An evaluation of the performance management of nurses and care staff who are responsible for caring for people with intellectual disabilities, who are employed in a specific care unit run by the Health Service Executive (HSE) in Ireland.

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment for the MA in Human Resource Management.

Submitted to the National College of Ireland September 2015.

Padraic Galvin

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Abstract:

This research paper was undertaken to evaluate the performance management of nurses and care staff who are responsible for caring for people with intellectual disabilities, while working in a specific care unit run by the Health Service Executive (HSE) in Ireland. All data was obtained from staff working at the care unit. The researcher did background research, examining books, academic journals and articles in order to get his foundation for his research paper. In order to evaluate the performance system, sub research objectives were designed based on academic literature in the field of human resource management and in performance management. CIPD (2014) identified six components of performance management, they are, performance appraisal, feedback, goals and standards of performance, learning and development, measurement and pay. The research questionnaire was constructed around these six components. The quantitative methods approach was adopted and the author used a web based survey to acquire the data required to fulfil the research objectives. The results showed that the performance management system in place is effective in managing individual and organisational performance through the effective use of feedback, goals and standards and learning and development however, in terms of measurement and performance appraisal and to a lesser extent pay, there are changes that could be made to in order to create a collectively effective performance management system.

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Part 1 - Introduction

Performance management systems have become more and more common in organisations all over the world. In the healthcare sector however, such systems traditionally don't appear to be as common. According to Harnett, Bowles, and Coughlan, (2009), there are only a few mechanisms of performance management in place for performance standards to be achieved. There are many benefits, both organisational and individual, that can be gained through the implementation of an effective performance management system. Silva and Ferreira (2010), carried out an evaluation of performance management systems in primary health care services in Portugal, finding the systems to be disjoint and not coherent. This paper will carry out a similar study in a healthcare unit in Ireland, basing the research around the CIPD's (2014) components of an effective performance management system. They are; performance appraisal, pay, feedback, goals and standards of performance, learning and development and measurement. The aim of this paper is to evaluate the current performance management system in a health care unit for nurses and care staff who are responsible for caring for people with intellectual disabilities. In this paper, the researcher will identify whether a performance management process is present in the care unit and if it is present, what components does it consist of? In order to achieve certain research objectives the author has decided to carry out a quantitative study. This will be achieved through the use of a web based survey.

Part 2 - Literature Review

2.1 Importance of Management of Performance

There are many different types of organisations, however no matter what the type of organisation, every organisation's aim is to be successful. Whether it is an organisation within the business sector which strives to make profit or a charitable organisation which aims to raise money for and develop projects for disadvantaged people who are in need of assistance. This success is essentially achieved by the performance of the organisation and the continuous improvement of that performance. Hill and Jones (2004) state that the goal of upmost importance for organisations is to perform effectively and efficiently. The management of people within an organisation can be key to that organisation achieving organisational success. As Deming (1982) points out there should be a belief that there is no such thing as a bad

employee, and shouldn't be used as an excuse, its actually just bad management, which goes to further emphasise the importance of the effective management of performance.

Within an organisation it is the people's skills that are vital for an organisation's success once they are managed correctly. Barney (1995) believes that in order for an organisation to be successful, it needs to look at what capabilities and skills it can utilise within the organisation. He states that "to *discover these resource and capabilities, managers must look inside their firm for valuable, rare and costly-to-imitate resources and then exploit these resource through their organisation"* (Barney, 1995, p.60). Wright, Dunford and Snell (2001) are of firm belief that an organisational success can be gained by using a resource based view by using human resource practises to develop their human capital pool in order to achieve their desired behaviour from the staff. The success of an organisation no matter what type of environment it is operating in is dependent on performance.

The management of performance can improve an organisation's systems and outputs, and can help to facilitate long term planning and organisational control by identifying factors that are critical to the organisation being successful (Unahabhokha, Platts and Tan, 2007). According to Bennett (2009), performance management is also concerned with the specification of which goals an organisation should aim to achieve. Having the priority goals set out and highlighted should assist in preventing the dispersal of organisational initiative (Bennett, 2009). This is backed up by Verbeeten (2008) when he states that performance management can "*reduce and eliminate ambiguity and confusion about objectives; and to gain coherence and focus in pursuit of the organisation's mission*" (Verbeeten, 2008, p. 428)

2.2 Performance

Brumbach (1988) describes performance as meaning "*both behaviours and results. Behaviours emanate from the performer and transform performance from abstraction to action. Not just the instruments for results, behaviours are also outcomes in their own right – the product of mental and physical effort applied to tasks – and can be judged apart from results*" (Brumbach, 1988, p.387). This is backed by Armstrong and Baron (2004), when they point out that performance can often be judged on output and nothing more, reaching the targets or goals set out by the organisation, but performance isn't only just about what workers achieve but how they go about achieving their goals. It is the management of employee's performance that is crucial in an organisation being effective and achieving their desired goals and results

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(Armstrong and Baron, 2004). Performance can also be described as actions and behaviours of an employee that are applicable to objectives of that organisation (Landy and Conte, 2010).

Roper, Prouska and Na Ayudhya (2010) expand on this by saying performance includes employee actions that benefit the organisation in their attempts to achieve their goals and objectives. According to Roper et al. (2010), performance is understood and measured on the use of different outcome measures or performance indicators which are used to determine an employee's performance. There are many different takes on what performance actually is, but there is no doubt whatever the sector or area of work, that performance can be influenced by how the actions and behaviours of the employees is managed.

2.3 Performance Management

Armstrong and Baron (2004) define performance management as "*a process which contributes to the effective management of individuals and teams in order to achieve high level of organisational performance. As such, it establishes shared understanding about what is to be achieved and an approach to leading and developing people which will ensure that it is achieved*" (Armstrong and Baron, 2004, p.2). Performance management can also be described as a process of "*identifying, measuring, and developing the performance of individuals and teams and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organisation*" (Aguinis and Pierce, 2008, p.139).

A common aspect to the above literature regarding performance management, is the importance the organisation places on supporting the employee to reach their full potential in relation to their performance. This is further discussed by Kohli and Deb (2008) when they identify performance management as a crucial strategy of human resource management which attempts to improve the organisations overall performance and that it is a very important tool in clarifying performance objectives, standards and competencies to improve performance.

Drumm (2005) makes the point that, performance management includes actions like joint goal-setting, continuous progress review and continual communication, feedback and coaching for in order to achieve an improved performance as well as implementation of employee-development programs and rewarding achievements. Performance management is often looked at as a process that is systematic, where the organisation's overall performance can be improved by improving the performance of individuals within a team framework (Drumm, 2005).

Armstrong (2006) identifies a key point that performance management is about making sure that the backing and appropriate guidance needed by employees to improve their performance and develop their skills are available and accessible.

2.4 Aims and Benefits of Performance Management

Armstrong (2006) describes the organisational objective of performance management is to create a culture of high performance within the organisation, where employees as individual and/or teams take responsibility for the continual improvement of processes within a business as well as the skills they possess and for their contributions within a framework that is implemented. Armstrong identifies the need to focus on people within the organisation carrying out the right behaviours by ensuring the goals for employees are clear (Armstrong 2006).

The following are some of the various aims outlined by a range of different organisations which were gathered by *IRS Employment Trends* (2003):

- Employee's tasks are focused on doing the right things and doing them correctly. Ensuring that everyone's individual goals are aligned to the organisational goals (Eli Lilly and Co).

- Making a link or connection between job performance to the achievement of the medium term service plans and corporate strategy (Leicestershire County Council).

- Having a systematic approach to organisational performance in place by aligning individual employee accountabilities and responsibilities to the desired targets and activities set out by the organisation (Royal Berkshire and Battle Hospitals NHS Trust)

- Employees having clarity about what is expected of them to achieve and what standards must be met, and how that helps to contribute to the organisation's overall success, receiving routine, fair and accurate feedback and coaching to challenge and motivate them to achieve their goals and fulfil potential (Mark & Spencer Financial Services).

- The maximisation of the individual employees and the teams to benefit not only themselves but also the organisations by focusing on achieving their aligned goals and objectives (West Bromwich Building Society).

(IRS Employment Trends, 2003)

Sahoo and Mishra (2012) believe that performance management is a way of advocating a workforce that is superior-performing through emphasising job descriptions for employees, creating a performance improvement plan and implementing a 360 degree feedback mechanism. Having clear job descriptions set out for the employees benefits the individual as it creates a platform that the employee can clearly understand in terms of what that individual needs to personally develop and what they need to contribute to the organisation as a whole. The performance-improvement plan (PIP) is set up and implemented to allow for constructive dialogue between an employee and their supervisor and to ensure clarity regarding the work performance and what needs to be improved. Finally systems of 360 degree feedback provide one of the most effective ways for understanding personal development needs of the employee 360 degree feedback is more detailed and exact, more reflective of their performance and more legitimate than feedback that is just delivered from their supervisor (Sahoo and Mishra, 2012).

Armstrong (2006) like Sahoo and Mishra, believes performance management is most effective when it links individual and organisational objectives together while incorporating the organisational core values which can lead to the individuals and the organisation both benefiting. Having the individual and organisational goals aligned allows for expectations to be set out and agreed upon, for example:

- Role responsibilities

- Role accountabilities

- Skills that are required

- Behaviours that are expected

(Armstrong, 2006)

The idea of having this clarity is to allow for the development of the capacity of employees in order to reach or exceed what's expected of them and to help them reach their full potential, that will benefit them individually and ultimately the organisation (Armstrong, 2006).

For an organisation to achieve effective performance management and to see the benefits, the performance-management system should not be used merely as an evaluation and documentation process but also as a strategic tool. By doing this, there will be a holistic analysis of organisational performance, the process and the individual levels for worker's satisfaction, commitment and goal attainment (Sahoo and Mishra, 2012).

Armstrong (2006) outlines the benefits performance management has on the organisation and the opportunities it can potentially create:

- Integration of individual, team and organisational objectives.

- Focus individual and team behaviours and efforts to meeting the organisation's needs.

- Recognition of individual contributions.

- Plan individual career development.

- Introduction of relevant and effective learning and development schedules to meet needs that are identified.

Thomas, Humphrey and Warmington (2009) carried out a study examining how a performance management framework can be used to improve quality within in the area of mental health services in the NHS in Britain. They found that the framework introduced allowed staff working with adults with mental health issues to meet the quality expectations that were outlined to them in policies. This framework was also seen to encourage an alteration in staff attitudes towards quality in services. It also allowed management to refocus on whether it performs well or not. The performance management system linked objectives to the identified core competencies that the clinical teams need to provide their services in an effective and efficient manner and were created to be the base on which performance and quality could be improved further. (Thomas et al. 2009)

The Health Service Executive of Ireland (HSE) in their *Performance Management in the HSE Guidance Document* (2012) describe performance management as a process of creating a culture where individual workers and teams are given the opportunity to take responsibility for continuously improving the service they are delivering and improving their own skill set, behaviour and contribution to the organisation. The process is a strategic one, with the aim of developing the right culture including people management, issues concerning the delivery of service and the long term goals and objectives. It is also important to note that performance management systems are not only used to improve performance but they also are used to address underperformers within the organisation. (HSE, 2012).

Performance management according to Weiss and Hartle, is a "*process for establishing a shared understanding about what is to be achieved and how it is to be achieved, and an*

approach to managing people that increase that probability of achieving success" (Weiss and Hartle, 1997, p. 3).

2.5 Characteristics of Performance Management

Performance management is a process that is planned, this process is made of primary elements which are agreement, measurement, feedback, positive reinforcement and dialogue (Armstrong, 2006). Torrington, Hall, Taylor and Atkinson (2014) share a similar view of the characteristics of a performance management system and that it is built around dialogue, shared understanding, agreement and mutual commitment instead of being used to define a rating for pay. Williams (2002) outlines components of performance management, be it policies or procedures for the aspects of an employee's performance listed below:

- directing or planning
- managing or supporting
- reviewing or appraising
- developing or rewarding

Focusing on this, more and more organisations are asking their workers to take responsibility of performance management and asking them to become more involved in the gathering of self-assessment evidence and data during the year (IDS, 2005).

Torrington et al (2014) identify characteristics of performance management systems:

- A link from the top to bottom that includes objectives of the business and individual objectives.

- Driven by and owned by the line manager.

- A constantly updated document in which performance and development plans, support and continuous review are kept track of, as the employees work progresses and prior to annual review.

- Performance is rewarded and strengthened.

These points made by Torrington et al (2014) can be seen in Armstrong's work. He believes performance management is a constant and adjustable process which involves managers and

the people they are in charge of, working together in a framework to allow them to work effectively and efficiently together in attempt to achieve the desired results. The process is reliant on the principle of management by contract and agreement and harmony and cooperation instead of control. A key focus of performance management is performance planning and improvement for the future instead of a reflective performance appraisal. It is a process that is generally concerned with the performance of the individual but can be used for team performance as well. Development is crucial aspect, performance management is seen as an integral part of the reward system, as it can be linked in with performance-related pay but it's developmental aspects are far greater in terms of significance (Armstrong, 2006).

Many of these principles are also identified by Dreher and Dougherty (2001). They insist that all of the above components are implemented and mutually dependent to form a holistic approach to performance management. If one of these components is not functioning properly or out of sync with the rest of the steps it can have a negative impact on the effective of the performance management system. Dreher and Dougherty (2001) list the components of a performance management system as:

- Performance planning

- Ongoing performance communication

- Data gathering, observation and documentation

- Performance appraisal and feedback

- Performance diagnosis and coaching

(Dreher amd Dougherty, 2001)

There are various characteristics of a performance management system that organisations generally utilise. They are:

- Performance appraisal

- Feedback

- Goals and standards of performance

- Learning and Development

- Measurement

- Pay

2.5.1 Performance Appraisal and Pay

Performance appraisal can be defined as "*the formal assessment and rating of individuals by their managers at, usually, an annual review meeting*" (Armstrong, 2006, p.9).

Performance appraisal has become a feature in every organisation over the past number of years. Performance appraisal is also described as the "*systematic approach to evaluating employee performance with a view to assisting decisions in a wide range if areas such as pay, promotion, employee development and motivation*" (Gunnigle, Heraty and Morley, 2011, p.192). The performance management loop outlines a specific framework which orderly and efficient appraisal can take place. The stages are:

1. Establish, communicate and agree objectives and standards.
2. Evaluate Performance.
3. Compare performance with objectives and standards.
4. Decide on appropriate action.
5. Review standards and objectives:
   (a) Take corrective action or (b) Continue unchanged.
6. Communicate decisions and results.
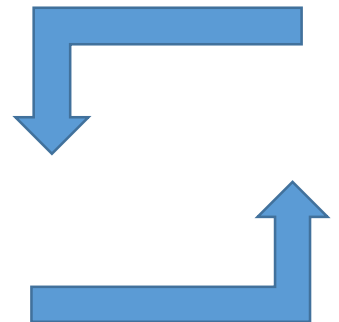
(Gunnigle et al, 2011, p.193)

2.5.2 Feedback

Another key aspect of performance management can be 360 degree feedback. The CIPD (2014) see this as a system that is centred on the gathering of data regarding performance from various different sources, which comprise of individuals that report to the person in question, associates which include work colleagues or fellow team members, customers or clients as well as the manager (CIPD, 2014).

360 degree feedback can be defined as "*the systematic collection and feedback of performance data on an individual or group derived from a number of the stakeholders on their performance*" (Ward, 1997, cited in Armstrong, 2006, p.157).

Continuous feedback is very important in an organisation as it allows actual job experience to be shared to help improve future performance and to modify organisational goals and two way communication between staff and managers which can be harnessed by an open and honest style of management and should apply to all staff within the organisation (Income Data Services, 1997).

Armstrong (2006) identified a 360 degree feedback model (figure 1) which can produce data for employees from the individual who they report to, their direct reports, their colleagues, fellow team members or employees from other sectors of the organisation and their customers or clients (Armstrong, 2006).

Figure 1: 360 degree feedback model
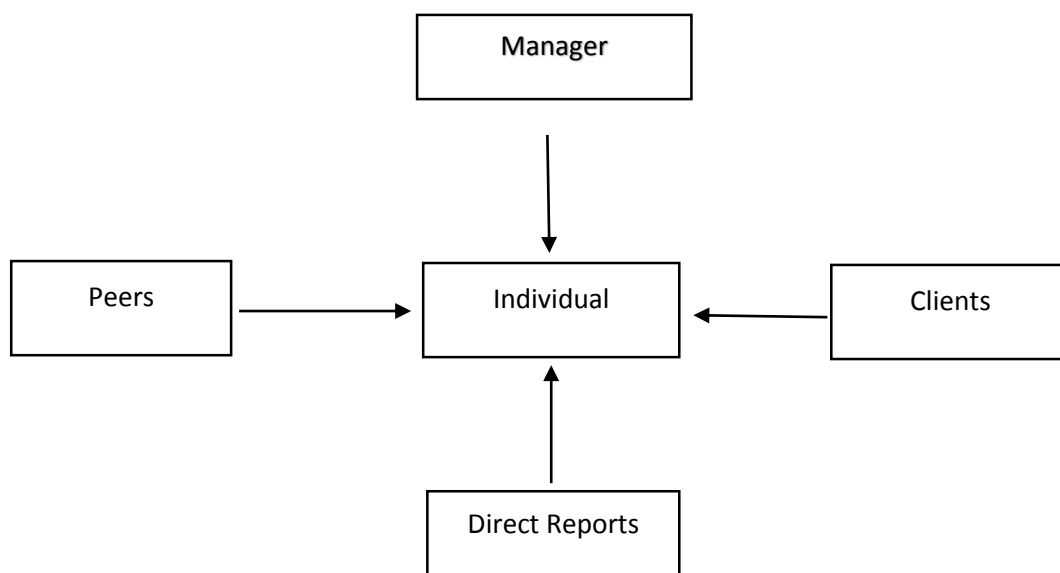
(Armstrong, 2006, p.158)

Within this model a system of self-assessment can be included to develop forms of feedback (Armstrong, 2006).

Turnow (1993) points out what he believes to be the two key assumptions behind the rationale for 360 degree feedback:

"*1. That awareness of any discrepancy between how we see ourselves and how others see us increases self-awareness, and 2. That enhanced self-awareness is a key to maximum performance as a leader, and thus becomes a foundation block for management and leadership development programmes*" (Turnow, 1993, cited in Armstrong, 2006, p. 159).

