

Project No.: 031209

Report on Short Term Illness and Injury Plan Usage

Ministry of Housing and Social Development

**Internal Audit & Advisory Services
Office of the Comptroller General
Ministry of Finance
Province of British Columbia**

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Abbreviations

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| AMG | Attendance Management Guidelines |
| ASP | Attendance Support Plan |
| BCEAP | British Columbia Employment and Assistance Program |
| BCPS | BC Public Service |
| CSW | Client Service Worker |
| EAW | Employment Assistance Worker |
| FTE | Full-Time Equivalent |
| IAAS | Internal Audit & Advisory Services |
| MFS | Manager of Field Services |
| PSA | Public Service Agency |
| RSD | Regional Services Division |
| SAS | Supervisor Administrative Support |
| STIIP | Short-Term Illness and Injury Plan |
| the ministry or MHSD | Ministry of Housing and Social Development |
| TOL | Time on Line |

Executive Summary

The Regional Services Division (RSD) of the Ministry of Housing and Social Development (the ministry or MHSD) administers the British Columbia Employment and Assistance Program (BCEAP). The *Employment and Assistance Act* and the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act* guide the program.

The ministry requested that Internal Audit & Advisory Services (IAAS) conduct a review of the Short Term Illness and Injury Plan (STIIP) usage in RSD. The purpose of the engagement was to assess the effectiveness of the internally developed Attendance Support Plan (ASP) on influencing STIIP usage within the RSD. To prepare for this engagement, IAAS met with stakeholders from the ministry and developed the following areas to focus our review.

- Accountabilities and processes related to STIIP management;
- The application and implementation of the ASP;
- The reasons for the decrease in STIIP use from prior years; and
- Demographics and Vocational issues that contribute to STIIP use.

Our fieldwork was conducted from January to March 2009, covering 21 offices and interviewing 98 employees province-wide. Observations and results of our engagement are summarized as follows.

Overall Conclusion

Overall, we found the ASP has been effective in reducing STIIP use through the establishment of processes, roles, and responsibilities to facilitate the proficient management of leave due to illness within RSD. Although the ASP is not commonly known by its title, the spirit of the agreement is evident throughout the RSD.

Accountabilities and Process

The ministry has communicated staff accountabilities and set in place adequate processes with respect to STIIP management. They are clearly stated in a document entitled Attendance Management Guidelines (AMG), which is available online to all staff.

It was apparent through extensive interviews, however, that although the formal guidelines are available, the majority of supervisors communicated their attendance expectations, procedures, and processes to employees through staff meetings and one on one debriefs. To further support the improvement of STIIP accountabilities and processes, we recommend the following:

- All new staff should receive a copy of the AMG and STIIP roles and responsibilities in their employee orientation package.
- RSD develop and implement a single absence monitoring process for supervisors.

Application of the ASP

We were informed by regional executives that the ASP was not communicated to staff as a comprehensive document. We have confirmed this statement through the interview process; however it is clear the core components of the plan have been introduced through different initiatives across the province. To further enhance the application of the ASP, RSD could contemplate:

- A step by step methodology for managing patterned absences;
- Continued support for wellness activities to nurture a healthy workplace; and
- Re-enforce the practice of seeking staff input to develop viable business solutions.

Reduction in STIIP Usage

The reduction in STIIP usage can be attributed to a number of factors. Common responses garnered through the interview process as key contributors were increased employee engagement, strong supervision, and recognition programs. It is evident that managers, supervisors, and staff have become more active in addressing STIIP usage as an office priority. The following suggestions are provided for consideration to continue the downward trend.

- Keeping legitimate vacancies filled to mitigate excess workload issues;
- Focus on teambuilding activities to foster synergies in the office; and
- Continue to develop supervisors through training programs and mentoring opportunities.

Demographics
and Vocation

In addition to the findings outlined above, we have researched whether demographics and the type of work within the income assistance field could be a contributor to higher than average sick leave. Based on our analysis, we are confident in stating that there is a strong correlation between the type of work ministry front-line employees are expected to perform, demographic factors and increased sick leave.

Other Findings

Through the course of our interviews, items outside of the initial scope of this project were raised which may have merit and are provided for contemplation.

It is clear that workload is seen as a contributor to the increased use of STIIP. In many of the offices visited, the workload impact is exacerbated by the number of staff absent on a daily basis, either due to vacation, modified work week, special leave or employee illness. In addition, many staff remarked on change fatigue due to the number of initiatives being implemented in RSD in recent years. The following points are provided for review:

- Examine the processes employed for approving all leave management transactions with intent to minimize the impact of absences on workloads.
- Employ appropriate change management processes when implementing strategic change throughout the organization.

In closing, we wish to express our appreciation to RSD staff for their cooperation and assistance throughout this review. It was evident that employees are passionate about their careers and truly care about the role they play within the public service. IAAS would like to commend the front-line employees and management, who provide a critical function to some of the most vulnerable citizens in British Columbia.

Stuart Newton
Executive Director
Audit & Technical Services
Internal Audit & Advisory Services

Introduction

The Ministry of Housing and Social Development (MHSD) administers the British Columbia Employment and Assistance Program (BCEAP). This program provides temporary assistance, disability assistance, supplementary assistance and employment programs for British Columbians in need. The *Employment and Assistance Act* and the *Employment and Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Act* guide the program.

Approximately 1,600 MHSD employees deliver services to more than 140,000 BCEAP clients, in over 100 locations across the province. Over 68 percent of these employees are working in front-line service delivery, with 62 percent of staff having 10 years of service or more. The remaining 32 percent work in areas within Regional Services Division (RSD) providing support to the service delivery in headquarters and the regional executive offices.

The Short Term Illness and Injury Plan (STIIP) is available to all public service employees for support during times of illness. In 2006, the ministry had the highest STIIP usage rate within the province, with 67 percent more STIIP time than the rest of the BC Public Service (BCPS) or 14.3 days/full-time equivalent (FTE) compared to 8.6 days/FTE in the BCPS.

The Research, Evaluation and Statistics Branch of the ministry completed a report in November 2006 titled, "*An Analysis of STIIP Hours Used by MEIA Employees*," which summarized that half of the 67 percent disparity of STIIP hours (over the rest of the BCPS) can be explained by the characteristics of the ministry employees: age, gender and classification. However, the other half of the disparity is not explained and may be distinct to MHSD, which is discussed in section 4.0 Demographics and the Income Assistance Profession.

