketing based, but investigate future direction as a part of a vision towards equity and fairness (within our organisation and society).
3. Simplify processes and systems and particularly avoid duplication of tasks. Eg. outlook / carelink rostering.
4. Remove as much administrative tasks as possible so that client facing staff can concentrate on what they're trained to do. Most of these issues / processes such as service agreements / billing details should and can occur in the background.
5. Either properly modify Carelink, if possible, or replace it. Apart from the stress it causes, it is inefficient, unproductive (at least in the Client services area), and costly to GDN.

Adaptation to Change

1. While it is understood organisations must change, that should be managed so as to not cause undue and unnecessary stress.
2. Form a working group as above to properly assess the likely outcomes of change, and in particular, to question the need. Much of the current change has left staff questioning apparent purpose, or value.
3. Consider that a steady change of staff at the ELT level will necessarily introduce new leadership – new managers with new ideas will often introduce change and often replace existing systems and processes. This needs to be done with caution and consultation. As well as having an impact on systems and process it also has an impact on the direction of the organisation in terms of its ethics and purpose.

Appraisals

1. Review the appraisal process, to be more transparent, and in consultation and agreement of those affected.
2. Link performance with real wage increases. This is particularly relevant in the client services stream, with so many pay points, and will require a sustainable, but adequate funding source.
3. Direct all client facing staff to only work their paid hours per week (or flexible work arrangements with appropriate TIL) and then re-examine any KPIs as part of (a).

4. Consider that part time staff will always have a greater proportion of their time engaged in fixed time activities such as meetings. The way to make these staff more productive is to minimise fixed time activities and not impose KPIs unfairly that will lead to them working out of hours. The balance between being informed/ attending meetings/ completing training and completing client hours can be a juggle when working less hours.

Management

1. The ELT to be more consultative with those on the levels that deliver services to clients. Avoid making decisions without attaining a proper understanding of the work performed and the impacts those decisions may have on client-facing staff.
2. Avoid a frequent rotation of staff at this level so the ELT managers have time to develop an understanding of the work performed by the organisation.