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ThirdSector

Recession Bites

Charity Pulse 2010
Sector-wide Staff
Survey Report

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Introduction

Charity Pulse is an annual voluntary sector-wide staff satisfaction survey conducted by Birdsong Charity Consulting and *Third Sector* magazine. This year's survey ran during March and April 2010. This is the fourth year that we have run the survey.

Charity Pulse is a unique approach to measuring staff satisfaction in the sector, because it enables individuals working for any charity to take part. The aim of the research is to build up a picture of working life in charities and help to raise the standard of people management in the sector.

The survey asks charity workers 44 questions about working life at their charity including:

- the effectiveness of their management
- the quality of internal communications in their organisation
- their views on development, reward and loyalty
- their work/life balance

It also provides the opportunity for charities to receive cost-effective benchmarked staff satisfaction data, by promoting the survey to their staff.

We had an excellent response this year, with 672 charity people taking part, representing over 160 different charities.

This year our sector-wide survey report focuses on the deepening impact of the recession on voluntary sector staff satisfaction.

The headlines

When we were preparing the *Charity Pulse* sector-wide survey report this time last year, the recession was big news. What we found, however, was that there had been relatively little impact on voluntary sector staff satisfaction at that time. Our findings supported the view that the sector was lagging behind other areas of the economy when it came to feeling the effects of the downturn.

In 2010 the sector has well and truly caught up.

- **Managers have less time for their team members**, meaning that staff feel less supported and less valued.
- **Charity workers are less engaged with their organisations**. They have less pride in their charity and are less likely to recommend them as an employer.
- **Morale is lower**. Just 39% of respondents told us that morale in their organisation was high, compared to 50% in 2008.
- **Charity staff are dealing with the aftermath of redundancies**. 60% of the survey respondents reported that there have been redundancies in their charity during the last 12 months. The 'least safe' organisations in this respect were disability charities. The safest were those in the environment sector and in voluntary sector umbrella bodies.
- **Managers are continuing to feel more pressure than non-managers** - but also to get more satisfaction from their work than other staff.
- **More staff are planning to leave their charity in the next year**. Managers who are thinking about leaving their charity are much more likely to cite workload and stress as contributory factors than non-managers. For non-managers, salary and career development are more important drivers when considering a move.
- **Worryingly incidents of bullying have increased this year**. 16% of respondents tell us that they have experienced bullying over the past 12 months, compared to 12% in 2008. As we have found in previous years, senior managers are the staff group most likely to be on the receiving end of this unacceptable behaviour.

Overall the survey reveals a drop in charity staff satisfaction. Responses to 58% of the questions have declined since 2009. 42% are on a par with last year. No areas have improved.

Where is recession biting hardest?

Job satisfaction in the voluntary sector is down. Staff have less pride in their organisations and are less likely to recommend their charity as an employer.

People working in charities feel less appreciated than before the recession began, with just 61% feeling that their views are listened to and valued - compared to 71% two years ago. Managers appear to have less time for their staff. Only 54% of all survey respondents tell us that they get the support they need to do their job well, compared to 64% in 2008.

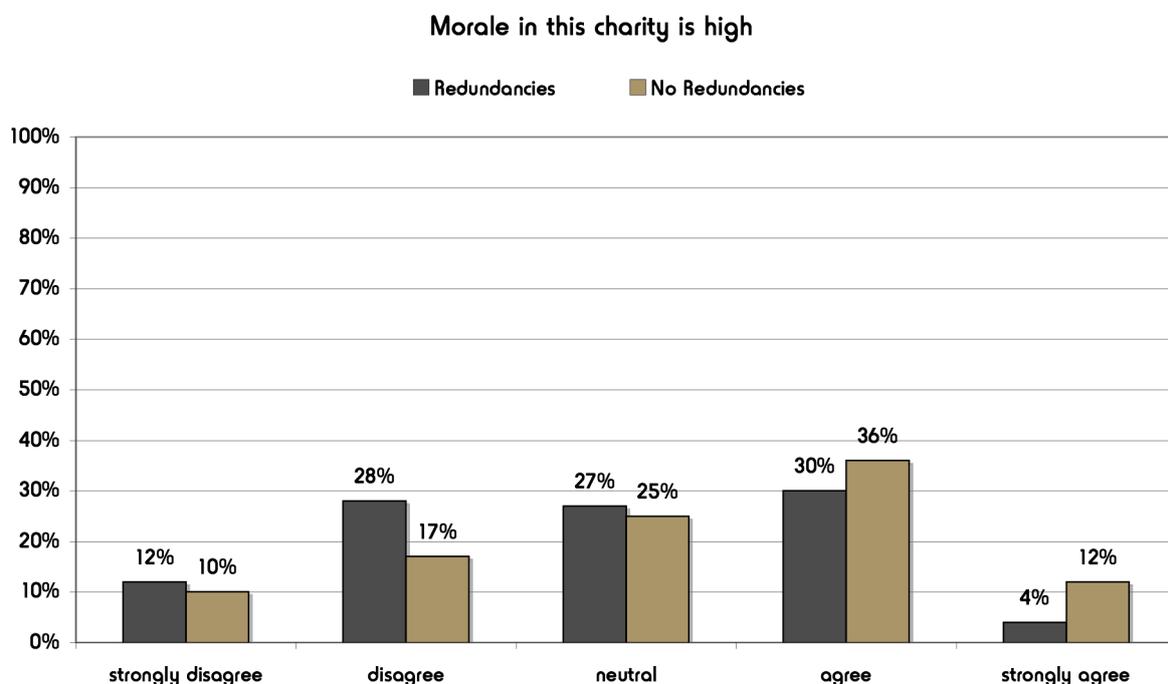
In 2009 we saw a drop in staff satisfaction with their training and development, reflecting the fact that charity training budgets were being cut. This year satisfaction in this area has fallen even further. The drop is particularly acute among junior staff - only 40% of non-managers feel that their skills are now being used to the full compared with 51% in 2007.