Internal Audit & Advisory Services (IAAS) was requested by the ministry, to undertake a review of STIIP usage in MHSD.

Purpose

The purpose of the review was to assess the effectiveness of the ministry's ASP in influencing STIIP usage within the RSD.

Objectives, Scope and Approach

The objectives of the review were:

- To assess the extent to which MHSD's employees are aware of their accountabilities and the processes related to STIIP management;
- To determine whether there is a consistent understanding and application of the ASP and that it has been fully implemented throughout RSD;
- To determine the reasons for any significant decrease in STIIP use from prior years and whether the implementation of the ASP is the reason for the decrease; and
- To determine causes for levels of STIIP which are higher than government average in front line RSD employees and determine if they are attributed to the type of work performed and the demographics of the staff.

Specifically, we reviewed the ASP, STIIP management processes, controls, and accountabilities within the RSD of the ministry. Where possible, industry best practices were researched and compared to RSD operational guidelines. The engagement involved staff interviews, a review of STIIP policies, procedures, standards, legislation, and associated documentation within the ministry and the Province of British Columbia.

Observations and Recommendations

We conclude that the ASP has been effective in reducing STIIP use, through the establishment of processes, roles and responsibilities to facilitate the proficient management of leave due to illness within RSD. Opportunities do exist to further improve the efficiency and effectiveness of managing the STIIP and are outlined in our report. A summary of recommendations within this report are attached as Appendix 1. The following highlights our findings by objective as stated in the Terms of Reference.

1.0 Accountabilities and Processes

We conclude that employees have an awareness of STIIP management accountabilities and management processes; however the dissemination of this information is ad hoc and informal.

The following observations, findings and recommendations have been developed to give the reader further insight into the issues related to STIIP accountabilities and processes.

1.1 Attendance Management Guidelines

The ministry has developed a document entitled Attendance Management Guidelines (AMG) to ensure that all employees and supervisors are aware of their accountabilities and the processes that relate to STIIP management. The AMG is a compilation of ministry specific policy and procedures which were derived from material provided by the BC Public Service Agency (PSA).

We found that the use and awareness of the AMG was not consistent throughout RSD. Some offices visited used the AMG on a regular basis, while other offices relied on their own guidelines. As a result, offices were creating their own processes to deal with STIIP management. When asked about the AMG, only 6 of the 21 supervisory teams interviewed were either aware of the document and/or had provided copies to staff. In addition, most staff interviewed were not aware that the AMG were available on the ministry's intranet.

The lack of awareness of the AMG by employees and supervisors could contribute to increased STIIP use and the possible misuse of STIIP. In addition to the potential misuse, RSD runs the risk of not following PSA policies when granting STIIP.

RSD needs to ensure that all staff are fully aware of the AMG to ensure that STIIP is being applied in a consistent manner across RSD and in accordance with PSA policy.

Recommendations:

- (1) We recommend that RSD continues to communicate the contents of the AMG to staff so they are fully aware of their roles and accountabilities in relation to STIIP and other employee absences.**
 - (2) We recommend that all new staff receive a copy of the AMG and other STIIP roles and responsibilities in their orientation package.**
-

1.2 Monitoring Staff Absences

There are a variety of ways that supervisors monitor and track STIIP, which leads to a lack of consistency for monitoring staff absences throughout RSD. The most common method requires that staff contact their supervisor directly by telephone. Once the supervisor has verified the absence, there are a myriad of ways offices record this leave transaction. Some offices use calendars, both electronic and paper based, while others utilize e-mail and spreadsheet technology.

Additionally, the process of inputting the absence into Time on Line (TOL) is inconsistent. Although staff are expected to complete this function, we found this process varied from office to office; in most cases the Supervisor, Administrative Support (SAS) enters TOL as part of the approval process.

The lack of consistency and controls through the offices and regions has resulted in misunderstandings between staff and supervisors when staff have moved to other offices. Additionally, the variety of methods in place to monitor STIIP use can result in an increased risk that supervisors are not tracking STIIP use correctly, resulting in a risk that pattern use will not be identified.

The ministry needs to verify that staff absences are fully monitored in all offices and that the procedures set in place will provide assurance that all staff absences are accounted for in a timely and accurate basis.

Recommendation:

- (3) In order to ensure consistency and efficiency within RSD, we recommend that RSD develop and implement one provincial absence monitoring process for supervisors.**
-

1.3 Addressing Chronic Illness

Occupational Health professionals suggest that the work environment can have a impact on employee health status. A number of illnesses are preventable by minimizing risk of injury at the workplace, having a participatory leadership style and promoting healthy lifestyles, both at work and on personal time.

A significant number of the medical conditions leading to work disability arise long before the absence begins. Further, these conditions often present changes in employee attendance, workplace behaviour, and conduct. Where organizations are able to identify these changes, and connect the employee with treatment supports, the number of work days lost can be reduced through fewer or shorter absences.

At this point in time, we observed that some RSD supervisors are not looking proactively for behavioural impacts of underlying illness, but instead are managing sick leave after staff have become so ill that they need time off work.

A proactive approach in detecting attendance patterns, workplace behaviour, trends, or recurrences of injury or illness of staff will result in less STIIP use by employees. Highlighting the importance of a proactive approach to personal lifestyle choices can pay dividends for the employer and ultimately the employee through a better quality of life.

Recommendation:

- (4) Provide managers and supervisors with support to identify early indicators of health change and further training on public service health supports and disability management, in an attempt to support staff proactively.**
-

1.4 Human Resource Training for Supervisors

There are a number of examples where staff have progressed from being an Employment Assistance Worker (EAW) or Client Service Worker (CSW) to the Office Supervisor position. In order for this transition to be effective, there is a need for considerable training to impart the skills necessary to prepare one for managing difficult situations related to STIIP use and other general supervisory duties.

We found that a number of office supervisors are not aware of their full roles and responsibilities in relation to those of the Manager of Field Services (MFS) and they are not comfortable in dealing with certain staffing issues. For example, some office managers rely on the MFS to review STIIP reports to identify potential pattern use, while in other offices, the supervisor would perform the review without the reliance on the MFS.

