Manchester City Council's Frontline Social Work Staffing Challenges within Adults' Services

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Overview of the Data Fellowship

Over the course of 8 weeks, I was set the task to review the recruitment and retention data of Adults' Social Services held by Manchester City Council and summarise my findings in a final presentation.

The main goals of the internship were to:

- assess the retention and recruitment data

- identify and highlight key areas of improvement to help maintain a stable work force

- create recommendations for the necessary improvements

Data Analysis

I reviewed and analysed pre-existing quantitative data pertaining to a 5-year span provided by Manchester City Council. These included data about deployments, absences, caseloads, agency spend, resignations, and equalities. In addition, I also created a qualitative survey with the purpose of better understanding the feelings and points of view of Adult Social Workers, as the quantitative data was limiting in this aspect. The survey was sent to social workers within the Adults' Services that have active caseloads. The software used to analyse the quantitative data was Excel, while the qualitative survey

Have you considered leaving your current job role for any reason?
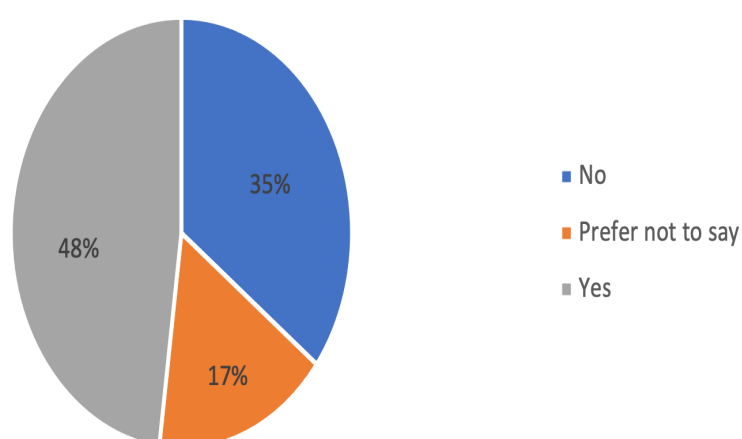
- No
- Prefer not to say
- Yes

Chart showing the respondents who had considered leaving their current job role

was created through Microsoft Forms. By utilising Excel, I was then able to visualise the findings from the survey. The analysis of the datasets was facilitated by the creation of pivot tables, charts, and graphs.

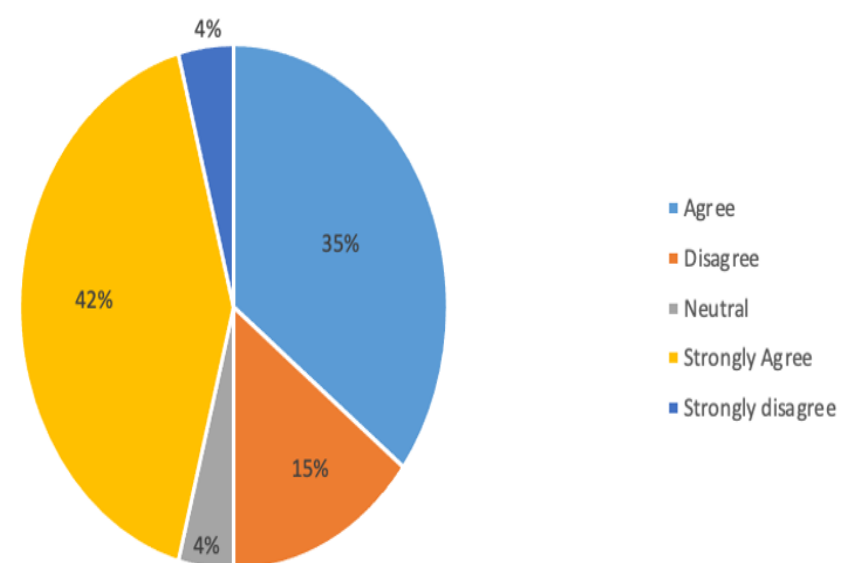I have felt stress, depression or anxiety in relation to my job

- Agree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Strongly Agree
- Strongly disagree

Chart showing the respondents that have felt stress, depression or anxiety due to their job

Findings

- Agency spend is very high, so the council needs to stop relying on agency workers
- There is a lack of transparency surrounding the assignment of caseloads and a centralised monitoring activity of caseloads should be implemented
- Most respondents have considered leaving their job due to the need for better pay, stress and anxiety and lack of support
- Stress and depression are a significant reason for absence for social workers, which could be reduced with less caseloads
- The survey revealed that discrimination in the workplace is an area that should be further investigated

Key Skills Learnt

Through this internship, I have managed to acquire and refine several skills. Firstly, I have improved upon my data analysis skills through using Excel and creating the qualitative survey on Microsoft Forms. Due to COVID-19, I was able to enhance my adaptability skills, as I worked both remotely and in the office. Furthermore, I managed to refine my organisational and communication skills by attending weekly meetings with my managers. I had the opportunity to develop my project and time management skills because I was given the freedom to explore the areas of interest that I had with this project. Lastly, the delivery of the final presentation enabled me to work on my public speaking skills, as I had to present my findings in front of the heads of department at Manchester City Council. Prior to the start of the internship, public speaking was something that I found particularly challenging, but this experience allowed to become more confident.

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