Impact of redundancies

60% of respondents to the *Charity Pulse 2010* survey reported that there have been redundancies in their charity during the last 12 months. The 'least safe' jobs in this respect were disability charities. The safest were those in the environment sector and in voluntary sector umbrella bodies.

London based charities were worst hit - 65% of survey respondents working in the capital had experienced redundancies compared to 51% of charity workers based around the UK.

In charities where there have been redundancies, the biggest impacts on staff satisfaction have, not surprisingly, been in the areas of morale and job security.



The graph shows the huge impact that staff redundancies are having on the morale of the 'restructure survivors'. In charities where there have been redundancies, 34% of staff believe that morale in their organisation is high, compared with 48% of those working in other charities.

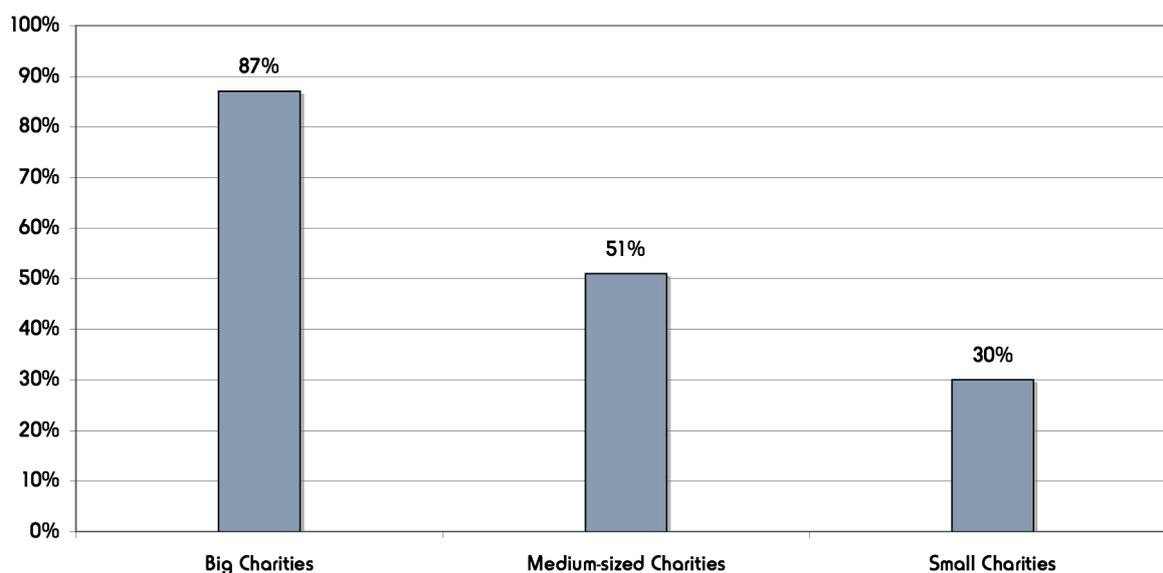
In organisations where there have been redundancies, 42% of the remaining staff are concerned about their job security, compared to 33% in other charities.

Is small beautiful?

In January 2010, *Third Sector* and *nfp Synergy's: State of the Sector Survey* found that the larger the charity, the more likely they are to have made staff redundant. This survey supports those findings.