As supervisors are not always comfortable in their role of monitoring and administering the STIIP program, qualification for eligibility may not be adhered to consistently.

The ministry needs to ensure that as staff grow within the organization, they are provided with training to enable them to handle sensitive situations. An effective supervisor needs to have the tools to communicate all messages to staff.

Recommendation:

⁽⁵⁾ We recommend that front line supervisors receive additional human resource training to ensure that they have adequate skills to fulfill the duties required of them and that their roles and responsibilities related to STIIP management are clearly reflected in their Employee Performance and Development Plan (EPDP).

2.0 Application of the Attendance Support Plan

Objective two of the review was intended to determine the level of application of the ASP throughout the regions. In a teleconference with the Regional Executive Directors on January 19, 2009, we were informed that the ASP had not been implemented and communicated out to staff. Throughout our review, we determined that although the plan was not formally communicated to all staff, it is evident that each region has introduced initiatives that are included in sections of the ASP.

The following components of the ASP have been identified for further discussion.

2.1 Absenteeism Awareness

An important component of the ASP is staff awareness with respect to attendance management. It was the ministry's belief that if awareness increased, STIIP would decrease as staff were more in tune with the impact to the office when they were not available for work.

Throughout our review we found that supervisors have been utilizing different methodologies to determine when to raise a STIIP issue with an employee, and thus increase individual awareness. While some supervisors do not hesitate to discuss absenteeism on an as and when needed basis, others choose to wait until an employee exceeds the government average STIIP consumption rate before addressing the situation.

There is yet another small percentage of supervisors who do not feel comfortable having a discussion on any terms.

Although it is clear after interviewing twenty-one different supervisors that absenteeism awareness is a priority within their respective offices, the inconsistency between methods used to deal with STIIP related issues, could result in further STIIP use, increasing the costs of the program and lowering the effectiveness of the offices.

Recommendation:

(6) Develop a step by step methodology for dealing with patterned absences and provide consistent training to all supervisors in the province.

2.2 Wellness Programs

A key component of the ASP is the introduction of wellness initiatives targeted towards creating a better work environment.

Throughout our review, we found a variety of wellness activities in place. Programs offered ranged from simply informing staff of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle to some staff being provided with financial support for wellness programs. As a result of this support, staff interviewed stated they felt more energetic, happier and enjoyed coming to work more than in past years.

The introduction of wellness programs throughout RSD has had a positive impact on staff at all levels. As case intakes increase, it is imperative that RSD maintain the message of wellness and support the staff to continue to engage in healthy activities.

Recommendation:

(7) We recommend the ministry continue to invest funding in Wellness Programs to support employee's Health Goals.

2.3 Engagement

Numerous studies cite that employee engagement and staff empowerment pays dividends for organizations. We witnessed clear examples of where the ministry has made courageous attempts to involve staff and request feedback on important initiatives. There are however, examples where staff feels their voice has not been heard.

For example, with the recent simplification model change, many staff were concerned with the timing of the implementation and felt that they were not consulted on the impact to staff workloads in a traditionally busy period.

In order for any change to be successfully implemented, the ministry needs to consider the staff impacts. Without the support of staff, the ministry will continue to struggle with the launch of new initiatives. In the current fiscal environment, the ministry will need to continue to develop and implement ways to overcome challenges such as higher caseloads and budgetary restrictions, by including staff at all levels.

Recommendation:

(8) We recommend that the ministry continue the practice of seeking staff input and promote regular follow up with employees to acknowledge their contributions.

2.4 Management Presence

Since the creation of the ASP, upper management have been increasing their presence in the field offices.

Front line staff have acknowledged that the increased presence of management in the field office is appreciated and perceived as a form of recognition by senior management.

This connection with executive decision makers allows front-line employees to have a voice and allows management to appreciate the daily challenges within district offices.

Relationships between management and staff are critical to the success of the BCEAP. Without a strong bond and solid communication channels, there can be a risk to effective program delivery.

In an environment where teamwork is key to successfully delivering the BCEAP, the increased management presence in the field offices further adds to teambuilding and solidifies the connection between headquarters and the field offices.

Recommendation:

(9) We encourage senior management to make every effort to visit district offices to continue to build a strong relationship with front-line staff members.

3.0 Reduction in STIIP usage

Since the implementation of the ASP and the former Interim Attendance Plan, STIIP has been declining, from a high of 14.43 average days per FTE in fiscal 03/04 to 10.82 for fiscal 08/09. At an average staff salary of \$187.88/day this equates to a productivity gain of over \$1 million for the ministry.

We found a variety of reasons for the reduction in STIIP use in RSD as follows.

3.1 Additional Staff

The ministry has been aggressive and successful in hiring to fill vacant positions. New staff are welcomed by existing front-line staff as they bring new energy to the offices and help to mitigate workload stressors. Workload was cited as the number one contributor to high STIIP usage through our interview process. It is IAAS' belief that leaving vacancies un-filled creates strain on the residual workforce and ultimately is a contributor to higher STIIP usage.

Recommendation:

(10) We recommend the ministry makes a concerted effort to continually fill vacant positions required to perform the core function of the district offices.

3.2 New Hire Training

The current 12 week training program for new hires is module based and involves self study followed by the practical application of the lesson. Depending on the complexity of the module, the practical application can range from hands on work experience, the shadowing of a coach at the work site or virtual sessions.

It was raised on a number of occasions through the interview process, from both new hires and veteran staff, that there may be efficiencies to the organization if new employees could, in addition to the 'on the job' portions of the training program, do additional hands-on work in the office setting. By honing their skills and reinforcing their learning's, prior to moving on to the next module in the program, the workload issues raised by staff may be mitigated to some degree.

Recommendation:

(11) We recommend the ministry consider revising the current 12 week training process, allowing new staff to work on the job in between modules to gain hands on experience as part of the training process.

3.3 Recognition

Since the creation of the ASP, the ministry has increased staff recognition programs to show their support for employees.

In our review, we found that staff thoroughly embraces recognition for a job well done, although consensus shows that team awards are preferred over individual acknowledgement. Individual recognition based on low or no STIIP use was met with resistance by the majority of staff interviewed as staff felt that it was unfair to penalize people with documented illness.