In the context of performance management in a health care organisation, there was a report on Continuing Professional Development of Staff Nurses and Staff Midwives from the National Council for the Professional Development of Nursing and Midwifery (2004) and it stated that 90% of feedback nurses receive on their performance is in fact from relatives and patients.

2.5.3 Goals and Standards of Performance

A very important aspect of performance management is ensuring goals and standards of performance are addressed appropriately. CIPD (2014) say that organisations introduce goals and standards for employees, sectors within the organisation and the organisation as a whole, these goals and standards should be integrated and aligned with the overall purpose of the organisation.

In the Income Data Services report (1997) they outlined the following points regarding objectives and performance;

- Allows the organisation to transfer organisational goals/objectives into individual, team and department goals/objectives.
- Setting out individual and team goals and standards offers clarity on organisational goals.

- Provides a shared understanding of what is needed to get the desired performance levels and how this will be achieved.

- Encourages the responsibility of staff to manage their own performance.

- Allows for the measurement of performance against jointly agreed objectives.

Harnett, Bowles and Coughlan (2009) carried out a research paper on performance and standards within the area of mental health nursing and found that introduction of an effective performance management system in the sector will result in higher standards of transparency, an increase in employee participation in the process of decision making and a clear value base nursing services and teams. They also indicated that the system will bring about the opportunity for clarity in standards of practices and high standards regarding transparency (Harnett et al. 2009).

2.5.4 Learning and Development

The CIPD (2014) identify learning and development as a key aspect of improving the performance of the organisation, once a understanding is shown for the importance of organisational, team and individual learning plans (CIPD, 2014).

There are learning opportunities throughout the three main stages of performance management process; the agreement and planning stage, the continuous managing of performance stage and the performance review (Armstrong, 2006).

Armstrong (2006) outlines the aims of learning within the performance management framework, they are to provide:

1. Greater responsibility for workers in managing their work within the framework of certain policies and expected behaviours with support being provided if and when it is needed.

2. Opportunities for career progression and the sufficient learning that is needed to achieve this progression are deliberated.

3. Identification of areas where improvements can be made and the learning needed to accomplish this is also agreed (Armstrong, 2006).

Development is also a crucial aspect of the performance management system of an organisation. According to Armstrong (2006) having plans for employee development enables the organisation to encourage learning and to give employees the acquired skills and know how to assist them in their progression in the organisation and their careers.

Johnson, Hong, Groth & Parker (2011) carried out a study looking at learning and development in promoting nurses' performance and attitudes at work. Johnson et al. (2011) found that a visible link between performance and work behaviours and learning and development. The clinical practice was developed which resulted in an improvement of performance and the coaching resulted in an improvement of employee attitudes.

2.5.5 Measurement

Measurement is a very important aspect of performance management. Measurement allows the organisation to get an idea of what the current levels of performance are so they can then plan to improve performance and personal development of employees (Armstrong, 2006). Employees need to know the grounds on which they're going to be measured, in relation to their performance, these measures need to be clear and utilised fairly within the organisation (CIPD, 2014).

Performance management is concerned with actively seeking employees to take control of their own performance and it is impossible to do so without the ability to measure and assess the employee's progress in relation to their goals and objectives (Armstrong, 2006).

The measurement of performance obviously varies depending on the type of job or sector that an employee works in. Armstrong (2006) believes that the difficulty attached to measuring performance depends on whether the employee has specific targets to reach which would be considerably easier to measure compared to knowledge employees. However, this can be

helped by identifying two different forms of results of performances, they are outputs and outcomes (Armstrong, 2006).

Outputs are essentially results that can be measured while an outcome is an effect that can be seen due to efforts made by employees but can't necessarily be measured quantifiably (Armstrong, 2006).

Armstrong (2006) identifies some of the different types of outcome measures:

- *Attainment of a standard (quality or level of service);*
- *Changes in behaviour;*
- *Completion of work/project;*
- *Acquisition and effective use of additional knowledge and skills;*
- *Reactions – judgement by others, colleagues, internal and external customers.*

(Armstrong, 2006, p. 61)

2.6 Limitations

There are many limitations and concerns regarding performance management. Roper at al. (2010) outline two of these limitations concerning performance management within an organisation;

1. A worker can work very hard to achieve their goals but does not achieve the desired results due to factors that are outside their control.
2. A pure results based approach to job performance can be unlikely to give the worker and the organisation feedback on how to improve job performance into the future as the results alone do not necessarily highlight areas that could be improved by certain employee behaviour.

These two limitations may cause job performance to be viewed as a bunch of employee behaviours instead of a results and targets achieved by the employees (Colquitt, Lepine and Wesson (2009).

Torrington et al (2014) also describe another aspect to a performance management system, one which is concerned with measurement, this type of performance management system can be seen as being judgemental, providing the organisation with the opportunity to assess and to get rid of workers, the system focuses on control and getting the most out of the employees, tends to cause the raising of false expectations and is a tool to manage salaries.

Pollitt (2013) identifies reasons for some problems concerning performance management within an organisation. He describes performance management as anything but mechanical and that there are awkward choices that have to be made. The following are a list compiled by Pollitt (2013) of issues that arise when designing a performance management system:

- The question must be asked what certain aspects of which type of activities are going to be measured? This is a key issue, as it is often expressed that what does get measured gets more attention than what isn't measured. The difficulty of this choice depends on how complex the service being provided is, as it is not possible to measure everything or else the system would become burdensome. (Bevan, 2006, Van Thiel and Leeuw, 2002 and Varone and Giauque, 2001). Armstrong (2006) also identifies many concerns that were highlighted by Pollitt (2004). Measurement and review as one of his concerns regarding performance management, "*if you can't measure it you can't manage it*" (Armstrong, 2006, p.5). This can be an issue in healthcare for example it may be difficult to measure whether a good job is done by employees when they are caring for people with intellectual disabilities.
- In relation to the measurement process, who is going to monitor it and how will it be done? Who is going to carry out and take responsibility for measurement? The employees providing the service? Their superior managers or officers? Independents bodies? Individuals using the service? In a case that the service providers manage themselves there can be a clear risk of bias occurring (Talbot, 2010). What techniques or systems will they use to measure? Will it be done visibly or privately? At arranged times or randomly? Will the measurements be dependable?
- Which employees will have access to the acquired data? How or will it be certified?
- Which benchmark will be applied? Will an employee's performance be measured up against a) a standard or threshold b) an average or mean, c) a performance from the recent past of the organisational department or d) the finest performance of any

organisational department in a similar industry e) various different combinations of all of the above.

- What way will the raw information be taken, shaped and then presented?
- Once the information is presented, who will be able to access this resulting information? Employees? Supervisors? Inspectors? Service users? Just ordinary members of the general public?
- How will the information be utilised? The different ways Pollitt (2013) describes how the information could be used include; a) symbolic or stereotype use, the organisation could boast about having a modern performance management system, b) a disciplinary use against low performers as the system shows, c) as a support for resource claims for example could be used as proof that extra resources are needed, d) to advocate learning in the organisation, e) to help make decisions on whether to develop, expand or cease certain activities, f) to offer individual's the opportunity to for career progression, g) to be merely filed away and forgotten about and finally, g) any mix of the above points.

(Pollitt, 2013)

2.7 Contextual factors

Performance management within a clinical environment can be defined as a "*systematic development and sustained attention to standards applied to a specific environment in order to assure certain outcomes*" (Harnett, et al. 2009, p.435). This system once is implemented and utilised fairly, gives managers the opportunity within the organisation to address poor performance and improve the quality of services (Harnett et al. 2009).

Harnet et al. (2009) outline the need for performance management is greatest when the individuals being provided for are vulnerable and where the state has authority over these individuals in the manner which is exercised by mental health service providers. Mental health services are different to any other organisation as people can have their liberty removed and can be left in vulnerable positions which requires high levels of vigilance, accountability and transparency within the organisation.

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A key component of performance within an organisation is their values and standards and how they are upheld in the organisation, it falls under a feature of behaviour but is focused on what workers do to understand core values such as concern for quality, concern for people and to work ethically (Armstrong and Barron, 2008). This is especially the case in organisations that are involved in primary healthcare like the HSE, where practices must be centred on values. The values identified by the HSE are Respect, Fairness and Equity, Excellence, Leadership, Accountability and Responsibility with patient safety the number one priority. Armstrong and Barron (2008) state the importance of transforming values written in manuals into values that can be seen in everyday use "*ensuring rhetoric becomes reality*" (Armstrong and Barron, 2008, p. 10). However, this is not always the case as shown in the following:

In December 2014, RTE uncovered some shocking revelations of abuse and mistreatment of residents in a care facility for intellectually disabled adults in Swinford, Co. Mayo. Fianna Fail Spokesperson on mental Health, Disabilities and Special Needs, Colm Keaveney raised the question "*what was the performance management practice within the unit? Were regular performance assessments carried out and were these audited?*" (Keaveney, 2014). It is clear to see from the revelations in Co. Mayo that the values which are said to be central to the performance management system were not converted from theory into reality in this particular care unit in question. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2008 made a vital recommendation about the need for Ireland's public sector to move away from the current compliance culture and to encourage and introduce a culture of performance within the sector. Silva and Ferreira (2010) undertook a study in Portugal looking at performance management in the public sector. In their research, they described the performance management systems in the primary healthcare services (PHSs) they studied as "*disjoint and lacked consistency and coherence*" (Silva and Ferreira, 2010, p. 424). Silva and Ferreira's study also found that the performance management system in the PHSs that there was a lack of alignment between individual and organisational goals and that accountability was very poor. (Silva and Ferreira, 2010, p. 424).

Holloway, Alam and Griffiths (2012) carried out an investigation into performance management in Australia's public mental health service. Holloway et al. (2012) highlighted the need for implementing greater levels of change in relation to performance indicators and other ways of measuring performance in the public mental health sector. They found the aim of any performance measurement system within the public sector should also be the

concerned with using performance indicators that notify management of the performance of the organisation and highlight if there is a need for any change.

Part 3 – Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) methodology is the theory behind how research should be carried out, this includes the assumptions made, theoretically and philosophically, upon which, research is based on and the ramifications of these have on the methods adopted by the researcher or researchers.

Research methodology is essential for researchers as the contribution it makes regarding knowledge and skills provided is key in order to solve problems, and achieve set goals or objectives for the investigation (Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler, 2008). This chapter will be examining the methodology chosen to carry out this research paper, the limitations associated with the methodology chosen as well as covering the ethics of the research design.

The aim of this study is to evaluate the performance management system of nurses and care staff who are responsible for caring for people with intellectual disabilities in a care unit run by the Health Service Executive (HSE). This part of the research paper will be concerned with the different aspects of the research which will be undertaken. These aspects include methodology of design, the selection of the sample, the methodology behind the data collection as well as the consequent analysis of this data and finally the ethical issues that must be taken into account to successfully complete the research and the purpose of that research.

3.2 Research Questions

According to Ellis and Levy (2008), the research problem needs to be treated as the starting position for any research to commence and it therefore, influences every element of the investigation process. The identification of the issue is hugely important to an investigation taking place, otherwise it can be quite difficult for the researcher to carry out research and a successful investigation (Kerlinger and Lee, 2000). This paper titled "*An evaluation of the*

performance management of nurses and care staff who are responsible for caring for people with intellectual disabilities who are employed by the Health Services Executive (HSE) in Ireland" will look to evaluate and review the current practices of performance management in the HSE, the aims of these practices, what type of tools and procedures is the performance management system composed of.

3.3 Sub-Objectives of my Research

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) point out that research objectives are developed from the research question, and they are more likely to direct the researcher in a way that obtains more specific information and data of the topic that's being examined. Research objectives according to Anderson (2013) are statements that are clear and precise, which highlight what the researcher aims to achieve as a result of carrying out their research. While I am carrying out my research and analysis, I will also have a number of related sub objectives that I will be looking at. These will include:

- Is a performance management system or process present in the care unit that is being examined?
- If a performance management system or process is present what does it look like? Using the CIPD (2014) components of an effective performance management system as a bench mark, which components can be found in the performance management system the researcher is examining? Which characteristics are not present?
- What characteristics is it composed of? If a performance management system is present, who is responsible for carrying out the process for the unit?
- Do the staff feel characteristics help improve individual and or organisational performance?

3.4 Research Methodology

The aim of this research paper is to evaluate in a quantitative way, the performance management system in a chosen care unit in the HSE and to highlight and examine the components that make up this performance management system.

In order to reach this aim, the researcher will use a variety of components chosen from the model of the research 'onion' (figure 3.1) developed by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009). The research 'onion' is made up of six different layers;

1. Research philosophies (the first layer)

2. Research approaches

3. Research strategies

4. Research choices

5. Time horizons

6. Different techniques and procedures (the last and centre layer of the onion)

According to Robson (2002) each layer of the research 'onion' contains an important component in the research process and influences way the process will be designed. The six layers finish with the final layer which is the centre layer known as the techniques and procedures layer. It's at this moment of the process that is concerned with collecting and analysing the data, which allows the researcher to come to a conclusion (Saunders et al 2009).

Figure 3.1: The research Onion (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.108)
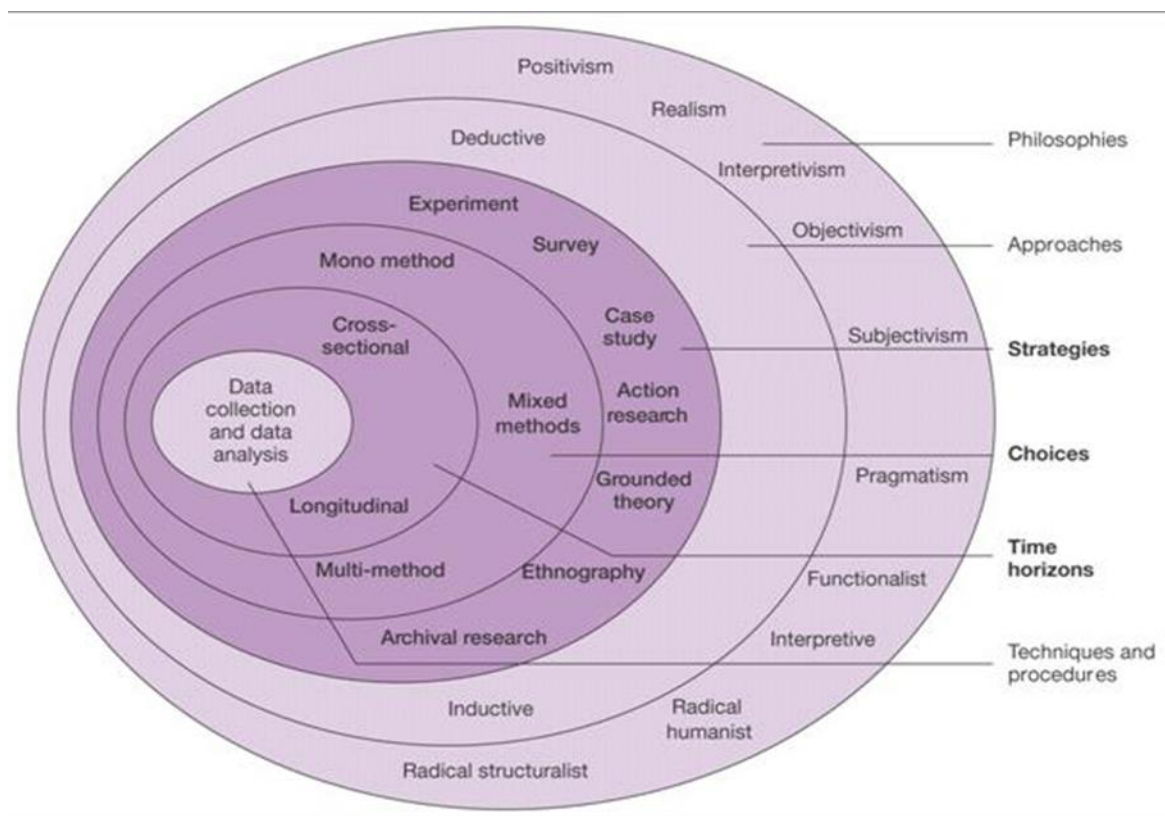
3.4.1 <u>Layer 1</u>: The Research Philosophy

According to Saunders et al. (2009) research philosophy is important as it is what a researcher does when they are carrying out research in a topic, they are effectively expanding their understanding in a certain field. This layer identifies a range of philosophical approaches that the researcher can undertake to base his/her research strategy on and the different research methods that will be utilised to gather the required data needed to complete the research paper successfully (Saunders et al. 2009).

The philosophies layer as described by Saunders et al (2009) highlights a range of different philosophies that can be chosen by researchers. In this research paper, the philosophy adopted will be the positivism approach. Anderson (2013) describes the word 'positivist' as being often associated with researchers who work "*within the traditions and assumptions of an 'objectivist' perspective*" (Anderson, 2013, pp. 55). This approach is deemed to be appropriately suitable by the researcher as according to Saunders et al. (2009) it is only through observation that brings about the production of valid data. This means that the role of human behaviour is a vital aspect with this approach because there is always the chance that the information gathered by the researcher does not go along with existing theories and principles (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Therefore, there is a need to identify, examine and compare existing theory before then carrying out research which allows the researcher the opportunity to test the previous theories and assist him/her in achieving the research objectives of the research paper.

In addition, according to Gil and Johnson (2002), the positivist researcher is very likely to make use of statistical procedures and analysis regarding to the quantifiable perceptions throughout the research. This approach is undoubtedly an essential facet of this investigation's research methodology because it provides the opportunity of gathering contemporary data and comparing it to the secondary data researched.

It is often upheld that a researcher adopting a positivist perspective will be more inclined to utilise a form of methodology which is highly structured in an attempt to promote successful replication (Gil and Johnson, 2002). This approach is an important aspect of this research paper's methodology as it allows the chance to collect primary data and then compare it to previously researched data.

3.4.2 <u>Layer 2</u>: The Research Approaches

This layer of the research onion is concerned with the researcher deciding on which approach in order for him/her to carry out the research successfully. There are two layers identified by the research 'onion', the deductive approach and the inductive approach. For the purpose of this research paper, the deductive approach was chosen as it was deemed to be more suitable.

