

Stakeholder Survey Report 2008

Introduction

The Scottish Public Pensions Agency (SPPA) administers and regulates the NHS and Teachers pensions schemes in Scotland and other occupational pension schemes for which the Scottish Ministers are responsible.

It is the aim of SPPA to continuously improve the services it provides and the stakeholder survey provides an opportunity to review customer feedback to see if we are achieving our aims.

This is our third Stakeholder Survey since SPPA relocated to the Scottish Borders over 6 years ago and is a key performance task in the Operations Business Plan 2008/09.

In this report we will analyse the responses to identify areas where improvements can be made and to see how we compare to previous years. In particular we want to identify where our current service falls below customers expectations. The survey will help us to make informed decisions on providing a satisfactory or improved service to its members. The responses received from previous years surveys have already helped to inform us in making service improvements which have been implemented during the course of the last two years.

Methodology

We surveyed a random sample of current and previous members of the NHS and Teachers Pension Schemes and Employers. This involved issuing the questionnaire to 670 NHS Member and 502 STSS members (1172 in total) and 562 NHS employers and 269 employers (831 in total) from our selection of stakeholders, with completed surveys being received back from combined NHS and STSS of 413 (35%) members and 231 (27%) employers. The survey was carried out over a 7 week period and closed on 31 July 2008.

The survey allowed the participants to answer questions using a range of answers including very satisfied, satisfied, neutral, dissatisfied, very dissatisfied or Not Applicable. To calculate the satisfied results (as opposed to those who expressed dissatisfaction), neutral to very satisfied responses were included. 'Not Applicable' responses were not included within the percentage levels expressed.

The Scottish Government's Analytical Services Division were responsible for collating the results and providing the software to complete the survey. They also produced the overall results in graph form including a table providing information on options, percentages and values.

Results - Employers/Stakeholders Survey

The results are based on responses received from NHS Trusts, GP Practices, Direction Bodies, STSS Employers/Stakeholders. In total, 231 employers responded to the survey and answered the questions as follows.

'Overall, how satisfied are you with the service provided by the SPPA?'

This year's results show that satisfaction levels have increased to 97.3% from 95.2% in 2007, and we have still maintained the high level of satisfaction of the 2006 figures. GP Practices/Direction Bodies' responses are particularly pleasing, all responses being either very satisfied or satisfied. This reflects the particular activity focussed on the groups by SPPA through improved working relationships, visits and presentations aimed at targeting inconsistencies in knowledge and information.

Other **employer** results are as follows -

- 97% of employers are very satisfied to neutral with the time it took to get through to staff, the last time they contacted SPPA by telephone. This is an increase of 0.4% on last year.
- 99% of employers were satisfied with the 'politeness and courtesy of staff' compared to 82.8% in 2007.
- 83.9% of employers confirmed they have a list of contact details for the team that deals with their scheme. This is a good result compared to 79.2% last year.
- 70.5% of employers confirmed they have a copy of the employers guide, compared with last years 57.1%.
- 97% of employers were very satisfied to neutral with the overall way their call to SPPA was handled. This is a 2% decrease from 2007, however still remains a high percentage.
- 84.3% are satisfied that the response to their written enquiry has resolved their enquiry compared to 83.8% in 2007.

- 92% were happy with the information provided, however this is a decrease from 100% in 2007.
- 85.3% of employers got through to the correct team first time, however this result is a slight decrease from the 2007 result of 88.8%.
- 94.9% are satisfied in 2008 with the website being a source of information, this is a decrease from 95.4% being satisfied last year.
- We also asked customers 'On using our website, how satisfied were you with it as a source for contacts? 96.2% of employers were very satisfied to neutral which is a slight decrease from 97.5% in 2007.

Results - Members Survey - NHS & STSS

The results are based on responses from both NHS and STSS active and pensioner members. Within these two groups we selected a range of different reasons for contact with SPPA, including telephone contact, specific pensions events or any general enquiries where SPPA provided a response. These results are only based on groups who expressed an opinion and not those who indicated Not Applicable.

‘Overall, how satisfied are you with the service provided by the SPPA?’