Recognition does not have to involve a large financial commitment to the ministry, as quite often, a small gesture of thanks from either management or peers can make the difference to a staff member.

Recommendation:

(12) We recommend that the ministry continue to develop and invest in recognition programs, especially those that are targeted towards team accomplishments.

3.4 Teambuilding

In addition to the team-based recognition programs as recommended above, teambuilding experiences contribute to a healthy workplace and are critical to employee engagement.

Front-line staff work in a team environment that reaches far beyond individual offices. Through the use of technology, the ministry is able to share workloads across offices in the regions, balancing competing priorities. As clients now rely on multiple staff members to receive services, it is crucial for staff to function as one team.

Team functions help nurture this culture and support a new way of delivering services. We saw a number of examples of team oriented events ranging from chili cook-offs to noon hour basketball. Staff embraced these events as they create a reprieve to an often chaotic work day.

3.5 Supervision

A large number of the people we interviewed felt that a strong supervisor contributed to a cohesive work unit, created a sense of identity, and produced productive outcomes.

We saw many examples of strong supervision throughout the RSD. Supervisors that possess a clear vision for their respective offices and understand the merits of equity in the workplace and measurable outcomes play a critical role in managing the STIIP usage rates and delivering a critical program.

The ministry needs to ensure that all supervisors are provided with the necessary tools and training to successfully manage their offices.

Recommendation:

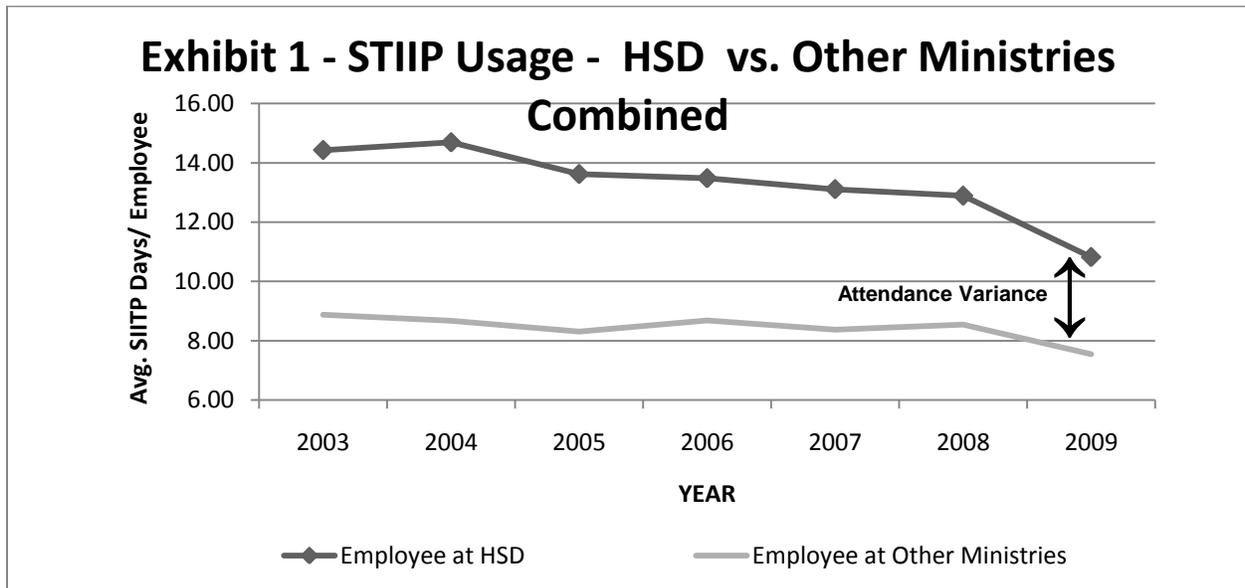
(13) Ensure that all supervisors are provided with appropriate training designed to address current supervisory challenges and that a succession planning approach is implemented for future leaders within the district offices.

4.0 Demographics and the Income Assistance Profession

Although STIIP use within HSD has been on the steady decline since 2003, (see exhibit 1) sick leave within the ministry is still above the government average, creating a significant attendance variance.

IAAS was asked to research whether the type of work performed and the demographics of the staff performing the work are significant contributors to this difference.

In order to determine the validity of this statement, IAAS considered three areas for further review. These included the type of work performed and the contributions that age and gender bring to this complex issue.