Saunders et al. (2009) identify the difference between the deductive and the inductive approach. The deductive approach is said to have greater links with the positivism philosophy as it is looks to design and develop theories and then look to create a research plan to examine these theories and to achieve the objectives of the research study (Saunders et al. 2009). The second approach, the inductive approach, is said to be to have more links with the interpretivism philosophy, where the researcher gathers information and develops a theory as a result of analysing that information (Saunders et al. 2009).

The deductive approach is the approach going to be adopted for the purpose of this research paper. According to Collis and Hussey (2003) the deductive testing theory is "*the dominant research approach in the natural sciences, where laws present the bias of explanation allow the anticipation of phenome, predict their occurrence and therefore permit them to be controlled*" (Collis and Hussey, 2003, cited in Saunders et al. 2009, p. 124).

3.4.3 <u>Layer</u>: 3 Research Strategies

This the third layer of the research 'onion' identifies a range of different strategies which researchers may use to conduct their research, such strategies include:

- Experiment
- Survey
- Case study
- Action research
- Grounded theory
- Ethnography
- Archival research

These above strategies are all heavily linked to either a deductive or inductive approach to research (Saunders et al. 2009).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher has decided to use a survey to gather the required data to successfully carry out the research. According to Saunders et al. (2009) a survey strategy is often combined with the deductive approach. A survey can be described as a "*research strategy that involves the structured collection of data from a population*" (Saunders et al. 2009, p.601).

According to Blumberg et al. (2008) a survey is an effective tool that can be used by the researcher when he/she is trying to gather primary data as the survey can be used to gather information on a wide range of topics through simple questioning of the respondents. It was decided that web-based surveys would be sent out to all the care staff and nurse working in a care unit in the HSE, for people with intellectual disabilities by email. The surveys were sent to staff on 20th of July 2015 with the aim of identifying what type of performance management system or process is present in the care unit and what characteristics of a performance management system exist.

3.4.3.1 Questionnaire

According to Saunders et al. (2009) the use of a questionnaire as a form of survey strategy is one of the most common ways of gathering data as every respondent is asked to answer an identical set of questions and can be an effective of way of getting information. Cameron and Price (2009) highlight the usefulness of administering questionnaires as they give the researcher access to data which represents how the respondents feel, think or react to certain topics and they also allow the researcher to gather this data from individuals at a reasonable price. Questionnaires are most effective when they are composed of standardised questions that the researcher can have full confidence in that they will be understood in the same context by everyone taking part in the questionnaire (Robson, 2002).

For this investigation, the questionnaire chosen by the researcher is the web based survey which is completed independently by the respondent and it will be administered electronically as it is an internet mediated questionnaire from SurveyMonkey.com, which is among the survey software systems that is recommended by Saunders et al (2009) when designing a questionnaire.

According to Anderson (2013), it's the researcher's objective to arrange for the survey to get to all of the people within the sample, in a timely manner which enhances the chance of receiving completed surveys in return. The higher the response rate of the researcher's survey, the more reliable the findings as a result of the investigation will be (Anderson, 2013)

There are keys issues as well as advantages and disadvantages of the web-based survey method of distribution. The key issues as identified by Neuman (2011) and Saunders et al. (2012) are the need to find a suitable website to create a suitable online questionnaire, to send correspondence with your survey outlining the reason for your research and instructions to help the respondents answer the survey and that hyperlinks must be working.

Advantages of web-based surveys:

- The questionnaire can't be changed.
- The website used to create the survey enables the researcher to monitor the 'hit rate' while the survey is 'live'.
- There is no bias on the part of the interviewer.
- Greater control of the format of the questionnaire.

(Neuman, 2011)

Disadvantages of web-based surveys:

- Sample can be deemed to be unclear if the respondents are not emailed the link to the survey.
- Individuals who don't have access to technology cannot be included in the research.
- The need for security to be incorporated into the web system to prevent one of the respondents responding to the survey more than once.

(Neuman, 2011)

In this investigation, the link to the survey was emailed to all care staff and nurses in the care unit that the researcher is examining. All staff have their own email address and access to that email account. Finally, each respondent was only allowed to respond once to the survey that the researcher sent out to prevent respondents responding on multiple occasions.

3.4.3.2 The Questionnaire for the Purpose of this Study

In this investigation, the researcher decided to develop his own questionnaire based around the six CIPD (2014) components of performance management, in order to successfully carry out his research. The researcher used a mix of list questions, category questions and the Likert-style rating scale type of rating questions to compose the questionnaire for the purpose of this research paper.

The list questions offer the participant a list of response and they can pick any one response from the list they prefer, while category questions offer a range of categories but only one will suit the participant's answer. The Likert-style rating scale is a type of questionnaire that gains information from respondents by asking them how strongly they agree or disagree with a statement, which is usually on a four to seven point rating scale (Saunders et al, 2009). The four points on the scale are "*strongly agree*", "*agree*", "*disagree*" and "*strongly disagree*". The data was analysed on SurveyMonkey.com and on Microsoft Word by constructing bar charts.

The researcher administered eighteen surveys, one for every care staff and nurse working at the HSE care unit. The population is small as that is the number of staff working at the care unit, this made the importance of a high response rate even greater. According to Saunders et al (2009) "*a perfect representative sample is one that exactly represents the population from which it is taken*" (Saunders et al, 2009, p.220). These web based survey was sent out via email by the researcher to the respondents that work in the HSE care unit. The researcher gave a brief explanation in an email which also had a direct link to the performance management survey, the email explained what the questionnaire was about, its academic purpose and how the process will be totally confidential. This email is available to view along with the questionnaire in Appendix (i).

3.4.4 <u>Layer 4</u>: The Choices Layer

Layer 4 of this research model is concerned with the research method that the researcher deems suitable for the investigation. There are three different methods according to Saunders et al (2009), they are:

1. Mono method
2. Multi-method

3. Mixed method

The researcher felt the most appropriate research method for this research paper was a mono method because as Saunders et al. (2009) states "a *mono method is a single data collection technique and corresponding analysis procedures*" (Saunders et al. 2009, p. 151). Therefore, the mono method used in this research paper is the survey sent out by the researcher to gather information. Curran and Blackburn (2001) highlight that this type of approach is increasingly being recommended within business and management research.

3.4.5 <u>Layer 5</u>: Time Horizons

This layer is the second most inner layer of the research 'onion' and it deals with the time variable. The two possible time horizons are cross sectional studies and longitudinal studies. Basically, when the researcher is planning their investigation, he or she must decide whether they want their research to portray an image based on a particular time (cross sectional studies) or a series of images to represent events over a certain timeframe (longitudinal studies) (Saunders et al. 2009). In this study, cross sectional approach will be used, Saunders et al. (2009) describe it as the study of "*a particular phenomenon or phenomena at a particular time*" (Saunders et al. (2009), p.155). In this study, the survey distributed to the staff working in the care unit for people with intellectual disabilities, was asking for their opinions at a certain time rather than a series of surveys over a period of time.

3.4.6 <u>Layer 6</u>: Data Collection and Data Analysis

The sixth layer is the final layer of the research model. In this investigation, primary data was obtained through surveys, but secondary data was also examined in the form of books, academic journals relating to the area being examined, publications, websites and organisation websites.

Secondary data is data that has been utilised for a specific investigation that was originally gathered for a different purpose while secondary literature is the publication of primary literature in the form of books and journals (Saunders et al. 2009).

3.4.7 Quantitative Research Approach

The researcher has decided to undertake the quantitative research approach to assist in achieving his research objectives for this research paper. Quantitative data is a form of data which can be numerical, that represents the dimensions of what is being examined (Anderson, 2013). Acccording to Bryman and Bell (2011) quantitative research "*is described as entailing the collection of numerical data and as exhibiting a view of the relationship between theory and research as deductive, a predilection for a natural science (and of positivism in particular), and as having an objectivist conception of social reality*" (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 150).

Data is vital for research to take place, quantitative data "*is the term given to data that can be counted and quantified to shed light on features of organisational and employment situations*" (Anderson, 2013, p.269). This is precisely what the researcher is aiming to achieve in this paper, to identify and evaluate features of the performance management process in a chosen HSE care unit, by carrying out quantitative research.

3.4.8 - Research Population

In this research paper the researcher is aiming to have a research census. A census is the term given to an occasion where "*it is possible to collect and analyse data from every possible case or group member*" (Saunders et al. 2009, p.210). The whole population of my research is eighteen staff as I am carrying out a study of an individual care unit within the HSE. The researcher is aware of the importance of gaining a high response rate with such a small amount of respondents. Saunders et al. (2009) describe a "*perfect representative sample as one that represents the population from which it is taken*" (Saunders et al. 2009, p.221).

3.5 - Ethics

Research ethics is to do with the obeying of "*code of behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of your work or are affected by it*" (Wells, 1994, p. 284). Research ethics is crucial to any research paper as "*the interest of participants should be* protected" (Anderson, 2013, p.128). There are quite a few ethical considerations that must be considered while carrying out this research paper. Consent must be given by the organisation to carry out the research. Whilst carrying out the interviews, the interviewees have the right

to anonymity. Anderson (2013) outlines ethical issue to be aware of during this research and design stage of this paper:

- Informed consent issues.

- Organisational permission issues.

- Vulnerable groups or individuals?

- Identifying, recruiting and approaching your participants.

(Anderson, 2013, p.137)

Saunders et al. (2009) relates research ethics to "*questions about how we formulate and clarify our research topic, design our research and gain access, collect data, process and store our data and write up our research findings in a moral and responsible way*" (Saunders et al. 2009, p. 184).

In completing this researcher paper, a lot of data and information was gathered by circulating web based surveys, the information obtained was solely used for the completion of this dissertation and the confidentiality of all the employees who took part in the research process was guaranteed. The files holding the survey data will also be deleted from all storage devices used during this research.

3.6 - Limitations

When undertaking a research investigation, it is inevitable that some limitations will arise during the process of the investigation. The limitations that the researcher came across in this investigation were:

1. Limitations regarding the quantitative approach and the use of the web based survey in particular which were explained earlier in this paper.
2. Limitations regarding time, which prevented researching another care unit to give the researcher an opportunity to compare and contrast performance management processes in two different care units and another time limitation.

3.7 Reliability

Saunders et al (2009) describe reliability as the "*extent to which your data collection techniques or analysis procedures will yield consistent findings*" (Saunders et al. 2009, p.156).

Robson (2002) identifies four possible threats to reliability:

1. Subject or participant error
2. Subject or participant bias
3. Observer error
4. Observer bias

3.8 Validity

Anderson (2013) refers to validity as how well a data collection method correctly measures what it is intended to measure and how well the findings resulting from the research are actually what they claim to be about.

Cooper and Schindler (2008) identify content validity, criterion-related validity and construct validity when looking at the area of validity of a questionnaire.

Content validity focuses on the measurement questions in the questionnaire and whether or not he these questions sufficiently covers the investigative objectives (Saunders et al. 2009). The researcher has ensured this through careful examination of research in the literature review.

Before the survey went live, it was pilot tested on a small group of nurses with the aim of refining the questionnaire by seeing if there was any issues with understanding the survey or with collecting the results and roughly how long it would take to complete. A draft survey was sent out and feedback regarding clarity of questions was taken on board and consequently minor adjustments were made to the survey.

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Part 4 – Findings

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher will highlight and analyse the data that was obtained from the web based survey that was sent to the nurses and care staff of the care unit. Each section of the questionnaire was dedicated to evaluating a certain characteristic of a performance management system as outlined by the CIPD, which was explored in the literature review.

To evaluate the performance management system in place and its components, a survey examining performance management and six aspects of performance management was distributed by the researcher.

The six areas are feedback, goals and standards of performance, learning and development, measurement, performance appraisal and pay.

4.2 - Performance Management

The first section of the questionnaire was aimed at finding out whether a performance management system existed in the organisation and if so, how often performance management meetings take place. In this section a list question and a category question was used by the researcher.

4.2.1 - Do you have performance meetings with your manager?

The purpose of this question was to establish whether or not the staff working in the care unit have performance meetings with their manager. A list question was used which allowed the respondent to answer either yes, no or I don't know. The most common answer received from respondents was 'yes' with 16 (88.89%) of respondents saying they had performance meetings with their manager while 2 (11.11%) responded by saying 'no' as shown in figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1:

No.

of

Staff

Q1 Do you have performance meetings with your manager?

Answered: 18   Skipped: 0

```
20

16

12

 8

 4

 0
        Yes              No           Don't know
```

Responses
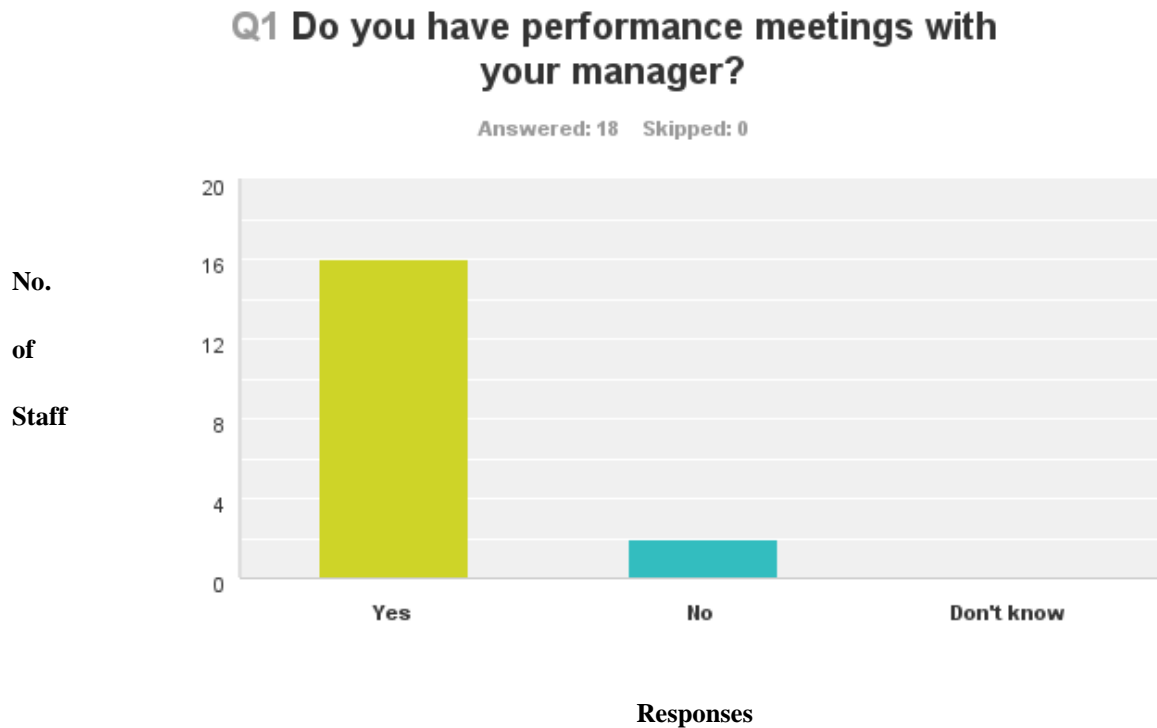
4.2.2 How often do you have performance meetings with your manager?

The purpose of this question was to determine how often staff have performance management meetings. A category question format was used in this question to obtain the data required. The most common answer was 13 (72.22%) respondents had a performance meeting with their manager 'twice a year'. The second highest answer was 2 (11.11%) respondents selecting 'three or more times a year' and the third highest with 3 (16.67%) respondents saying that they have 'none'. Finally none of the respondent's selected the other option of 'once a year' as can be seen in figure 4.2 below.

38

Figure 4.2:

No.

of

Staff

Responses
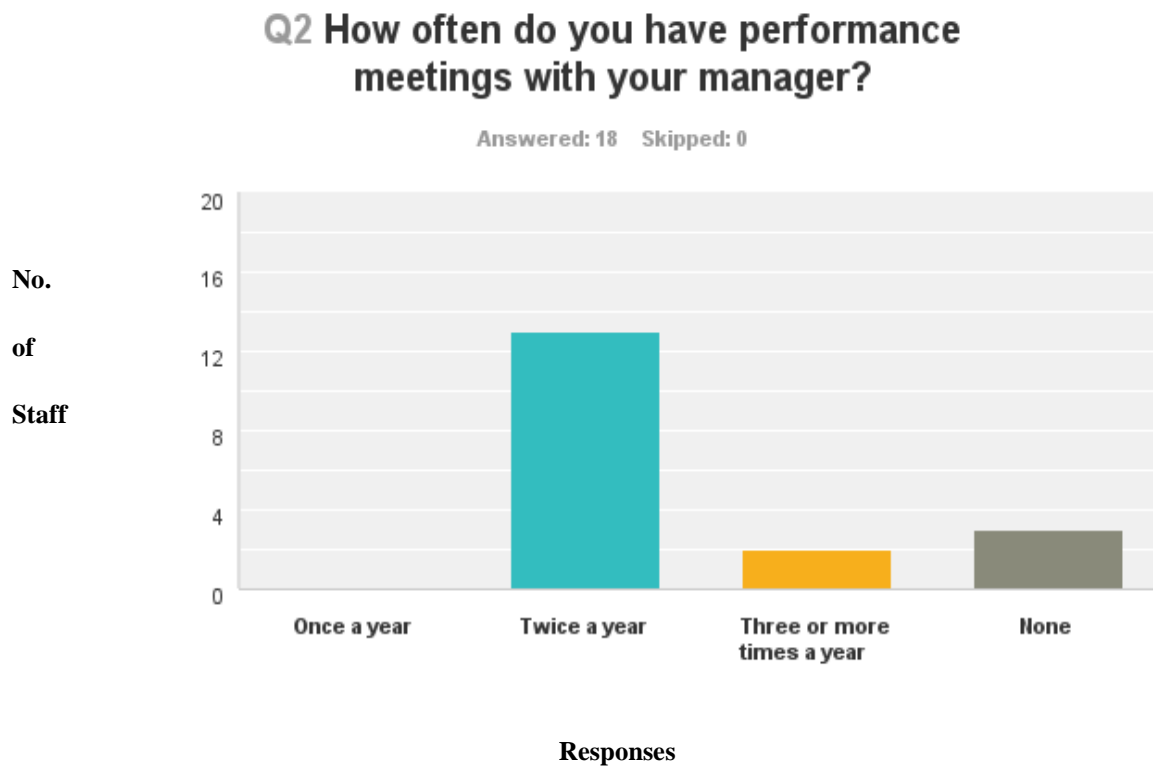
4.3 - Feedback

The second section of researcher's questionnaire was to determine whether feedback was a feature of the performance management system being examined and if it was present, do the staff feel that the feedback provided help improve individual and or organisational performance? In this section a category a list question and a four point Likert-style rating scale were used.