Overall 96.5% of members remain satisfied with the service they have received from SPPA. Given that these results were compiled at a time when there has been a lot of uncertainty with the introduction of pension reforms in both main schemes, this is a pleasing testament to the standard of service being provided to SPPA’s customers by staff. The areas for improvement in this category will be to try and encourage higher service satisfaction in the very satisfied category. SPPA is looking to introduce a new telephone voice recognition system in the future which is aimed at improving telephone handling services delivered.

Other **members** results are as follows –

- 95.8% are satisfied to neutral with the communication received from the SPPA’s payroll section, an increase of 2.1% from last year.
- ‘If you have experienced our automated call answering system, how satisfied were you with it?’ 95.3% of members were very satisfied to neutral, another increase of 1.7% from last year.
- ‘If you have written to/emailed the SPPA, how satisfied were you with the time taken to respond?’ Members satisfied to neutral have increased by 3.6% to 90.3% this year.
- ‘Having written to/emailed the SPPA, how satisfied were you with the clarity of information provided?’ 92% were very satisfied to neutral this year an increase of 2% from last year.
- ‘Having written to/emailed the SPPA, how satisfied were you with the way your query was dealt with?’ Again an increase of 1.9% to 90.3% of members being satisfied this year.
- ‘On receiving an annual benefit statement how satisfied were you with the clarity of information in the statement?’ members have confirmed their satisfaction with a 4.6% increase to 96.5% this year.
- ‘How satisfied were you with any of the SPPA guides you have read in the last year?’ 2008 results show an increase of 1.2% to 96.5% of members being either very satisfied to neutral.
- Lastly, we asked members, ‘Overall, how satisfied are you with the service provided by the SPPA?’ Overall, the very high satisfaction levels exceed 2007 by 2.1%, with 96.5% of members being satisfied with the service they have received.

- 95.8% of members were satisfied to neutral with the way their request was handled when contacting SPPA regarding a pension in payment. A 0.1% decrease compared to last year.
- When asking members ‘How satisfied were you with the time it takes to get through to staff on the telephone?’ There was a decrease of 3.3% in satisfaction levels to 92.6% in 2008. However SPPA is introducing a new telephone voice recognition system in the near future which will hopefully assist to improve this service.
- 97.7% were satisfied with the politeness and courtesy of SPPA staff, again a decrease of 1% from last year.
- Members were asked ‘Overall, how satisfied were you with the way your telephone

call was handled including the information provided by the member of staff?' This year 93.8% are very satisfied to neutral with the way their call was handled, a 1.3% decrease from last year.

- 'If you have visited the SPPA website at www.sppa.gov.uk, in the last year, how satisfied were you with it?' A drop of 0.1% to 91% from last year, however the website has since been changed considerably to make it much more user friendly.

Conclusion

In conclusion the overall result in satisfaction for both NHS and STSS members has increased by 2.1% to 96.5% on last year's results. This year we have been able to improve on the 2007 results, albeit the results have been compiled following a period of uncertainty in the pensions provision administered by SPPA. The Employer results also indicate an increase in overall satisfaction from 2007 survey. GP Practices and Direction Bodies responses are particularly pleasing in that all the responses are either Very Satisfied or Satisfied. The targeting of key development areas, information and knowledge gaps, aimed at improving working practices, appears to have been effective.