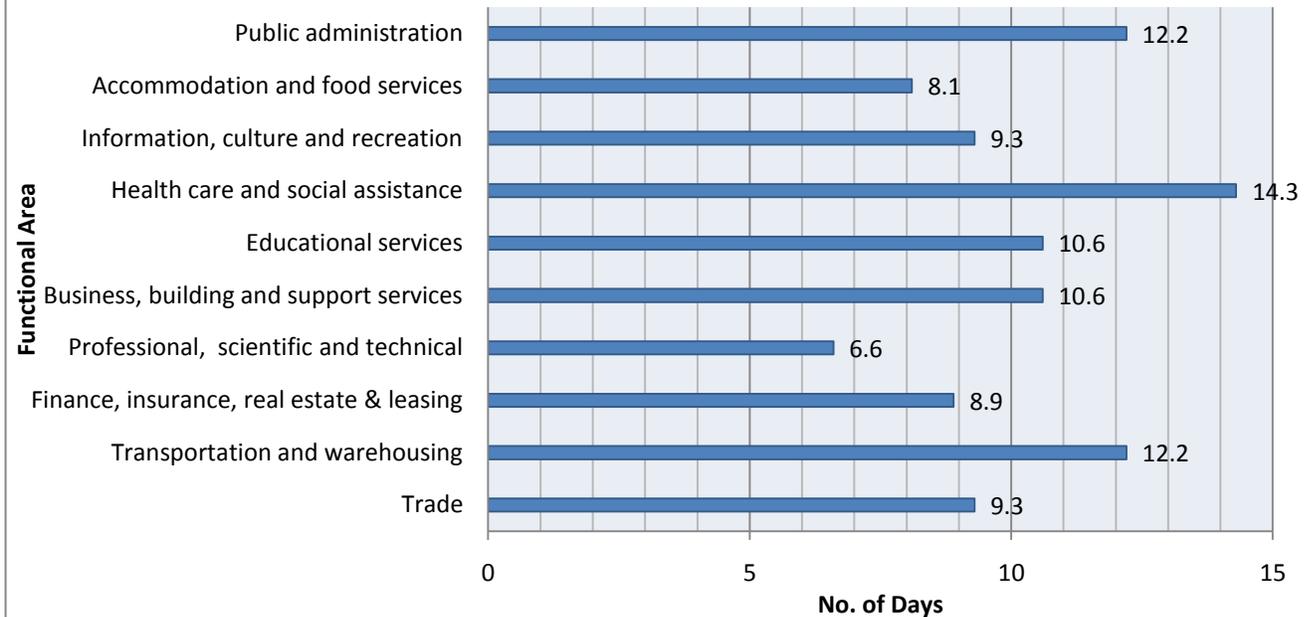
Source: BC Public Service Agency

4.1 Type of Work

Based on analysis of government produced statistical analysis, (both Provincial and Federal) professions that are in the social and health sectors tend to have higher sick leave than other occupations (see exhibit 2). It has been determined that RSD's employee profiles fit into this category for statistical purposes.

This higher level of leave may be due to the fact that these types of jobs are in constant contact with the public and being subjected to air-borne microorganisms. There also tends to be more emotional strain in the majority of these professions, leading to higher than average stress levels which can contribute to increased illness and ultimately higher STIIP use.

Exhibit 2 - Absence Rates for Full-time employees by Industry Days lost per worker in year 2007

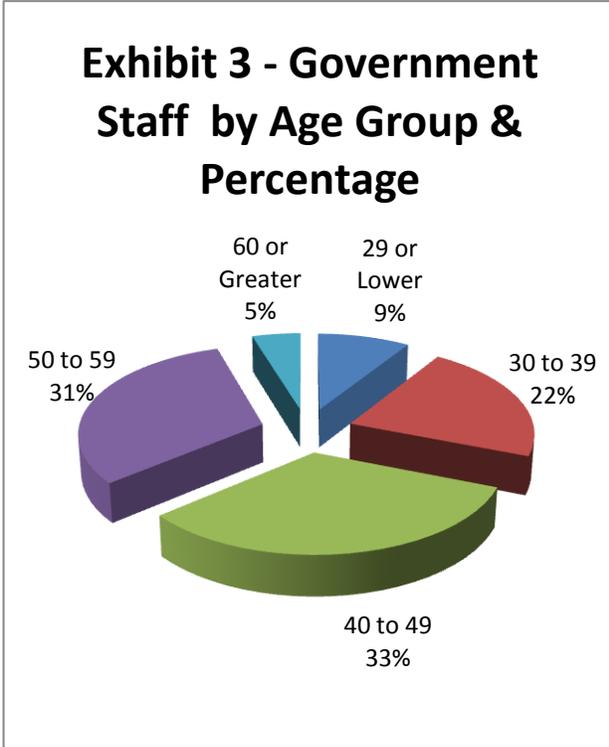


Source: Statistics Canada

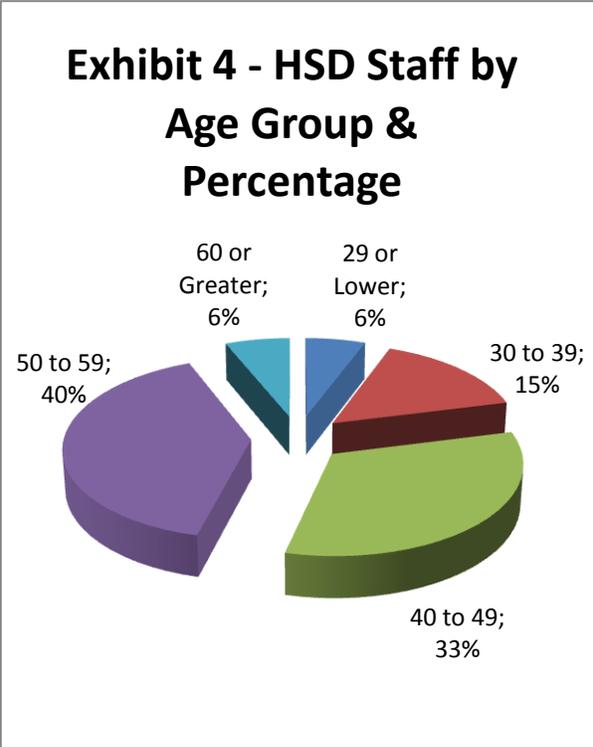
4.2 Age Analysis

It has been determined that the age of the employee can be a factor as well. The average age of RSD staff at 47 years is higher than the government average of 45 years. In addition, the ministry has a greater proportion of staff over 50 years of age, with 46% of the staff falling into this category as compared to the government average at 36% (refer to exhibits 3 and 4).

This may be a contributor as statistics often show that older staff utilize more sick leave benefits to that of younger staff members. It is also generally supported through research that older staff members are more resistant to technological advances in society and the significant change that automation can create, potentially leading to further STIIP impacts.