4.3.1 - At these meetings do you receive feedback on your performance?

The purpose of this question was to determine whether feedback was a component of the performance management system. The most common answer was 'yes' with 15 (83.33%) respondents choosing that option. The second highest answer was 'no' with 3 (16.67%) respondents answering no. Finally, none of the respondents chose the 'I don't know' option as shown in figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3:

Q3 At these meetings do you receive feedback on your performance?

Answered: 18   Skipped: 0

No.

of

Staff

Yes   No   I don't know

Responses
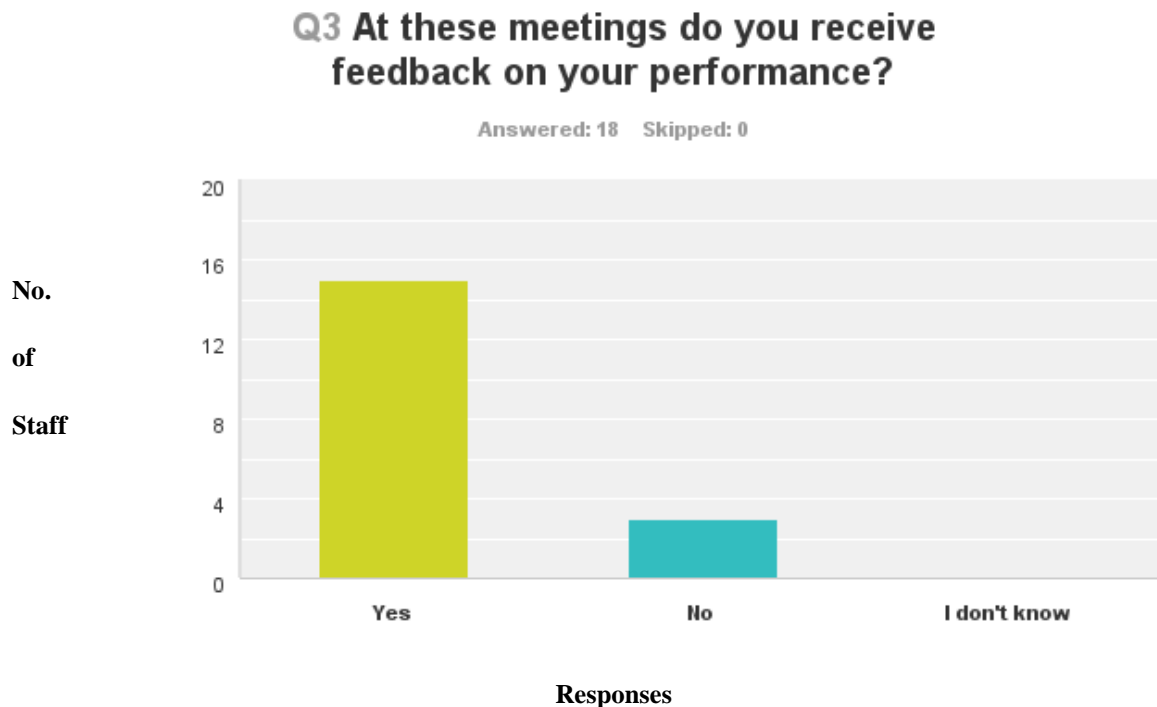
4.3.2 - Feedback on my performance has helped develop my clinical skills.

The purpose of this question was to see if staff felt feedback on their performance had helped develop their clinical skills. This question was constructed using a four point Likert-style rating scale which the respondents offer their opinion on a statement, with the answer points on the scale containing; 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' as can be seen in figure 4.4. The most common response was 'strongly agree' with 9(50%) respondent's choosing that option. The second highest response was 'agree' with 7(38.89%) of staff choosing that option. The third most common response was 'disagree' with 2(11.11%) and finally no one of the respondents chose 'strongly disagree'.

Figure 4.4:

No.

of

Staff

Q4 Feedback on my performance has helped develop my clinical skills.

Answered: 18   Skipped: 0
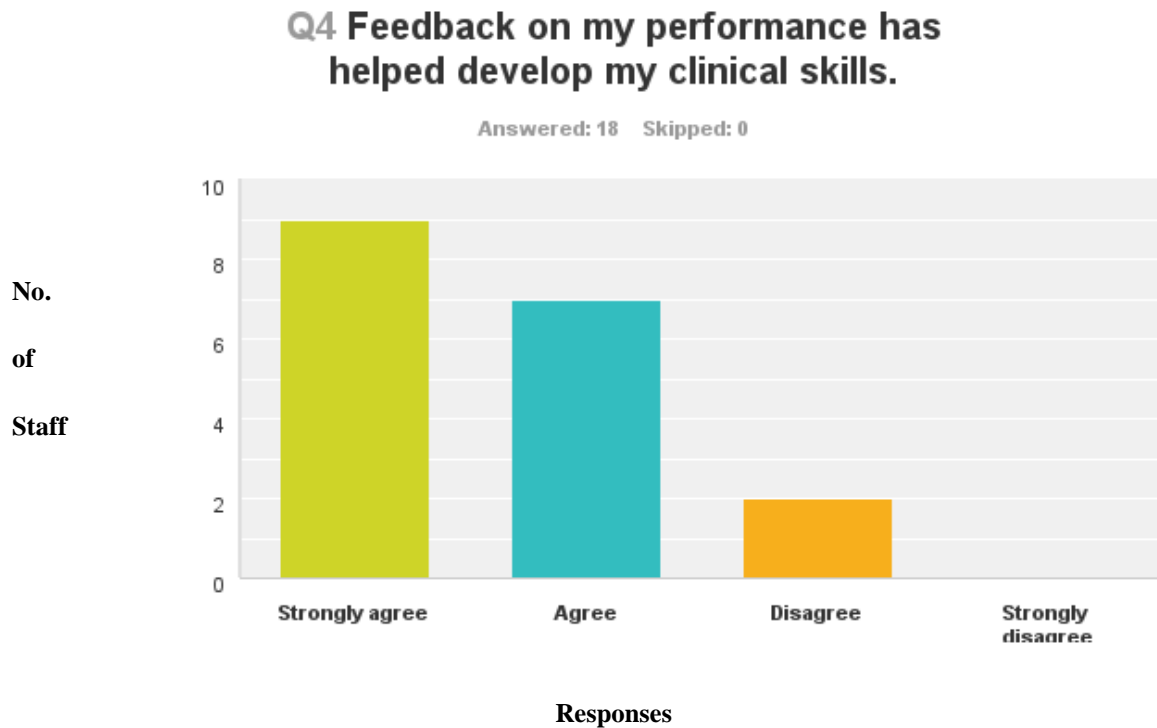
Responses

4.3.3 - Performance feedback helps develop professional practice in response to service user needs.

The aim of this question was to establish whether staff felt feedback on performance helps them develop professional practice in response to service user needs. The most common answer received was 'agree' with 11(61.11%) of the respondents selecting this option with the second most common response being 'strongly agree' with 7(38.89%) respondents selecting this option. No one selected 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' in reply to this statement as can be seen from figure 4.5 below.
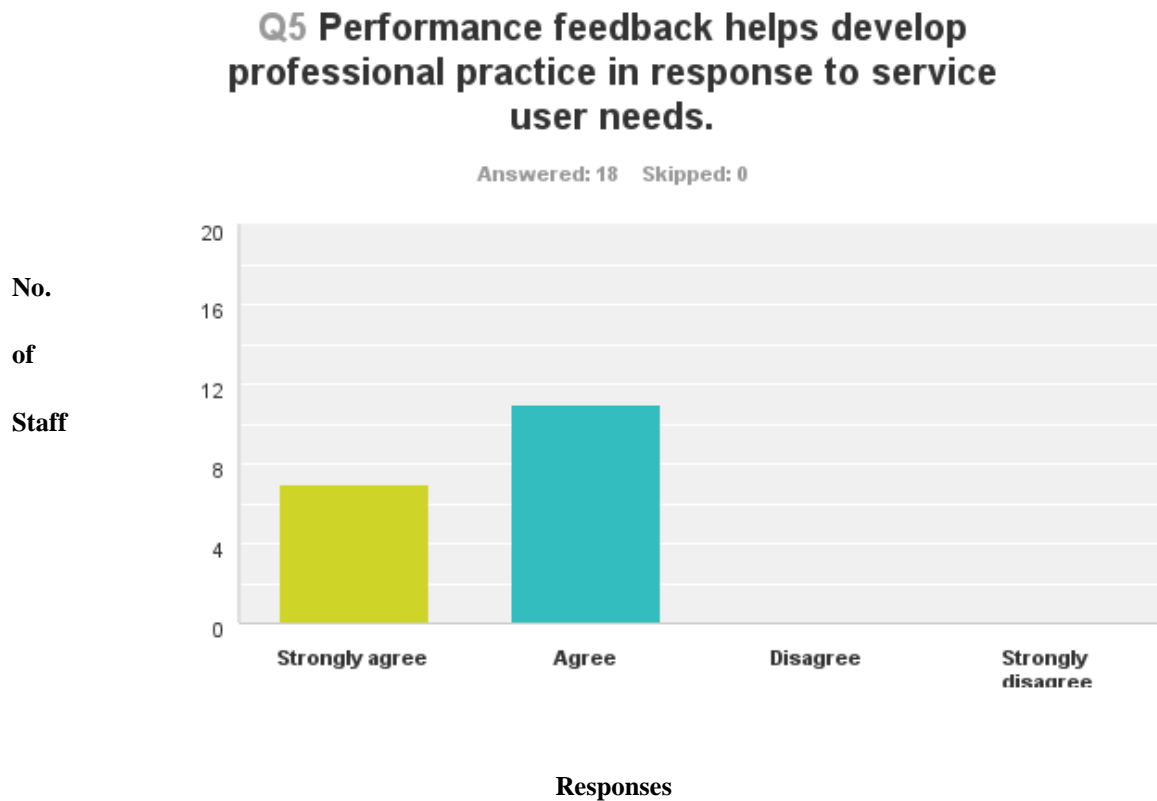
Figure 4.5:

Q5 Performance feedback helps develop professional practice in response to service user needs.

Answered: 18   Skipped: 0

No.

of

Staff

Responses

4.3.4 - The performance feedback I have received helps to improve my performance.

The purpose of this statement was to see if staff felt that performance feedback received by staff helps to improve their performance. The most common answer was 'agree' with 10(55.56%) staff choosing this option while the second most common answer was 'strongly agree' with 7(38.89%) choosing this response. The third most common answer was 'disagree' with 1(5.56%) respondent choosing this option. Finally, no one who responded selected the 'strongly disagree' option as shown in figure 4.6.

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Figure 4.6:

Q6 The performance feedback I have received helps to improve my performance.

Answered: 18   Skipped: 0

No.

of

Staff

Responses
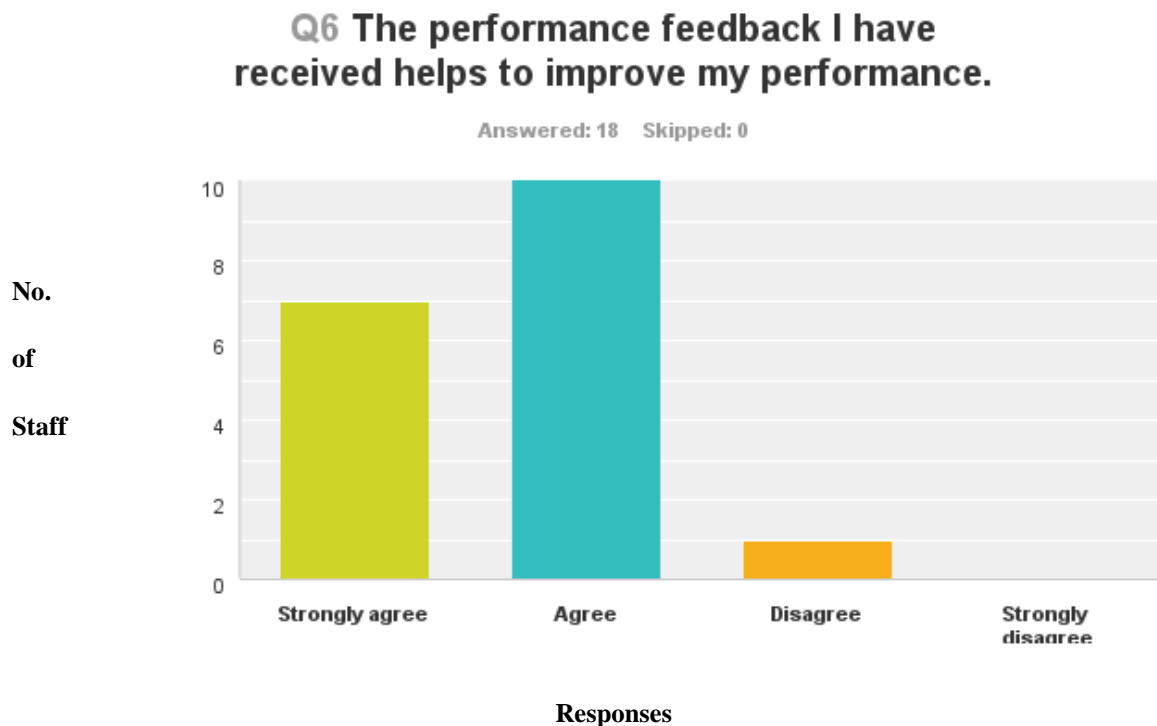
4.3.4 - Feedback from supervisors helps to improve the provision of quality care provided by the organisation.

The aim of getting the staff's opinion on this statement was to see if they felt feedback helps to improve the provision of the quality of care provided by the organisation, again the four point Likert-style rating scale was used to obtain the required data. The most common response was 'agree' with 10(55.56%) staff choosing that option, while the second most common response was 'strongly agree' with 8(44.44%) staff choosing that response. Finally, no one answered with 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' as shown in figure 4.7 below.

Figure 4.7:

Q7 Feedback from supervisors helps to improve the provision of quality care provided by the organisation.

Answered: 18   Skipped: 0

No.

of

Staff

Responses

4.3.5 - Have you ever received negative feedback regarding your performance at work?

The purpose of this question was to see if staff ever received negative feedback regarding their performance at work by using a list question. The most common answer was 'no' with 15(83.33%) respondents choosing this answer while 3(16.67%) respondents answered 'yes'. Additionally no one answered 'I don't know' to this question as can be seen in figure 4.8.

Figure 4.8

No. of Staff

Q8 Have you ever received negative feedback regarding your performance at work?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 0

Responses
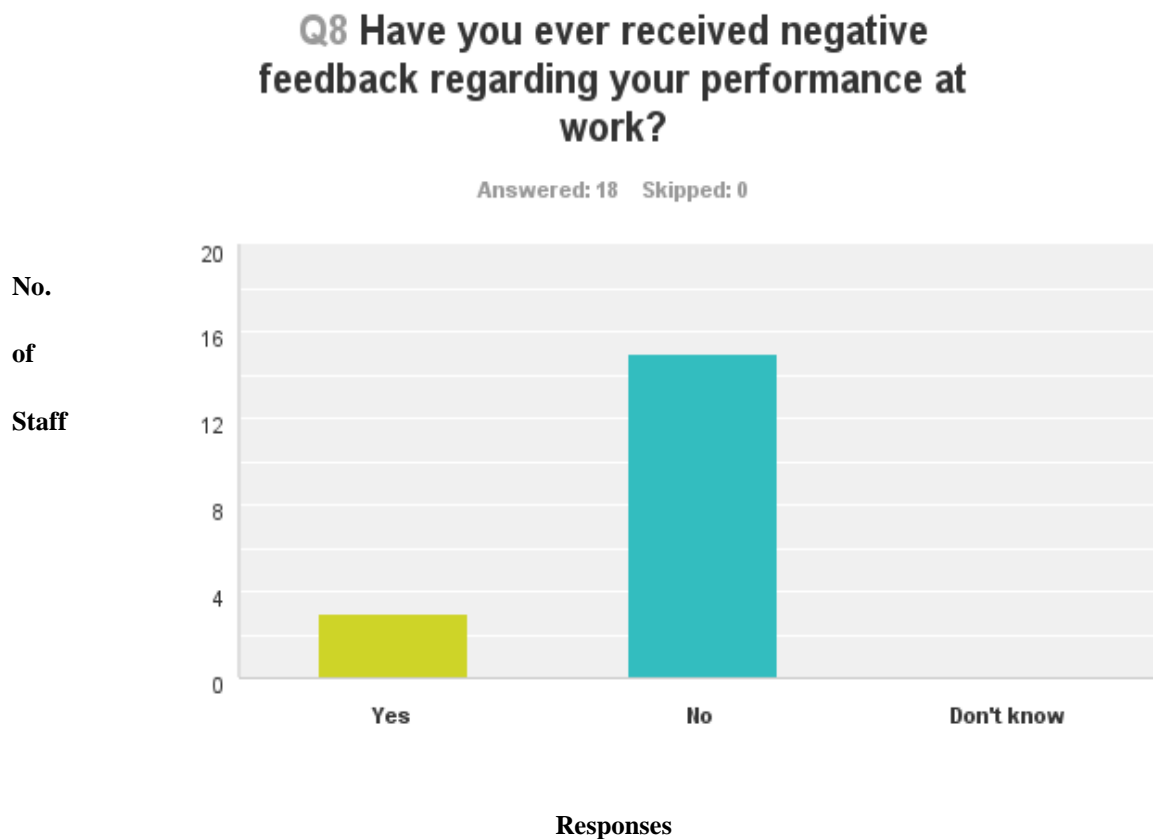
4.4 – Goals and Standards of Performance

This section of the survey is concerned with exploring goals and standards of performance for employees, within the care unit, and whether these goal and standards are integrated and aligned with the overall purpose of the care unit. The four point Likert-style rating scale was used in gathering information in this section of the questionnaire.

4.4.1 - I know exactly what my job is.

The purpose of getting the staff's views on this statement was to see if they know exactly what their job is. The most common answer was 'strongly agree' with 10(55.56%) respondents choosing this option. The second most common answer was 'agree' with 7(38.89%) staff agreeing to knowing exactly what their job is. Finally, 1(5.56%) respondent

chose to 'disagree' with this statement and no one chose the 'strongly disagree' option as shown in figure 4.9 below.