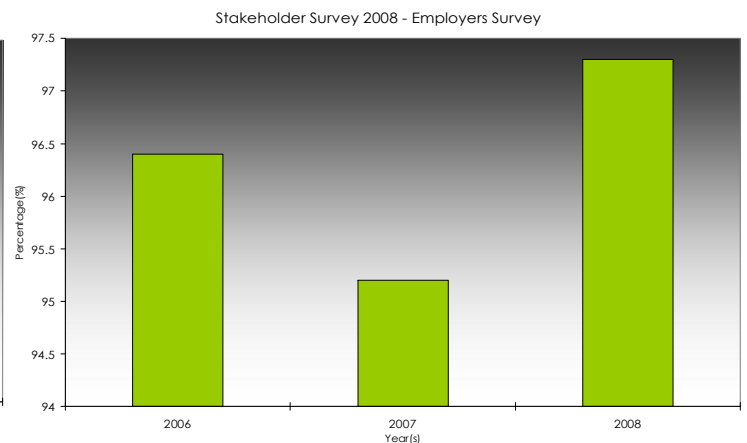
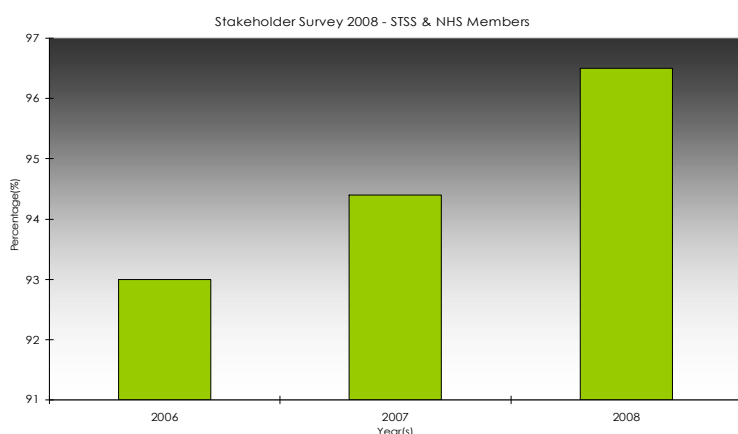
2007 saw the introduction of quality controls which have already resulted in improvements being made to the style and content of correspondence being issued by Operations staff. The effects of these controls should be more evident in subsequent surveys. If, however, there was anything to suggest an emerging trend of lower satisfaction levels in how written/email enquiries are dealt with, further investigation and action would need to be initiated.

SPPA recognises that its website is one of its main sources of communication. It has been essential to make sure information is both accurate and up to date. The website has seen improvements since the 2007 survey was completed. It's now continually developed with particular attention being focussed on ensuring it is regularly updated with the latest developments, forms and relevant correspondence. In addition to this, we are also ensuring that out dated material is removed. This should increase the likelihood that the 2009 survey might offer even higher positive feedback.

During the survey period SPPA have been working hard to develop and implement a new IT Pensions Administration System; by introducing this, SPPA hope that this will lead to improved levels of customer service and be reflected in stakeholders' opinions of the service they receive.

For 2009's survey, more research needs to be completed regarding the wording of questions and the selection criteria for recipients to ensure accurate reflection of its performance. Unfortunately issues were highlighted in how the members were completing the surveys with a high number returning surveys with "Not Applicable" marked. This can be interpreted in 2 ways; (i) dissatisfied with the response they received rather than how the actual request was dealt with or (ii) our selection process needs to be reviewed.

'Overall, how satisfied are you with the service provided by the SPPA?'
(Results below show overall percentage from 2006, 2007 and 2008)



Recommendations

The following recommendations have been identified where improvements could be made to SPPA's performance. By taking these suggestions on board improvements in customer service should be realised and future survey results will hopefully reflect continued improvements. The recommendations have been allocated to owners who will now have the responsibility to monitor, implement and achieve the results required by the assigned target dates.

Action	Owner	Target Date
Provision of full contact details for teams within SPPA, this will allow for easier placing of calls to the most appropriate person.	Director of Operations	31/03/2009
Introduction of standard telephone etiquette for dealing the callers – team leaders to monitor progress	Training & Development	31/03/2009
Improvements to the existing telephone system – currently underway with the impending introduction of the voice recognition system.	ISU	31/12/2008
Communication improvements – work has already commenced by the creation of the Operations Communications Team.	Operations Communications Team	31/03/2009
Regular maintenance of web – content and updating now fall under the control of the Operations Communications Team.	Operations Communications Team along with new Corporate Communications Manager	Ongoing
Quality checks – these have been introduced, however we need to ensure that standards are being met and enforcement of these standards is implemented where required.	Technical Training Team	31/03/2009
Payroll – effective provision of training, resourcing, support of system changes to improve customer service.	Payroll and Technical Training Team	31/03/2009