Source: BC Public Service Agency

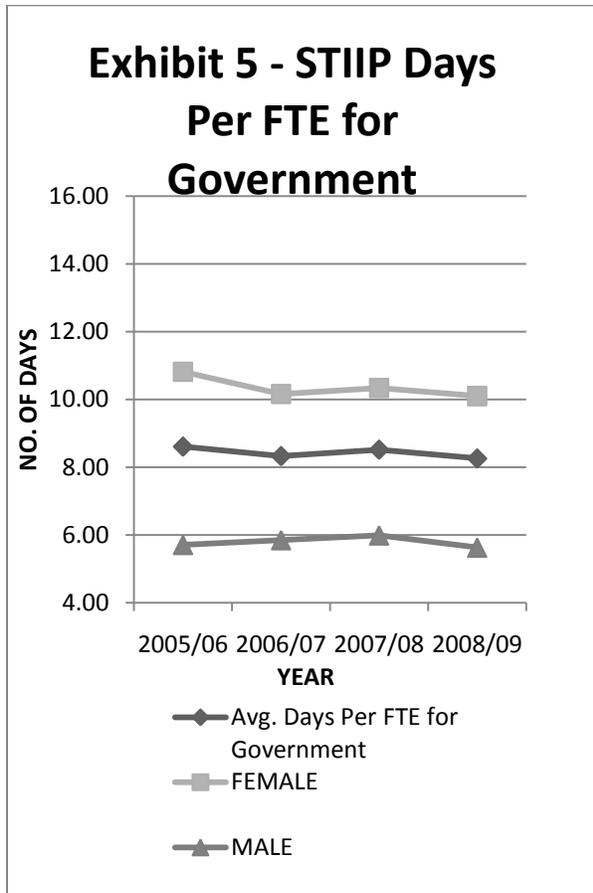


Source: BC Public Service Agency

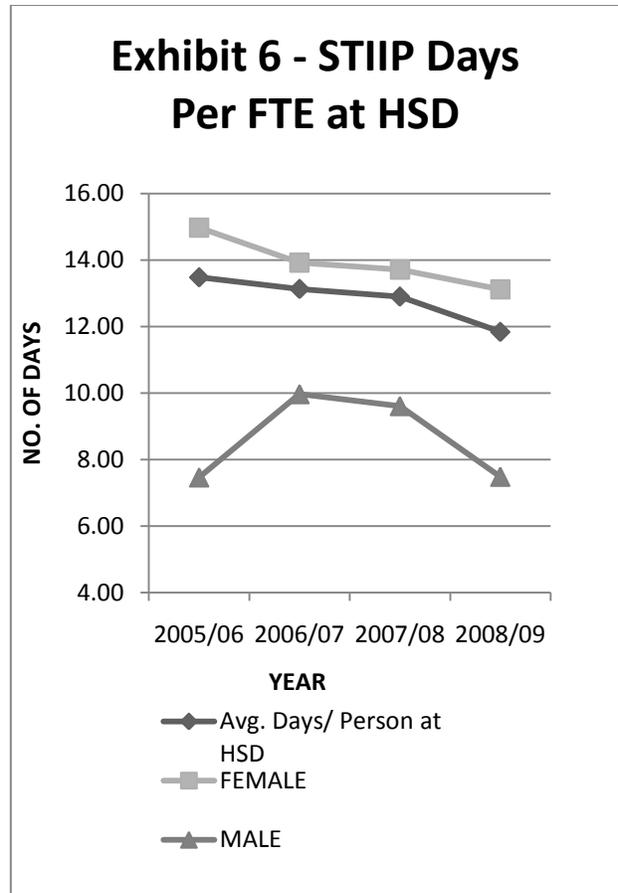
4.3 Gender

Gender balance may also be a factor in describing the differences in STIIP usage. Statistics show that 84% of the staff employed within RSD are female as compared to the government average of 59%. It is evident through many studies and data analysis that women, on average, take more sick leave as compared to their male counterparts (see exhibits 5 and 6 shown below).

There may be valid reasons for this difference. In our society, women are often tasked to play a more nurturing role within the family unit, and can be expected to be the main care giver for not only their children, but their parents as well. In some cases they may even be faced with taking care of grandchildren to a large degree.



Source: BC Public Service Agency



Source: BC Public Service Agency

Conclusion:

(14) It is our opinion that the type of work and demographics of ministry staff is a contributor to higher than government average STIIP usage in MHSD.

5.0 Other Considerations

5.1 Workload

The most common responses proposed by staff for the higher than average STIIP usage rates was the increasingly complex nature of the work, the workload itself and a constantly changing work environment. The consensus of staff is that STIIP may increase unless progress is made to rectify these issues.

5.2 Leave Schedules

At the time of our review, we were advised by many regional staff that offices were staffed to their full compliment. Despite this fact, with the impact of staff vacations (given the tenure of the majority of the staff), modified work week, special leave and other absences, many offices routinely operate at a less than adequate staffing level. This fact, combined with increasing intakes due to the current economic downturn, will impact staff stress levels.

Recommendation:

(15) The ministry may wish to evaluate the overall impact of leave management on an office by office basis with a goal to manage absences more effectively, ensuring that offices are operating with enough staff to support daily workloads.

5.3 Change Management

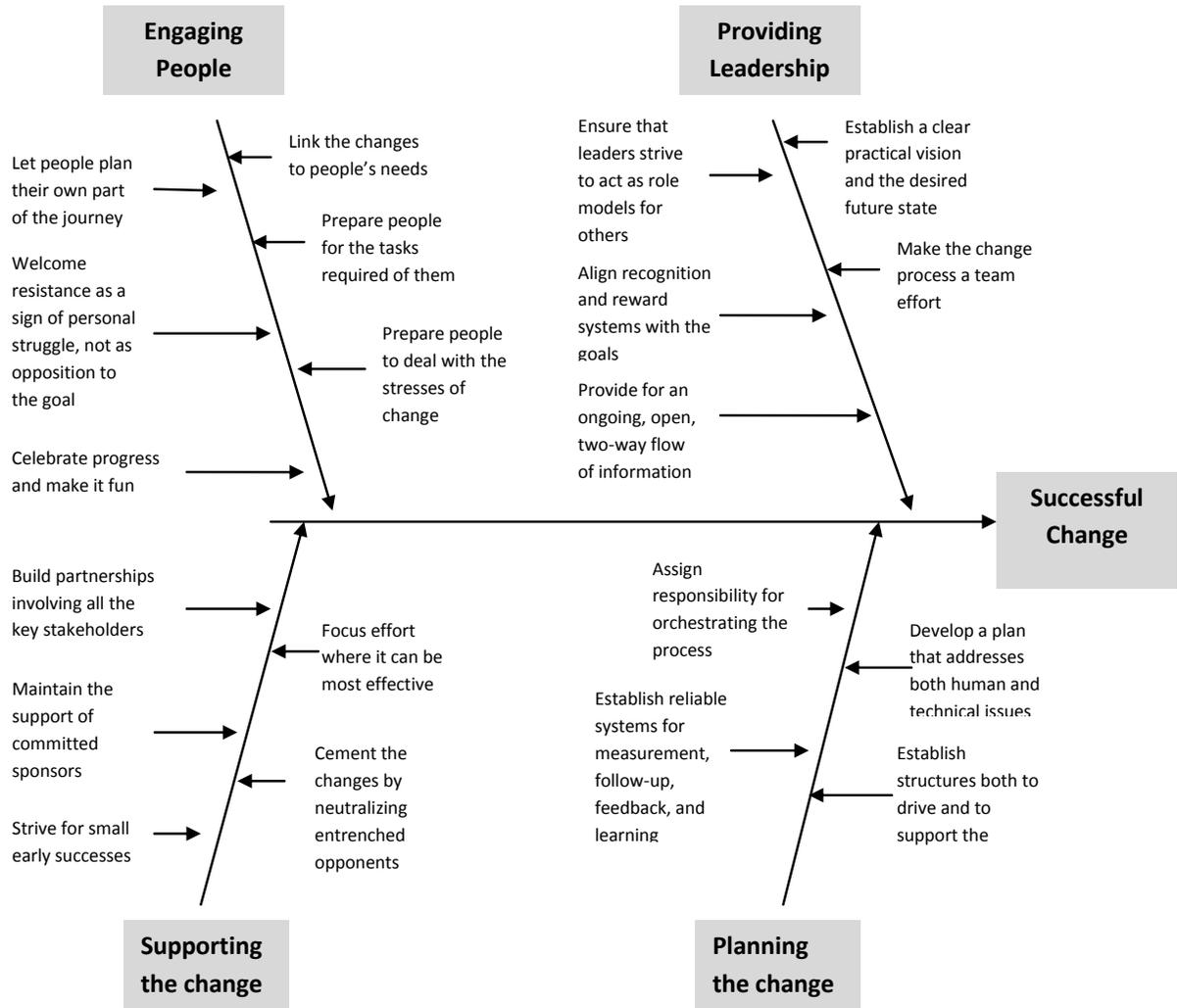
Staff relayed frustration with changes to policies and procedures as they relate to their day to day work, such as the Case Less work model and Simplification. Many staff are experiencing change fatigue, even though they embrace the concept of ministry efficiencies for the delivery of the program.