Figure 4.9:

Q9 I know exactly what my job is.

Answered: 18   Skipped: 0

No. of Staff

Responses
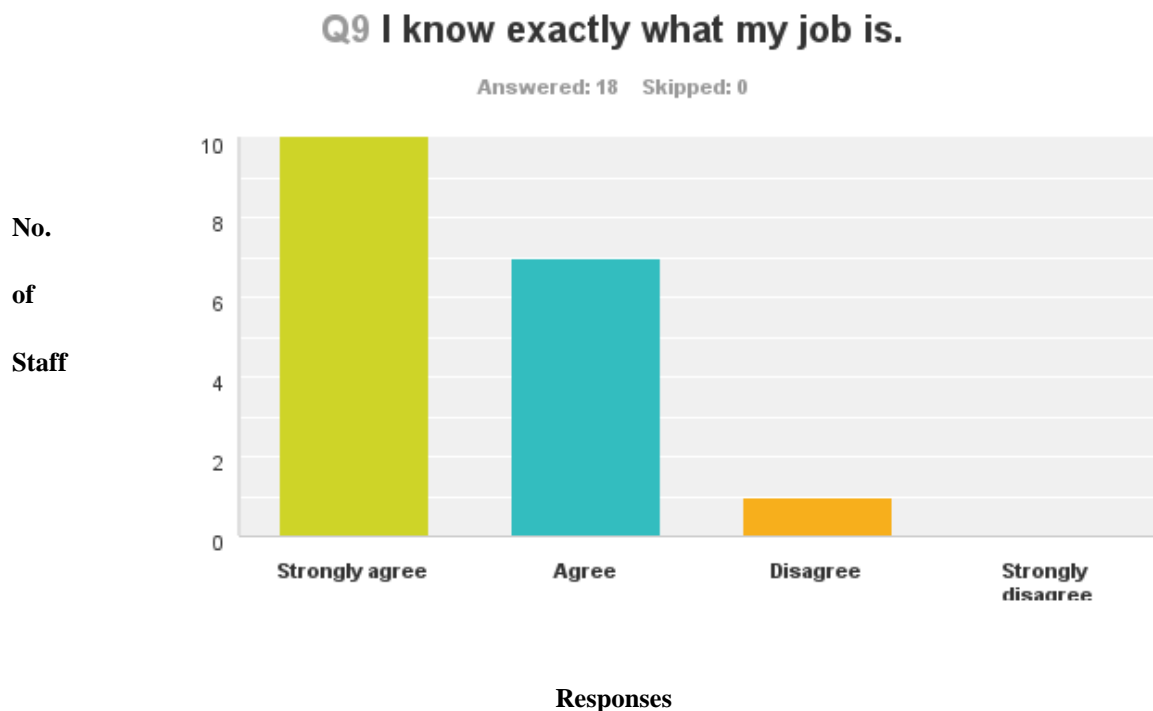
4.4.2 - I can see how the work I do contributes to the goals and objectives of the service.

The purpose of this statement was to see if staff felt the work they do contributes to the goals and objectives of the service. The most common answer was 'agree' with 10(55.56%) respondents choosing this option while the second most common answer received was 'strongly agree' with 8(44.44%) respondents choosing to strongly agree with this statement. Additionally, none of the 18 respondent's chose 'disagree' or 'strongly agree' as shown in figure 4.10.

Figure 4.10:

No.

of

Staff

Q10 I can see how the work I do contributes to the goals and objectives of the service?

Answered: 18   Skipped: 0

Responses
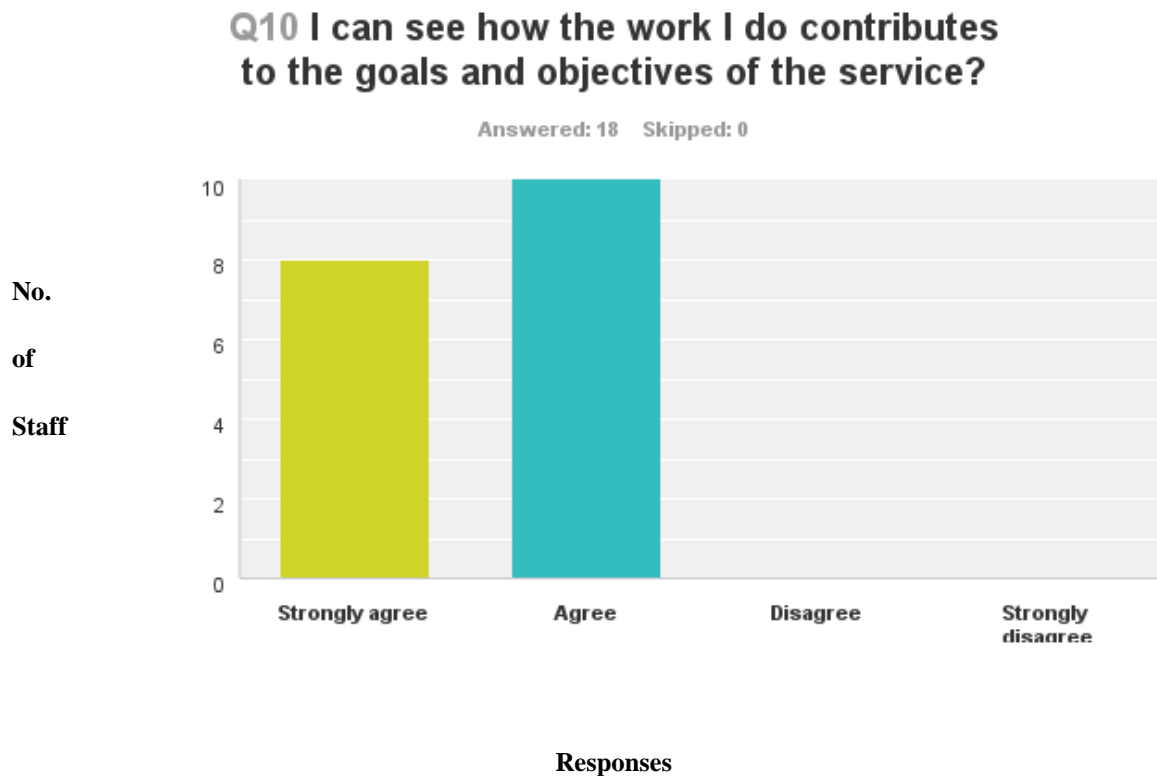
4.4.3 - I am fully aware of the performance standards expected of me.

The purpose of getting the views on this statement from staff is to try to see how aware they are of the performance standards that are expected of them. 12(66.67%) respondents strongly agreed with this statement while the second most common response was that of 6(33.33%) respondents who agreed with the statement. Finally, none of the staff participating in the interview chose to 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' with the above statement as shown in figure 4.11 below.

47

Figure 4.11:

Q11 I am fully aware of the performance standards expected of me.

Answered: 18   Skipped: 0

No.

of

Staff

(bar chart: Strongly agree ≈ 12, Agree ≈ 6, Disagree 0, Strongly disagree 0)

Responses
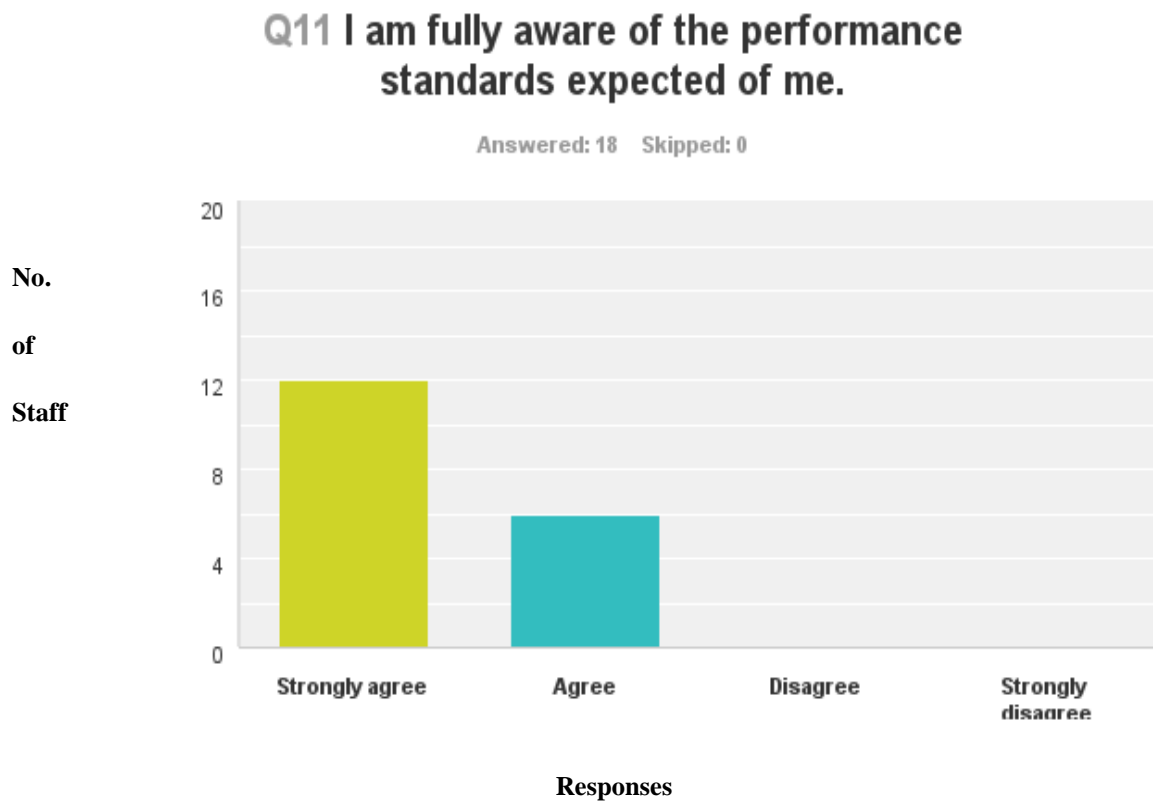
4.4.4 - Performance management encourages my participation in the decision making process at work.

The purpose of this statement was to unearth staff views on whether or not performance management encourages staff participation in the decision making process at work. The most popular option chosen here by respondents was 'agree' with 12(66.67%) respondents choosing this option. The second and third most common answers given by respondents were 'strongly agree' 3(16.67%) and 'disagree' 3(16.67%) respectively as illustrated in figure 4.12.

Figure 4.12:

No.

of

Staff

Q12 **Performance management encourages my participation in the decision making process at work.**

Answered: 18   Skipped: 0

Responses

4.4.5 - The performance management system helps in providing clarity in standards of work practices.

The purpose of this question on the questionnaire was to get an insight into how staff felt regarding the performance management system and if staff feel it helps in providing clarity in standards of work practices. The most common response was agree with 10(55.56%) respondents agreeing with the statement, the second most common response was 'strongly agree' with 6(33.33%) strongly agreeing with the statement, while 2(11.11%) respondents disagreed with the statement. Finally none of the respondent's strongly disagreed as shown in figure 4.13.

Figure 4.13:

Q13 The performance management system helps in providing clarity in standards of work practices.

Answered: 18   Skipped: 0

No.

of

Staff

Responses
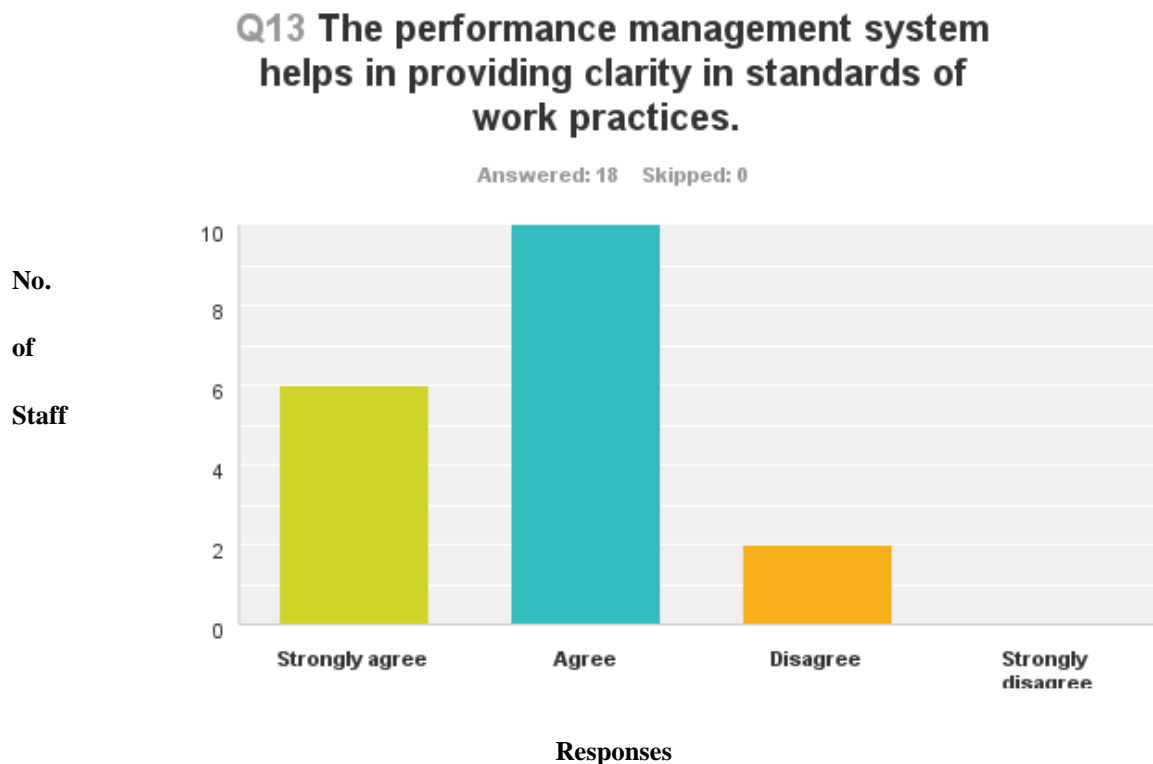
4.5 - Learning and Development

Learning and development was the fourth part of the survey. This section looked to identify and explore whether learning and development was present in the performance management system being examined and whether it was a key aspect of improving the performance in the organisation. The four point Likert-style rating scale was used throughout this section of the survey.

4.5.1 - The performance management process has offered me learning opportunities.

The purpose of this question was to get staff's opinion on whether the performance management process has offered staff in the care unit learning opportunities. The most common response was 'strongly agree' with 11(61.11%) respondent's choosing that option while 'agree' was the second most common response with 7(38.89%) respondents choosing that option. Finally, no one chose to respond with 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' as shown in figure 4.14.

Figure 4.14:

No.

of

Staff

Q14 The performance management process
has offered me learning opportunities.

Answered: 18   Skipped: 0
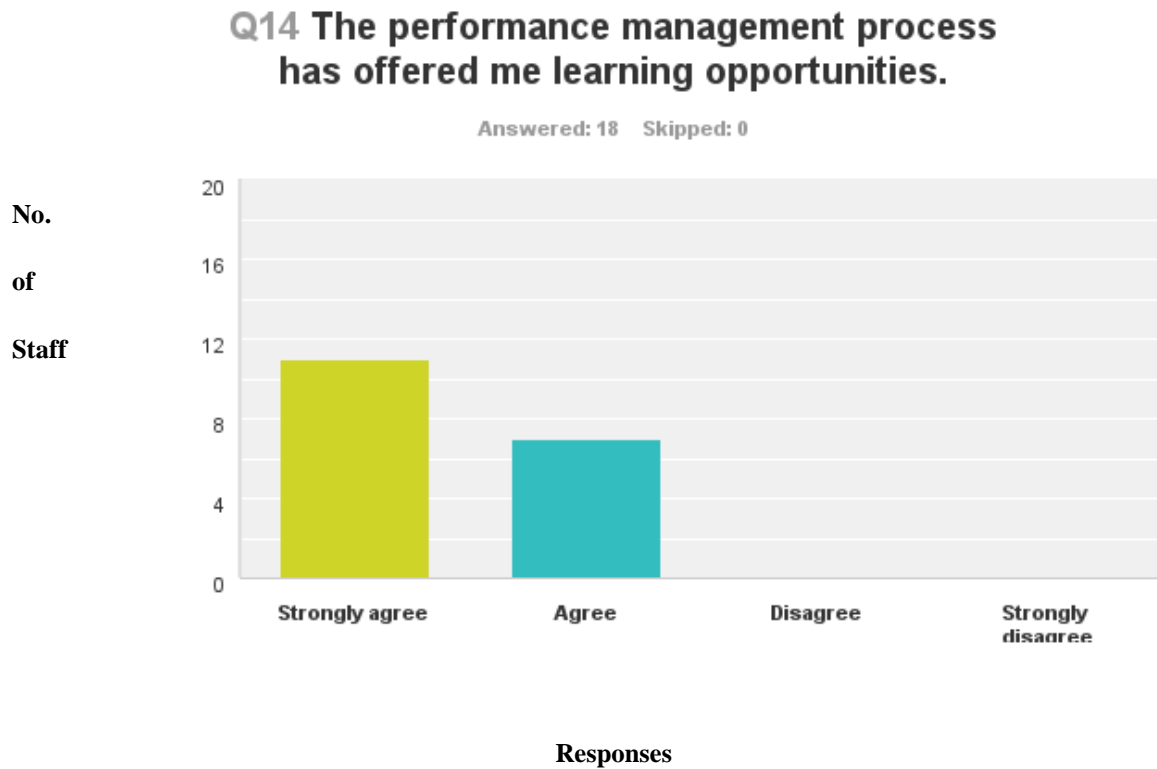
Responses

4.5.2 - These learning opportunities provide me with the skills necessary to have more responsibility in managing my work.