Given these statements, it is suggested that the RSD be sensitive to introducing change initiatives. A key component of change is the management of the human aspects of change. Staff input, consideration to timelines and training contribute to staff buy-in and successful implementation.

Exhibit 7 shows the guiding principles of change¹. By following these guidelines, future changes may garner a higher degree of success.

¹ The Society of Management Accountants of Canada, "Managing the Human Aspects of Organizational Change"

Exhibit 7 – Guiding Principles for Managing Organizational Change



Source: Managing the Human Aspects of Organizational Change, The Society of Management Accountants of Canada

Recommendation:

(16) Revised change management practices should be employed to assist when new initiatives are contemplated for RSD.

Appendix 1 – Ministry of Housing and Social Development Action Plan

| Priority | Rec. # | Recommendations | Management Comments to be Included in Report (Action Planned or Taken) | Assigned To | Target Date |
|---|--------|---|--|--|-------------------------------|
| 1.0 Accountabilities and Processes | | | | | |
| 1.1 Attendance Management Guidelines | | | | | |
| | 1. | We recommend that RSD continues to communicate the contents of the AMG to staff so they are fully aware of their roles and accountabilities in relation to STIIP and other employee absences. | <p>Action Planned:</p> <p>Promote Attendance Management Guidelines (AMG) to all staff through training and communication. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Human Resources Planning (SHRP) SHRPies' Points Newsletter Deputy Minister (DM) Newsletter Regional Services Division (RSD) Communication | EWD DM RSD | Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing |
| | 2. | We recommend that all new staff receive a copy of the AMG and other STIIP roles and responsibilities in their orientation package. | <p>Action Taken:</p> <p>A draft orientation website (referring to AMG) is being developed and will be available to all staff for review. Due to WFA, during 2009/10 there has been a dramatic decline in the number of new hires to MHSD. As this increases into 2011 the new employee orientation website will be revisited.</p> <p>Actions Planned:</p> <p>As follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote the orientation website, To provide a hard copy of the AMG to all new staff, Utilize the EAW coaches to promote/clarify AMG, and Discuss AMG roles and responsibilities during employee's 1st EPDP within each branch/division. | EWD - In Progress Regional Organization al Health & Development Managers (OHDM) | Spring 11 Spring 11 |

| Priority | Rec. # | Recommendations | Management Comments to be Included in Report (Action Planned or Taken) | Assigned To | Target Date |
|--|--------|--|---|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1.2 Monitoring Staff Absences | | | | | |
| | 3. | In order to ensure consistency and efficiency within RSD, we recommend that RSD develop and implement one provincial absence monitoring process for supervisors. | Action Planned: Create a “checklist” to standardize processes for addressing and monitoring absences. | EWD | In progress |
| 1.3 Addressing Chronic Illness | | | | | |
| | 4. | Provide managers and supervisors with support to identify early indicators of health change and further training on public service health supports and disability management, in an attempt to support staff proactively. | Action Taken: EWD intranet website includes a list of PSA HR Consultants and Disability Case Managers for staff to access. Action Planned: EWD to research the availability of a corporate tool that assists Supervisors in identifying “early indicators” of health change and public service health supports | Complete EWD& PSA | Complete In progress |
| 1.4 Human Resource Training for Supervisors | | | | | |
| | 5. | We recommend that front line supervisors receive additional human resource training to ensure that they have adequate skills to fulfill the duties required of them and that their roles and responsibilities related to STIIP management are clearly reflected in their EPDP. | Action Taken: Included in Supervisor’s EPDPs are STIIP management expectations and the yearly Supervisor EPDP review includes the outcome of STIIP performance within their office. Action Planned: Utilizing PSA support to provide yearly “refresher” training to Supervisors. | Complete OHDM | Complete Ongoing |