The purpose of getting staff's opinion on this statement was to determine whether learning opportunities provide staff with the required skills necessary to have more responsibility at work. The most common response was 'agree' with 10(55.56%) respondents agreeing with the statement while the second most common response was 'strongly agree' with 8(44.44%) respondents choosing that response. None of the respondents chose to answer with 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' as can be seen in figure 4.15.
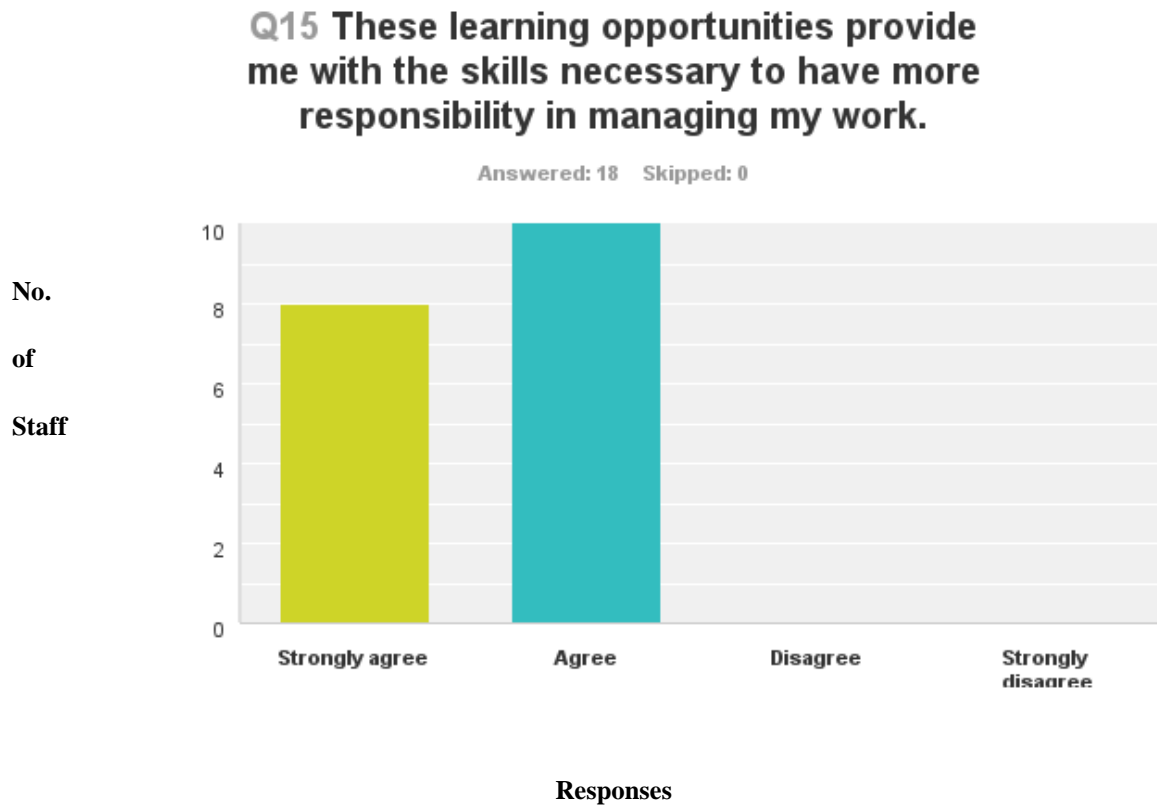
Figure 4.15:

Q15 These learning opportunities provide me with the skills necessary to have more responsibility in managing my work.

Answered: 18   Skipped: 0

No.

of

Staff

Strongly agree   Agree   Disagree   Strongly disagree

Responses

4.5.3 - These learning opportunities equip me with skills needed to improve the quality of care provided for service users.

The purpose of getting staff's opinion on this statement was to determine whether learning opportunities equip staff with the required skills needed to improve the quality of care provided for service users. The most common response was 'agree' with 11(61.11%) respondents agreeing with the statement while the second most common response was 'strongly agree' with 7(38.89%) respondents choosing that response. None of the respondents chose to answer with 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' as can be seen in figure 4.16.
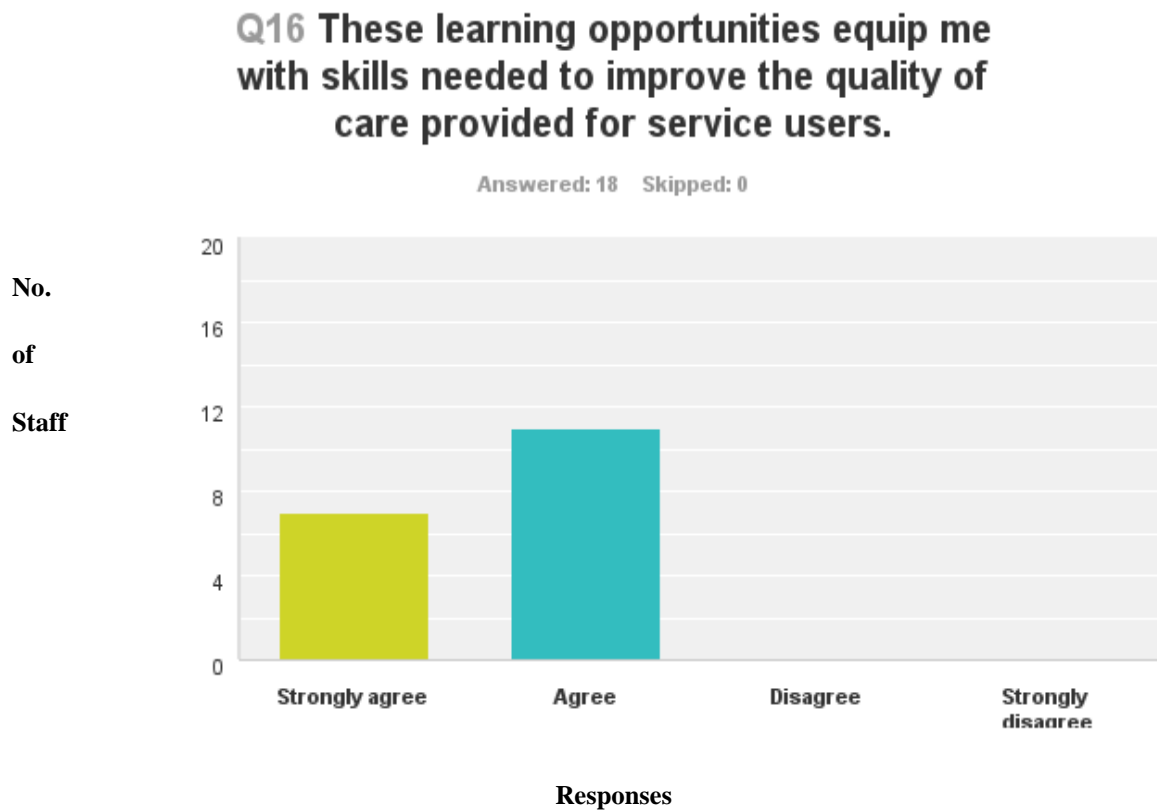
Figure 4.16:

No.

of

Staff

Q16 These learning opportunities equip me with skills needed to improve the quality of care provided for service users.

Answered: 18   Skipped: 0

Responses

4.5.3 - The performance management process has helped with my professional development.

The purpose of getting staff's opinions on this statement was to see whether or not they felt the performance management process has helped with their professional development. The most popular answer was 'agree' with 12(66.67%) respondents choosing to respond with this option while the second most popular answer was 'strongly agree' with 6(33.33%) respondents choosing to respond with this option. Finally, none of the respondents responded with 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree' as can be seen in figure 4.17.

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Figure 4.17:

Q17 The performance management process has helped with my professional development.

Answered: 18   Skipped: 0

No.

of

Staff

Responses

4.6 – Measurement

Measurement was the topic for the next section of the survey. This section looked to identify and explore whether measurement was present in the performance management system being examined and whether it was a key aspect of the performance management system. In this section, list style questions and a category style question were used.

4.6.1 - At your performance management meeting, is your performance measured?

The purpose of this question was to identify whether the performance of staff is being measured in the care unit. The most common response was 'yes' with 11(61.11%) respondents choosing this option. The second most common response was 'no' with 6(33.33%) respondents while 1(5.56%) respondent chose 'I don't know' as illustrated in figure 4.18.

Figure 4.18:

No.

of

Staff

Q18 At your performance management meeting, is your performance measured?

Answered: 18   Skipped: 0

Responses
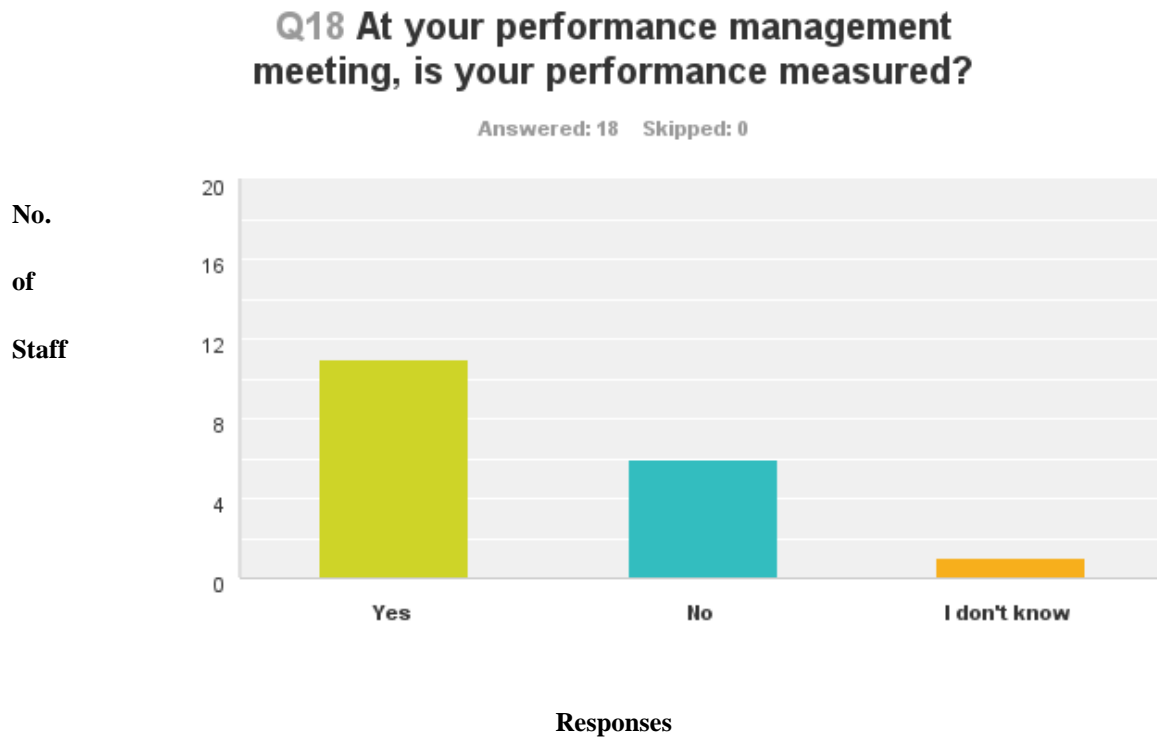
4.6.2 - Is your performance measured against outcomes of your performance?

The aim of this question was to see how performance was measured, did staff feel it was measured against outcomes of their performance. The results showed that the most common answer was 'yes' 14(77.78%) while the second most common result was 'no' with 4(22.22%) respondents choosing that option. Finally, none of the staff members participating chose 'I don't know' as illustrated in figure 4.19.

Figure 4.19:

No.

of
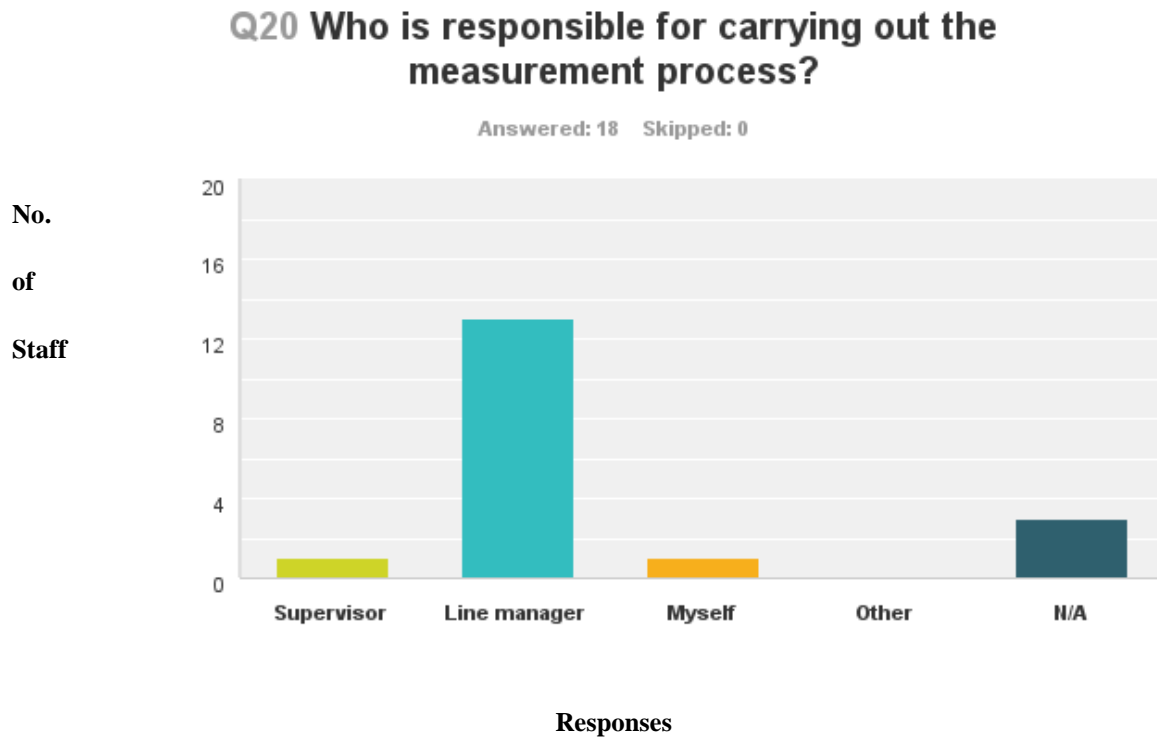
Staff

Q19 Is your performance measured against outcomes of your performance?

Answered: 18   Skipped: 0
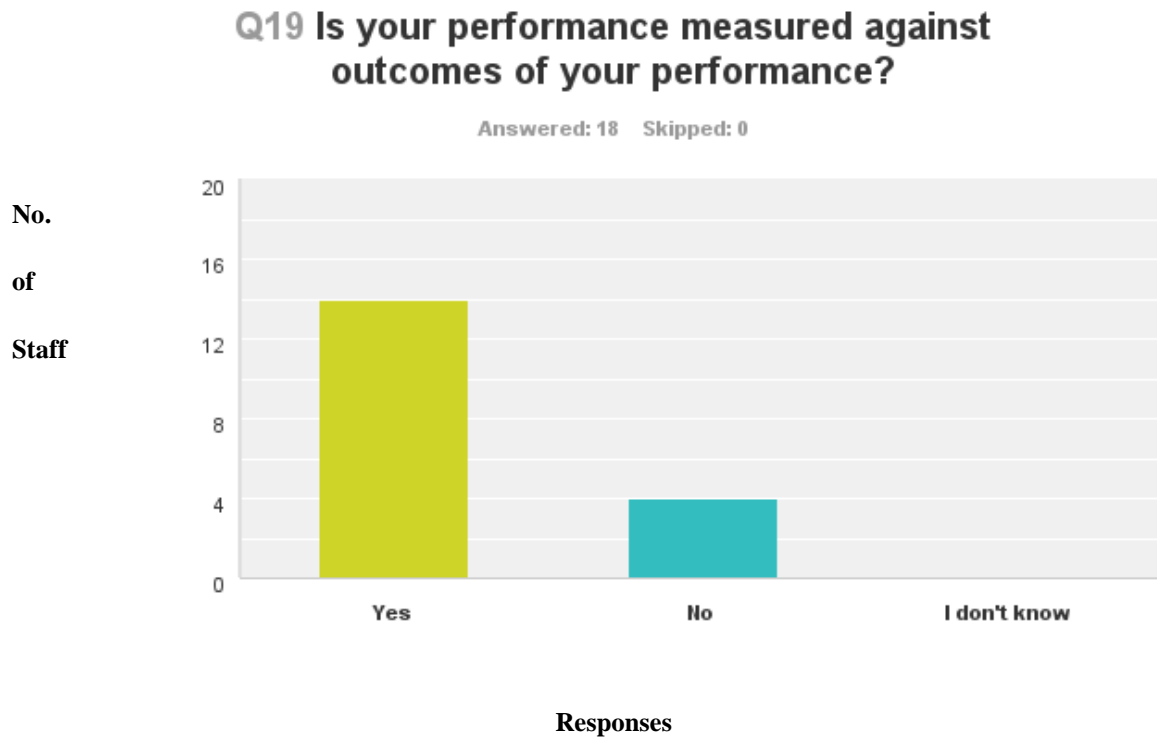
Responses

4.6.3 - Who is responsible for carrying out the measurement process?

The aim of this question is to establish who the staff feel is responsible for carrying out the measurement process. A category style question was used to gather the findings from this question. The most common response was 'line manager' with 13(72.22%) staff selecting that option, second most common answer was 'N/A' with 3(16.67%) staff selecting that option. Finally, 1 (5.56%) respondent selected 'supervisor' and another 1(5.56%) selected myself while no one selected 'other' as illustrated in figure 4.20.

Figure 4.20:

No.

of

Staff

Q20 Who is responsible for carrying out the measurement process?

Answered: 18   Skipped: 0

Supervisor   Line manager   Myself   Other   N/A

Responses

4.6.4 - Is it clear what your performance is being measured against?

The aim of this question was to try to ascertain whether staff are clear about what their performance is being measured against. The most common answer was 'yes' with 9(50%) staff selecting that option, while the second most common was 'no' with 6(33.33%) staff selecting that option. Finally, the third highest response was 'doesn't apply' with 3(16.67%) staff selecting that option with no one selecting 'I don't know' as illustrated in figure 4.21.

Figure 4.21:

No.

of

Staff

Q21 Is it clear what your performance is being measured against?