| Priority | Rec. # | Recommendations | Management Comments to be Included in Report (Action Planned or Taken) | Assigned To | Target Date |
|---|--------|--|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2.0 Application of the Attendance Support Plan | | | | | |
| 2.1 Absenteeism Awareness | | | | | |
| | 6. | Develop a step by step methodology for dealing with patterned absences and provide consistent training to all supervisors in the province. | <p>Actions Planned:</p> <p>As follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilizing PSA support to provide yearly “refresher” training to Supervisors Create a “checklist” to standardize processes for addressing and monitoring absences. Promote PSA website on Disability Case Management | OHDM EWD OHDM | Ongoing In progress Ongoing |
| 2.2 Wellness Programs | | | | | |
| | 7. | We recommend the ministry continue to invest funding in Wellness Programs to support employee’s Health Goals. | <p>Action Taken:</p> <p>The ministry continues to incorporate wellness into ministry culture through a variety of ways. With the current fiscal climate, we have had to reduce funding levels to support this; however, the Ministry Wellness Action Committee continues to actively promote wellness.</p> | Complete | Complete |
| 2.3 Engagement | | | | | |
| | 8. | We recommend that the ministry continue the practice of seeking staff input and promote regular follow up with employees to acknowledge their contributions. | <p>Action Taken:</p> <p>RSD has created a new committee structure that allows for “front line” consultation on various initiatives. In addition, the “pick mine” process allows for more inclusiveness of staff. Part of the new committee structure includes a standing HR committee that deals with HR issues including STIIP.</p> <p>The RSD Assistant Deputy Minister will continue dialogue with front line staff through her “ADM Chat Line” while Regions continue to focus on recognition.</p> | Complete RSD ADM & Regions | Complete Ongoing |

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| 2.4 Management Presence | | | | | |
| | 9. | We encourage senior management to make every effort to visit district offices to continue to build a strong relationship with front-line staff members. | <p>Action Taken:</p> <p>Regional senior management conducts tours to offices and conduct regular meetings with front line staff. Directors ensure that they attend and build relationships with offices within their region. Where possible, the DM, ADM will also attend a region and visit field offices and take time to talk directly to front line workers. The Executives in Training program has also provided front line staff with the opportunity to educate senior executives within the ministry on the specific services provided. Under the “Response to Economic Downturn” (RED) the ministry increased the support of management and HQ within an office to help provide services to clients during high volume and low staffing times (e.g. Cheque Issue Line-up Triage). While travel budgets have been reduced this fiscal, senior management is committed to finding innovative ways to maintaining their efforts to build strong relationships with front-line staff.</p> | Complete | Ongoing |
| 3.0 Reduction in STIIP usage | | | | | |
| 3.1 Additional Staff | | | | | |
| | 10. | We recommend the ministry makes a concerted effort to continually fill vacant positions required to perform the core function of the district offices. | <p>Action Taken:</p> <p>The ministry monitors all vacancies to ensure they continue to be filled. Communication has been sent to all ministry staff about the focus on ensuring we maintain front line staff – including references to this in the ministry HR plan, also available to all staff. During the current budget reduction strategy, front line staff were exempt from hiring restrictions. Regions are monitored to ensure that they are filling front line vacancies in a timely manner.</p> | Complete | Complete |

| Priority | Rec. # | Recommendations | Management Comments to be Included in Report (Action Planned or Taken) | Assigned To | Target Date |
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| 3.2 New Hire Training | | | | | |
| | 11. | We recommend the ministry consider revising the current 12 week training process, allowing new staff to work on the job in between modules to gain hands on experience as part of the training process. | <p>Action Taken:</p> <p>The Ministry Learning Centre continues ongoing evaluation of the EAW core training. Based on the ongoing evaluations the training is revised.</p> <p>In addition, there is a pilot underway for virtual EAW training and coaching which provides more work “on the job” than the initial training.</p> | <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> | <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> |
| 3.3 Recognition | | | | | |
| | 12. | We recommend that the ministry continue to develop and invest in recognition programs, especially those that are targeted towards team accomplishments. | <p>Action Taken:</p> <p>In meeting the issues around budget reductions, we have explored various cost effective and innovative ideas to provide informal and formal recognition (e.g. “You Rock”, “Act of One”, Treasure Chest, etc). Teams continue to be recognized for accomplishments in a variety of ways; DM newsletter, website (e.g. Public Service Week team pictures/events), Premier’s Award, etc.</p> | Complete | Complete |
| 3.5 Supervision | | | | | |
| | 13. | Ensure that all supervisors are provided with appropriate training designed to address current supervisory challenges and that a succession planning approach is implemented for future leaders within the district offices. | <p>Action Taken:</p> <p>As per the ministry’s HR Plan, we are focusing on building our Supervisory capacity through ongoing state of the art recruitment and development initiatives. We look forward to the Supervisory Training program that PSA is developing. Also, our succession planning guidelines are in development.</p> <p>Action Planned:</p> <p>Provide cost effective “just-in-time” training based on themes from the Supervisor’s 2009 Review Board results.</p> | <p>Complete</p> <p>Learning Services</p> | <p>Complete</p> <p>Complete</p> |

| Priority | Rec. # | Recommendations | Management Comments to be Included in Report (Action Planned or Taken) | Assigned To | Target Date |
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| 5.0 Other Considerations | | | | | |
| 5.2 Leave Schedules | | | | | |
| | 15. | The ministry may wish to evaluate the overall impact of leave management on an office by office basis with a goal to manage absences more effectively, ensuring that offices are operating with enough staff to support daily workloads. | <p>Action Taken:</p> <p>We have started reviewing work processes (e.g. Simplification Initiative, RED) and adjusted them (in consultation with staff) which includes line-up management, movement of work to other areas (virtual offices), efficiencies found with centralization, tools/information/cheat sheets for staff, etc.</p> <p>In addition, RSD is considering a contingency plan to address current increasing caseloads, which includes a request to reduce office hours to allow staff time to do their administrative work.</p> | Complete | Complete |
| 5.3 Change Management | | | | | |
| | 16. | Revised change management practices should be employed to assist when new initiatives are contemplated for RSD. | <p>Action Taken:</p> <p>RSD has developed a “field impact” calendar that outlines all initiatives in progress and planned. This calendar is referenced prior to any new initiatives being implemented. The document is reviewed by the DM & Executive to consider staff overload. We will continue to use this tool and adjust it to ensure that we can manage the change to the front line workers. In addition, the new committee structure within RSD has established a standing committee on change management.</p> | Complete | Complete |
| | | <p>General Ministry Comments:</p> <p>The ministry continues to experience success with STIIP management by supporting staff through a cultural shift from focusing on managing absences to supporting attendance. The attendance culture focuses on wellness, recognition, consultation of staff in change initiatives, motivating staff to be innovative, increased awareness of changes, and training.</p> | | | |