Answered: 18   Skipped: 0

Responses
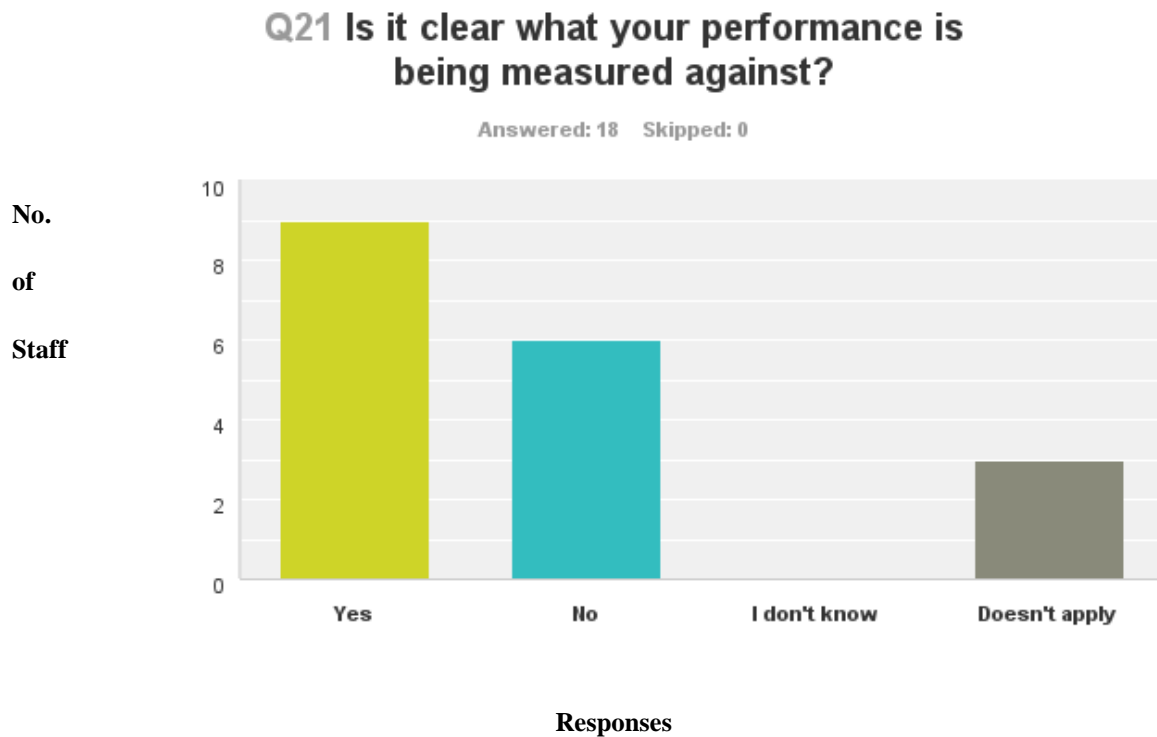
4.6.5 - Measurement of my performance against goals and standards has helped me to improve the provision of quality care for service users.

The aim of this statement was to get staff's opinion on whether measurement of their performance goals and standards has helped them to improve the provision of quality care for service users. The five Likert-style rating scale was used for this question. The most common response received was 'agree' with 8 (44.44%), while the second most common response was 'strongly agree' with 6(33.33%). The third most common response was 'doesn't apply' with 3(16.67%) and 'disagree' had 1(5.56%) response. Finally, no one selected 'strongly disagree' as a response as illustrated in figure 4.22.

Figure 4.22:

Q22 Measurement of my performance against goals and standards has helped me to improve the provision of quality care for service users.

Answered: 18   Skipped: 0

No.

of

Staff

Responses
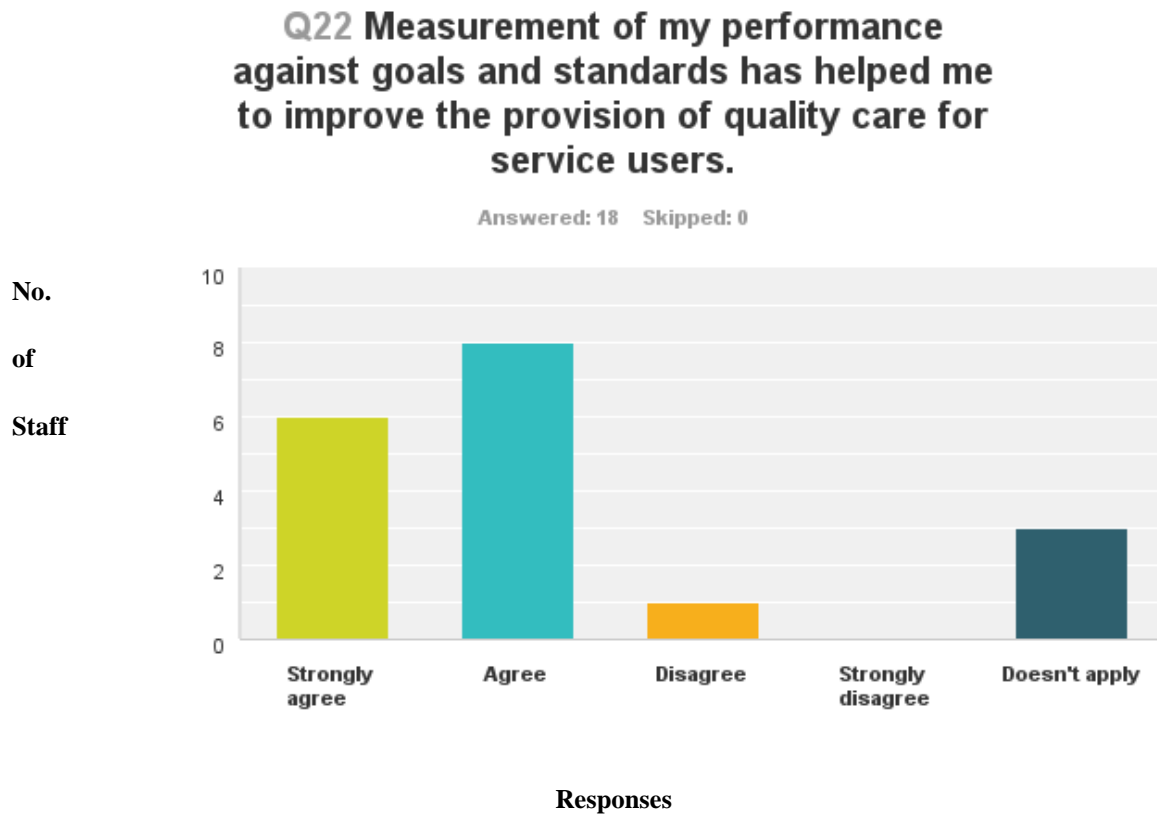
4.7 – Performance Appraisal and Pay

The final section of the survey was concerned with performance appraisal and pay. This section looked to identify and explore whether performance appraisal was present in the performance management system being examined and whether pay was a tool utilised by the organisation to manage performance. In this section, list style questions style question were used.

4.7.1 - Is your work performance formally assessed?

The aim of this question was to see whether staff's performance was formally assessed. The most common response was 'no' with 16(88.89%) respondents choosing that option, while 'yes' and 'I don't know' received 1(5.56%) response each as illustrated in figure 4.23.

Figure 4.23:

Q23 Is your work performance formally assessed?

Answered: 18   Skipped: 0

No.

of

Staff

| | Yes | No | Don't know |
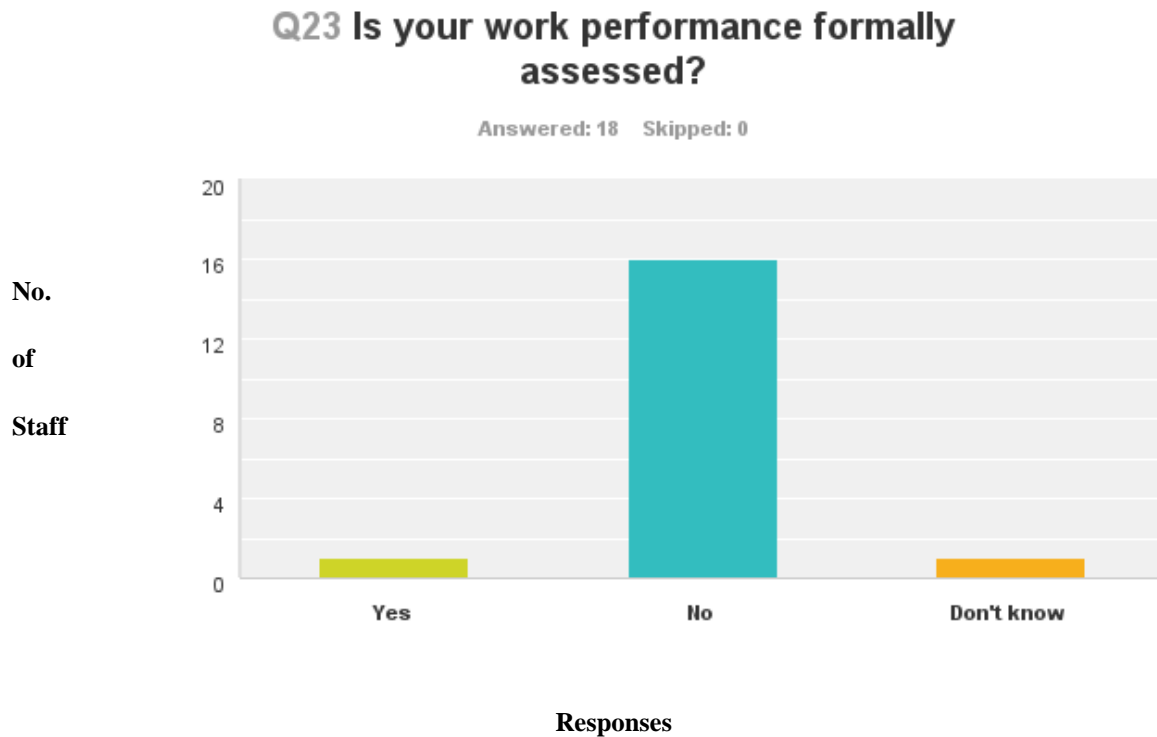
Responses

4.7.2 - Are you rewarded at work for achieving goals and objectives?

The purpose of this question was to see if staff were rewarded at work for achieving their goals and objectives. The only response received for this question was 'no' with 18(100%) staff members choosing this option, as illustrated below.

Figure 4.24

Q24 Are you rewarded at work for achieving
goals and objectives?

Answered: 18   Skipped: 0

No.

of

Staff

Responses

4.7.3 - Is your performance at work compared against others of a similar grade in your profession?

The aim of this question was to see if the performance of staff is compared against others of a similar grade in their profession. The most common response was 'no' with 15(83.33%) respondents selecting that answer. The second most common response was 'I don't know' with 2(11.11%) respondents selecting that answer while 1(5.56%) respondent answered 'yes' as illustrated in figure 4.25.

Figure 4.25:

No.

of

Staff

Q25 Is your performance at work compared against others of a similar grade in your profession.

Answered: 18   Skipped: 0

Responses

4.7.4 - Are the outcomes of performance appraisal linked to promotional systems in your organisation?

The purpose of this question was to see if staff felt the outcomes of performance appraisal are linked to promotional systems in their organisation. The most common response received was 'no' with 16(88.89%) respondents selecting that option, while 'yes' and 'I don't know' received 1(5.56%) response each as can be seen in figure 4.26.

Figure 4.26:

Q26 Are the outcomes of performance appraisal linked to promotional systems in your organisation?

Answered: 18   Skipped: 0

No.

of

Staff

Responses
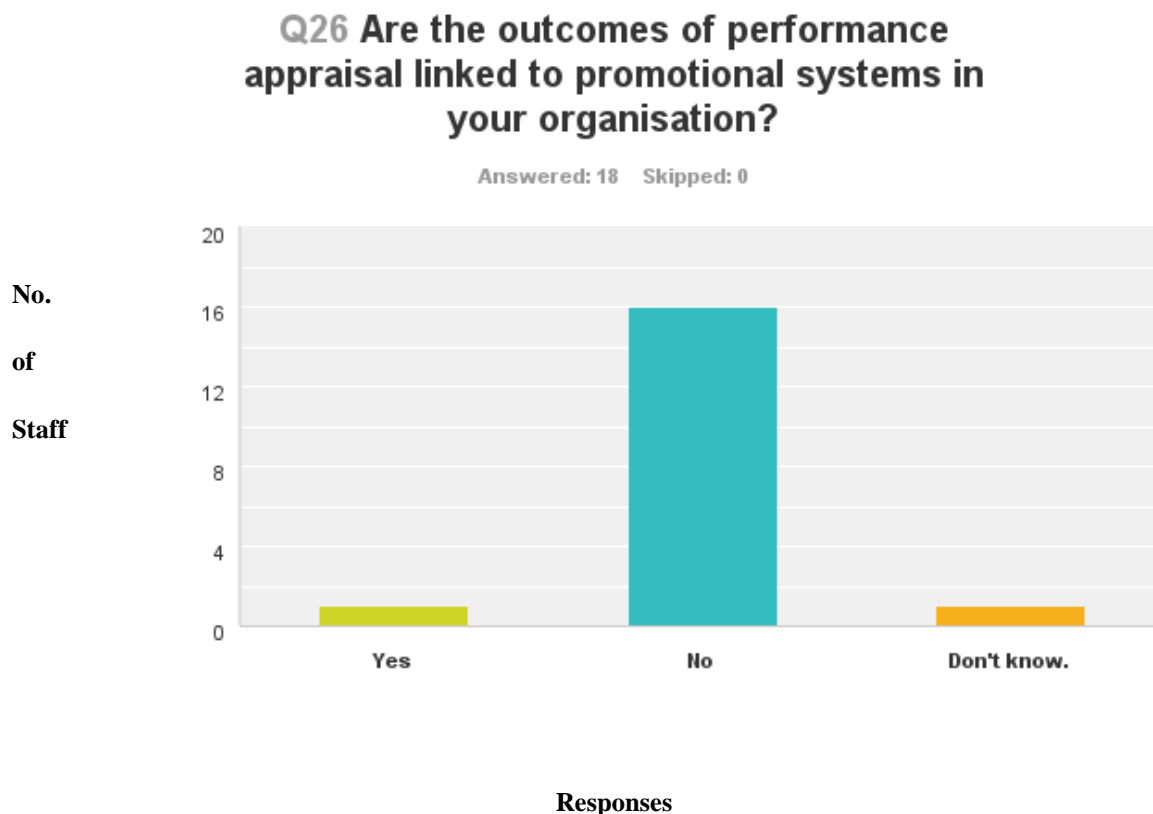
Part 5 – Analysis and Discussion

5.1 – Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to analyse the findings in order to evaluate the performance management system of the care unit in question. This is carried out by drawing the findings for each of the sub-objectives of the investigation and by summarising all of the results illustrated in the previous chapter as well as providing a conclusion for this research paper.

5.2 – Research Objectives

The main purpose of this research paper is to evaluate the performance management of nurses and care staff of people with intellectual disabilities who are employed in a specific care unit run by the Health Service Executive (HSE). The research was gathered through a web based survey which was designed by incorporating the six characteristics outlined by CIPD (2014), which are key characteristics of an effective performance management system. The six areas

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are feedback, goals and standards of performance, learning and development, measurement, performance appraisal and pay. Before examining the performance management system and its components, the researcher wanted to establish whether or not performance management system or process was in place in the organisation.

5.3 – Performance Management

The researcher started off the survey with the key aim of identifying whether a performance management system was present in the care unit that was used for the purpose of the study. As pointed out earlier in this paper, Harnett et al. (2009) believe that performance management is not a common occurrence in the health sector in Ireland and not many tools exist for performance to be managed effectively. Therefore, the first question on the questionnaire was '*Do you have performance meetings with your manager*?' The purpose of this question was to identify whether performance management existed in this care unit. The results stated 16(88.89%) staff responded with 'yes' which implies that performance management as a concept at the very least, exists in the care unit being examined by the researcher and meant further investigation into the characteristics of the management of performance would be interesting. The second question regarding performance management was based on examining how often performance management meetings took place in the organisation. The question asked 'How often do you have performance meetings with your manager?' The most common response was 'twice a year' with 13(72.22%) staff choosing that answer. Keaveney (2014) expressed concerns over whether performance management meetings were happening on a regular basis when he was talking about a care unit in Co.Mayo, the results of this question indicate that performance meetings in this care unit happen twice a year.

5.4 – Feedback

There are two objectives being looked at here by the researcher. The first was whether feedback was a feature of performance management in this care unit and the second objective was to the explore how the staff feel about the feedback provided and whether they feel it helps to improve individual and or organisational performance. The CIPD (2014) identify feedback as an important component of performance management, so the researcher wanted to find out if this component was present in the care unit being examined. The third question of the questionnaire

was '*At these meetings do you receive feedback on your performance*?' The most common answer was 'yes' with 15 (83.33%) respondents choosing that option.   The results showed that feedback was a component of performance management in this particular care unit.

Question 4 of the questionnaire aimed to examine whether feedback was a component of performance management in the care unit and whether or not staff felt feedback on their performance had helped develop their clinical skills. The statement was '*Feedback on my performance has helped develop my clinical skills*' and staff were asked to give their opinion on it. Earlier in this paper, in the literature review, Income Data Services (1997) highlighted the importance of feedback as it allows job experience to be shared to help improve future performance and modify organisational goals. The most common response gathered from question 4 was strongly agree' with 9(50%) respondent's choosing that option. The second highest response was 'agree' with 7(38.89%) staff choosing that option showing that 16 staff within the care unit either agree or strongly agree that feedback has helped them to develop their clinical skills.

The aim of question 5 was to establish whether staff felt feedback on performance helps them develop professional practice in response to service user needs. The statement was '*Performance feedback helps develop professional practice in response to service user needs*'. The most popular response received was 'agree' with 11(61.11%) of the respondents selecting this option with the second most popular response being 'strongly agree' with 7(38.89%) respondents selecting this option. Interestingly, no one responded with 'disagree' or 'strongly disagree'. Armstrong (2006) outlines the benefits performance management has on the organisation and the opportunities it can potentially create like the integration of individual, team and organisational objectives and assist to focus individual and team behaviours and efforts to meeting the organisation's needs. The results from this question would imply that the benefits Armstrong (2006) described are present in the performance management system being examined in this study as a result of feedback given to staff in relation to their performance. Question 6 has some similarities as its purpose was to see if staff felt that performance feedback received by staff helps to improve their performance. Question 6 was '*The performance feedback I have received helps to improve my performance*' and looked for the staff's opinion. The most common answer was 'agree' with 10(55.56%) staff choosing this option while the second most common answer was 'strongly agree' with 7(38.89%) choosing this response. This result emphasises the importance performance feedback plays within the

care unit with 17 out of 18 staff who work in the care unit felt performance feedback has helped improve their performance.

Similar to question 6, question 7 of the survey looked to gain staff's opinion on the following statement '*Feedback from supervisors helps to improve the provision of quality care provided by the organisation*' which focused on investigating if there was a link between performance management feedback and goals of the organisation. Bennet (2009) believes feedback is important as goals are set out and highlighted they assist in preventing the dispersal of organisational initiative. The most common response was 'agree' with 10(55.56%) staff choosing that option, while the second most common response was 'strongly agree' with 8(44.44%) staff choosing that response, which leads the researcher to believe that the provision of quality of care provided by the organisation can be improved through staff receiving feedback. Finally, the final question examining feedback as a characteristic on performance management was '*Have you ever received negative feedback regarding your performance at work?*', the most common answer was 'no' with 15(83.33%) respondents choosing this answer while 3(16.67%) respondents answered 'yes'.

5.5 – Goals and Standards

This area of the questionnaire is concerned with exploring goals and standards of performance for employees, within the care unit, and whether these goal and standards are integrated and aligned with the overall purpose of the care unit. As was outlined earlier in the paper, performance management can "*reduce and eliminate ambiguity and confusion about objectives; and to gain coherence and focus in pursuit of the organisation's mission*" (Verbeeten, 2008, p. 428). The researcher wanted to see if the performance management system in the care unit had benefits like the ones identified by Verbeeten (2008).

Question 9 was '*I know exactly what my job is*' which asked staff for their opinion. The top two most common answers were 'strongly agree' with 10(55.56%) respondents selecting this option and 'agree' with 7(38.89%) staff choosing that option. Question 10 was '*I can see how the work I do contributes to the goals and objectives of the service*' which ties in which question 9. Not one of the 18 staff have responded with disagree or strongly disagree to this statement which shows that there is a link between individual objectives and organisational objectives in

staff's opinion. IRS Employment Trends (2003) identify an aim of performance management as having a systematic approach to organisational performance in place by aligning individual employee accountabilities and responsibilities to the desired targets and activities set out by the organisation (Royal Berkshire and Battle Hospitals NHS Trust), which can be seen to be benefiting this particular care unit according to the survey results.

The purpose of question 11 was to get the views of staff on a statement to try to see how aware they are of the performance standards that are expected of them, question 11 was '*I am fully aware of the performance standards expected of me*'. 12(66.67%) respondents strongly agreed with this statement while the second most common response was that of 6(33.33%) respondents who agreed with the statement, this implies that all staff working in the care unit either agree or strongly agree that they are fully aware of the performance standards expected of them. Weiss and Hartle (1997) believe a crucial aspect of performance management is establishing a shared understanding about what is to be achieved and how it is to be achieved, the results would appear to show that this aspect is present in this performance management system.

Question 12 was '*Performance management encourages my participation in the decision-making process at work*'. The most popular option chosen here by respondents was 'agree' with 12(66.67%) respondents choosing this option. Harnett et al. (2009) carried out a research paper on performance and standards within the area of mental health nursing and found that introduction of an effective performance management system in the sector will result in higher standards of transparency, an increase in employee participation in the process of decision making, from the research gathered the dominant response in this question would imply staff are encouraged to participate in the decision making process at work through the performance management process.

Question 13 was '*The performance management system helps in providing clarity in standards of work practices*'. The most common response was 'agree' with 10(55.56%) respondents agreeing with the statement, the second most common response was 'strongly agree' with 6(33.33%) staff strongly agreeing with the statement. Armstrong (2006) outlines the benefit of performance management in focusing on staff within the organisation carrying out the right behaviours by making sure goals are clear.

5.6 – Learning and Development

This section examine learning and development which is the fourth characteristic of performance management as outlined by CIPD (2014). This section aimed to identify and explore whether learning and development was a characteristic of the performance management system being examined and whether it was an aspect of improving the performance in the organisation. Johnson et al. (2011) found that a visible link between performance and work behaviours and learning and development. The clinical practice was developed which resulted in an improvement of performance and the coaching resulted in an improvement of employee attitudes.

 Armstrong (2006) believes organisations can benefit from the introduction of effective learning and development schedules to meet needs that are identified.

Question 14 was '*The performance management process has offered me learning opportunities*'. The most common response was 'strongly agree' with 11(61.11%) respondent's choosing that option while 'agree' was the second most common response with 7(38.89%) respondents choosing that option. It is clear from this research that staff feel there are learning opportunities available to them through the performance management process.

Question 15 was '*These learning opportunities provide me with the skills necessary to have more responsibility in managing my work*'. The purpose of getting staff's opinion on this statement was to determine whether learning opportunities provide staff with the required skills necessary to have more responsibility at work. The most common response was 'agree' with 10(55.56%) respondents agreeing with the statement while the second most common response was 'strongly agree' with 8(44.44%) respondents choosing that response.

Question 16 is linked to question 14 and 15, it was '*These learning opportunities equip me with skills needed to improve the quality of care provided for service users*'. The aim of question 16 was to staff's opinion on this statement and to determine whether learning opportunities equip staff with the required skills needed to improve the quality of care provided for service users. Out of the 18 staff who took part in the questionnaire 18 either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, this implies that the learning opportunities are aligned with individual and organisational needs. Thomas et al. (2009) carrying out a study on performance management in the NHS, found that when the performance management system links objectives to the identified core competencies that the clinical teams need to

provide their services in an effective and efficient manner, performance and quality could be improved further.

Question 17 alters the focus slightly from learning to development. Question 17 was '*The performance management process has helped with my professional development*'. The most popular answer was 'agree' with 12(66.67%) respondents choosing to respond with this option while the second most popular answer was 'strongly agree' with 6(33.33%) respondents choosing to respond with this option meaning none of the staff disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. According to Armstrong (2006) having plans for employee development enables the organisation to encourage learning and to give employees the acquired skills and know how to assist them in their progression in the organisation and their careers. Results of this question seem to imply that such plans discussed by Armstrong are present in this performance management system.

5.7 – Measurement

The next section of the survey looked at measurement. This section looked to identify and explore whether measurement was present in the performance management system being examined and whether it was a key aspect of the performance management system.

The aim of question 18 was to determine whether or not measurement as a component of performance management existed in the care unit the researcher was studying. The question was '*At your performance management meeting, is your performance measured?*'

The most common response was 'yes' with 11(61.11%) respondents choosing this option. The second most common response was 'no' with 6(33.33%) respondents while 1(5.56%) respondent chose 'I don't know'. Measurement allows the organisation to get an idea of what the current levels of performance are so they can then plan to improve performance and personal development of employees (Armstrong, 2006), the dominant answer in this question was yes but the researcher also wanted to find out how the performance of staff was measured.

Question 19 was '*Is your performance measured against outcomes of your performance*.' The results showed that the most common answer was 'yes' 14(77.78%) while the second most common result was 'no' with 4(22.22%) respondents choosing that option. This gives the researcher the impression that performance is measured against outcomes which are

described by Armstrong (2006) as an effect that can be seen due to efforts made by employees but can't necessarily be measured quantifiably.

Having established how performance was measured in the care unit, the researcher then wanted to identify who was responsible for the process. Question 20 was '*Who is responsible for carrying out the measurement process?*'

The most common response was 'line manager' with 13(72.22%) staff selecting that option, second most common answer was 'N/A' with 3(16.67%) staff selecting that option. Pollitt (2013) identified a concern about the measurement process regarding who would be responsible for measuring the performance, the results from this question seem to indicate it is the line manager in this particular care unit.

Question 21 was '*Is it clear what your performance is being measured against?*'

The most common answer was 'yes' with 9(50%) staff selecting that option, while the second most common was 'no' with 6(33.33%) staff selecting that option. Finally, the third highest response was 'doesn't apply' with 3(16.67%). Interestingly the results of this question would appear to indicate that staff are unclear what their performance is being measured against, as 50% of them either responded with 'no' or 'doesn't apply. According to CIPD (2014) Employees need to know the grounds on which they're going to be measured in relation to their performance, these measures need to be clear and utilised fairly within the organisation, this doesn't seem to be the case in this performance management system.

Question 22 was '*Measurement of my performance against goals and standards has helped me to improve the provision of quality care for service users.*'

The most common response was 'agree' with 8 (44.44%), while the second most common response was 'strongly agree' with 6(33.33%). The third most common response was 'doesn't apply' with 3(16.67%) and 'disagree' had 1(5.56%) response. Armstrong (2006) identified 'the attainment of a standard (quality or level of service)' earlier in this paper as a possible outcome measure. 14 staff either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement imply that this type of measurement of performance exists in this care unit.

5.8 - Performance Appraisal and Pay

The final section of the survey examined performance appraisal and pay. The questions aimed to identify and explore whether performance appraisal was present in the performance management system being examined and whether pay was a tool utilised by the organisation to manage performance.

Question 23 was '*Is your work performance formally assessed?*'

The most common response was 'no' with 16(88.89%) respondents choosing that option, while 'yes' and 'I don't know' received 1(5.56%) response each. These results seem to indicate that performance is not formally assessed in the care unit, which gives the researcher the impression that performance management process is an informal process.

Question 24 was '*Are you rewarded at work for achieving goals and objectives*'.

The purpose of this question was to see if staff were rewarded at work for achieving their goals and objectives. The only response received for this question was 'no' with 18(100%) staff members choosing this option, clearly establishing that staff are not rewarded based on their performance.

Question 25 was '*Is your performance at work compared against others of a similar grade in your profession?*'

The most common response was 'no' with 15(83.33%) respondents selecting that answer. The second most common response was 'I don't know' with 2(11.11%) respondents selecting that answer while 1(5.56%) respondent answered 'yes'. The dominant answer to this question was clearly no.

The final question of this section and of the survey was question 26 which was '*Are the outcomes of performance appraisal linked to promotional systems in your organisation?*'

The most common response received was 'no' with 16(88.89%) respondents selecting that option, while 'yes' and 'I don't know' received 1(5.56%) response each. Earlier in this paper, Gunnigle et al. (2011) described performance appraisal as the "*systematic approach to evaluating employee performance with a view to assisting decisions in a wide range if areas such as pay, promotion, employee development and motivation*" Gunnigle et al, 2011, p.192).

It is clear to see from the findings that appraisal within the care unit does not evaluate performance with a view to helping the organisation to make decisions regarding pay or promotion opportunities.

Part 6 – Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 – Conclusion:

The use of performance management is becoming more and more prevalent even in organisations that traditionally wouldn't have had such a system in place like public healthcare organisations. This research paper evaluated the performance management system of a healthcare unit for people with intellectual disabilities, identifying six components as outlined by the CIPD (2014) and then examined whether they existed in that system and if so, in what capacity. A web based survey was utilised as part of a quantitative research approach. The six components examined were:

- Feedback
- Goals and Standards of Performance
- Learning and Development
- Measurement
- Performance Appraisal
- Pay

6.2 – Key Findings

This research paper has identified that a performance management system does exist within the care unit. This performance management system is concerned with aligning personal and organisational goals as would be expected from a healthcare organisation responsible for caring for people with intellectual disabilities exists.

In terms of feedback, the research shows it is a feature of the performance management system with the majority of staff feeling that it assists them in improving their performance, organisational performance and therefore helping to provide a better standard of care for service users. Therefore, the research implies that feedback plays a key role in benefiting the overall performance of the care unit. Goals and standards are crucial in any performance

management system and to the research carried out, the performance management system being examined in this study is no different. Staff seem to be aware of what is expected of them and of the goals and standards they are expected to meet. These goals seem to be aligned with the organisational goals while standards according to the results, seem to be clear and understood by staff. The third aspect of the performance management system being examined was learning and development. According to the results, learning and development, in terms of being a component of performance management does indeed exist in this care unit. The results seem to show a clear belief from staff that learning and development opportunities are available to them and that these opportunities are beneficial to them in terms of improving their skills needed to carry out their job more effectively and to improve the quality of care provided as well. It can also be drawn from the results that staff feel the performance management process has assisted their professional development. The next component examined was measurement. The findings from the measurement section of the survey were interesting as there was a mixed response received which made it difficult to draw any definite conclusions. The researcher believes further study maybe of a qualitative nature could be used to come to a more definite idea about this component of performance management within this care unit. It was clear to see that from the results that staff weren't sure how their performance was measured, the researcher feels that this needs to be addressed to gain the full benefits of the performance management system. Performance appraisal and pay were the final two components that were examined. It was clear from the results from this section that a formal appraisal system did not exist within the framework of the performance management system and that pay or rewards are not used to manage performance in this sector which did not come as a surprise, as it is a public healthcare organisation.

6.3 Recommendations and Costings

The author of this research paper is of a firm belief that with a few changes to the performance management system it could be very effective and beneficial to the organisation. The two areas that could do with changes are the measurement process and the appraisal process. The introduction of an altered performance management system which has a formal appraisal and a clear measurement process would benefit the overall performance of the care

unit and allow the organisation to address underperformers and allow for an improved quality of service. If sufficient changes were made to these two components identified by the author, there would be an opportunity for an improvement of the system as it would offer clarity to staff in relation to what their performance is being measured against. However, to implement these changes wouldn't be free and would take time to implement. In order to make the alterations to the performance management system I recommend contacting an external training agency to train up staff on the implementation of the new process. One of costs would be the actual training of managers and staff of the new processes and the passing of required knowledge to implement and to continue the new system. The second would be the re design of the staff performance management forms and finally the cost of an evaluation which will be needed to be carried out the training has been given.

The costing for this training with the Institute of Public Administration (IPA) who specialise in performance management training, would cost €450 and is a one day course (IPA, 2015). The course covers all areas of performance management but interestingly, it covers performance appraisal within a performance management context, setting goals and targets, reviewing performance and how to deal with under performance, conducting an appraisal meeting and coaching the required skills for an appraisal meeting. The two line managers responsible for carrying out the performance management process would attend this course costing a total of €900. On top of this, the cost of bringing in the new appraisal forms would roughly be about €1000. Finally, it would be worth getting in an external consultancy company to do an evaluation of the new performance management system over 2 or 3 days to see if there any improvements that can be made. This could cost up to €2500. The total costings of training, implementation and evaluation of the new performance management system would be approximately €4400, but would bring improvements to the system and therefore, would bring improvements in individual performances and organisational performance which would result in a better quality of service for the service users.

Part 7 – Personal Learning Statement

This research study was an evaluation of the performance management of nurses and care staff who are responsible for caring for people with intellectual disabilities who are employed in a specific care unit run by the Health Service Executive (HSE) in Ireland. The researcher, who has worked with people with autism over the last five years, felt that performance management in health care would be an interesting topic to explore especially in light of recent controversies.

The author started off by completing a dissertation proposal which gave him a basic understanding on the dissertation process and a starting point in terms of setting research objectives and in terms of reviewing relevant literature. The author then had to decide which type of research method would most suit his study. After exploring the different approaches it was decided that he would carry out a quantitative research study.

The quantitative methods chosen was a web based survey created on surveymonkey.com. The author found the website very user friendly and extremely helpful in gathering the required data.

Now that the research paper is complete and the author has experienced the learning process, he feels that the inclusion of a qualitative method of research in addition to the quantitative approach which was carried out, would have given him a more insightful collection of data and findings to draw on.

Another aspect of the study that the author would have liked to explore would have been to compare and contrast two different care units who are caring for people with intellectual disabilities, time constraints made this virtually impossible to complete but the study and the results would have been very interesting.

Completing this dissertation as well as completing the MA in Human Resource Management course has been a great personal challenge but also a great learning experience.

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Appendix – Questionnaire Survey (Survey on Performance Management)

Survey on Performance Management:

Dear participant,

I am currently a Master's student in Human Resource Management in National College of Ireland, and I am in the process of working on my dissertation. The aim of this research is to evaluate the performance management process of nurses and care staff and what characteristics of the performance management system are present in the organisation you work for. I kindly ask for your support by dedicating a little time to take part in this questionnaire, and telling me about your experience of the performance management process in your line of work. I would really appreciate if you took the time out of your day to take part in this questionnaire. Your experiences would give me an important input to my investigation. I assure you, that your response and all the information collected through this questionnaire will be treated anonymously. I'd like to thank you very much for being generous with your time and for your support.

 Please find below a link to the survey.

Many thanks,

Padraic Galvin

 National College of Ireland

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZGDV6MN

The Questionnaire

Performance Management Survey:
Feedback

1. Do you have performance meetings with your manager?

Yes

No

Don't know

2. How often do you have performance meetings with your manager?

Once a year

Twice a year

Three or more times a year

None

3. At these meetings do you receive feedback on your performance?

Yes

No

I don't know

4. Feedback on my performance has helped develop my clinical skills.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

5. Performance feedback helps develop professional practice in response to service user needs.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

6. The performance feedback I have received helps to improve my performance.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

7. Feedback from supervisors helps to improve the provision of quality care provided by the organisation.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

8. Have you ever received negative feedback regarding your performance at work?

Yes

No

Don't know

Goals and Standards of Performance

9. I know exactly what my job is.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

10. I can see how the work I do contributes to the goals and objectives of the service?

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

11. I am fully aware of the performance standards expected of me.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

12. Performance management encourages my participation in the decision making process at work.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

13. The performance management system helps in providing clarity in standards of work practices.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Learning and Development

14. The performance management process has offered me learning opportunities.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

15. These learning opportunities provide me with the skills necessary to have more responsibility in managing my work.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

16. These learning opportunities equip me with skills needed to improve the quality of care provided for service users.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

17. The performance management process has helped with my professional development.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Measurement

18. At your performance management meeting, is your performance measured?

Yes

No

I don't know

19. Is your performance measured against outcomes of your performance?

Yes

No

I don't know

20. Who is responsible for carrying out the measurement process?

Supervisor

Line manager

Myself

Other

N/A

21. Is it clear what your performance is being measured against?

Yes

No

I don't know

Doesn't apply

22. Measurement of my performance against goals and standards has helped me to improve the provision of quality care for service users.

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Doesn't apply

Performance Appraisal

23. Is your work performance formally assessed?

Yes

No

Don't know

24. Are you rewarded at work for achieving goals and objectives?

Yes

No

Don't know

25. Is your performance at work compared against others of a similar grade in your profession?

Yes

No

Don't know

26. Are the outcomes of performance appraisal linked to promotional systems in your organisation?

Yes

No

Don't know.