87% of individuals working for big charities had experienced redundancies at their charity in the last year, compared to 51% of those working in medium-sized charities and just 30% of those working in small charities.¹

Proportion of staff who have experienced redundancies at their charity in the last year



Despite the fact that small charity workers have the safest jobs at the moment, they feel the most vulnerable to redundancy. 42% of them are concerned about their job security, compared to 38% of staff working in medium-sized charities and 36% working in the big charities.

As we have found in previous years' surveys, people working in medium-sized charities have the highest morale of all charity staff. This might have something to do with the fact that they tell us that they receive the most support, get the most regular praise and think they have the best leaders. Medium-sized charity workers also believe that they have the best opportunities for personal development. But this doesn't mean that they have a soft option. In fact they also work the longest hours of all sector workers.

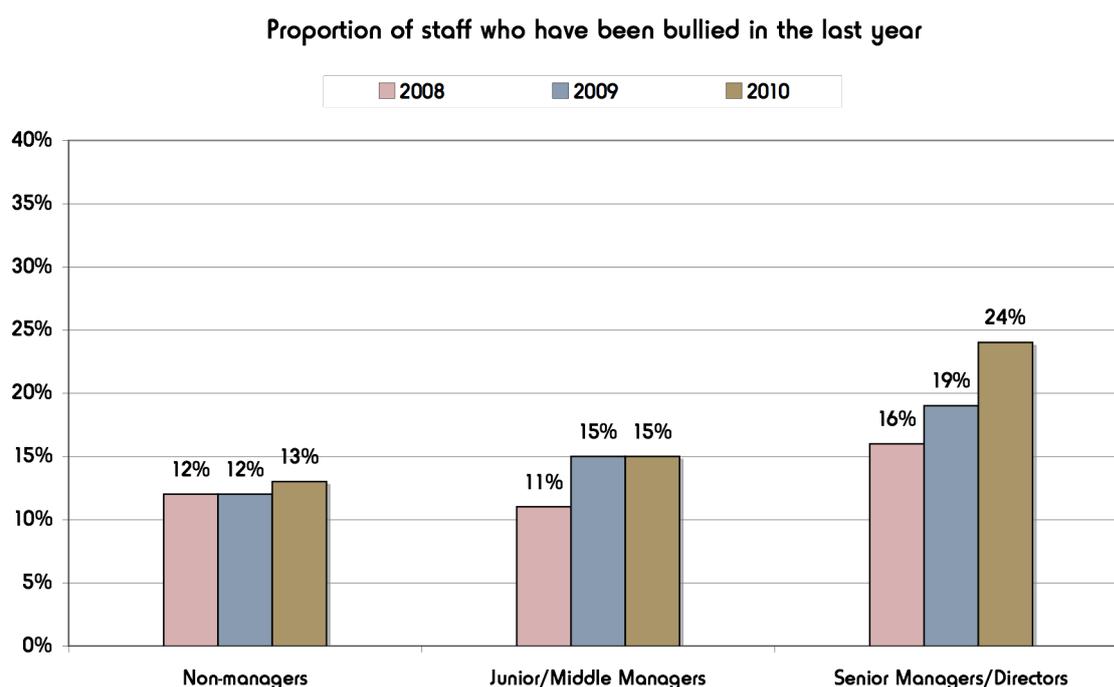
Note 1. In the *Charity Pulse* survey a charity is considered small if it has up to 50 staff, medium-sized if it has 51 - 200 and big if it employs more than 201 people.

Incidence of bullying

Whatever their size, UK voluntary sector organisations can harbour individuals who show inappropriate behaviours. The worst such behaviour is bullying and, sadly, this year's survey has found that the number of people affected by bullying in charities has increased.

16% of all respondents tell us that they have experienced bullying over the past 12 months. This compares with a figure of 12% in 2008.¹

Incidence of bullying among non-managers has remained largely unchanged at 13% - compared to 12% in 2008 and 2009. It is with managers, and senior managers in particular, that there has been a significant increase. An astonishing 24% of senior managers and directors told us that they had experienced bullying in the last year.



Statistics from the UK National Workplace Bullying Advice Line show that the number of complaints about bullying from the voluntary sector has shown the highest rate of increase of all sectors over the past decade.

Analysis of the percentage of calls to their advice line from different sectors suggests that workplace bullying is most prevalent in the following five sectors:

- Education - 20%
- Health - 12%
- Social services - 10%
- Charities - 6 - 8%
- Civil Service - 5%

Only 30% of enquiries were from the private sector.

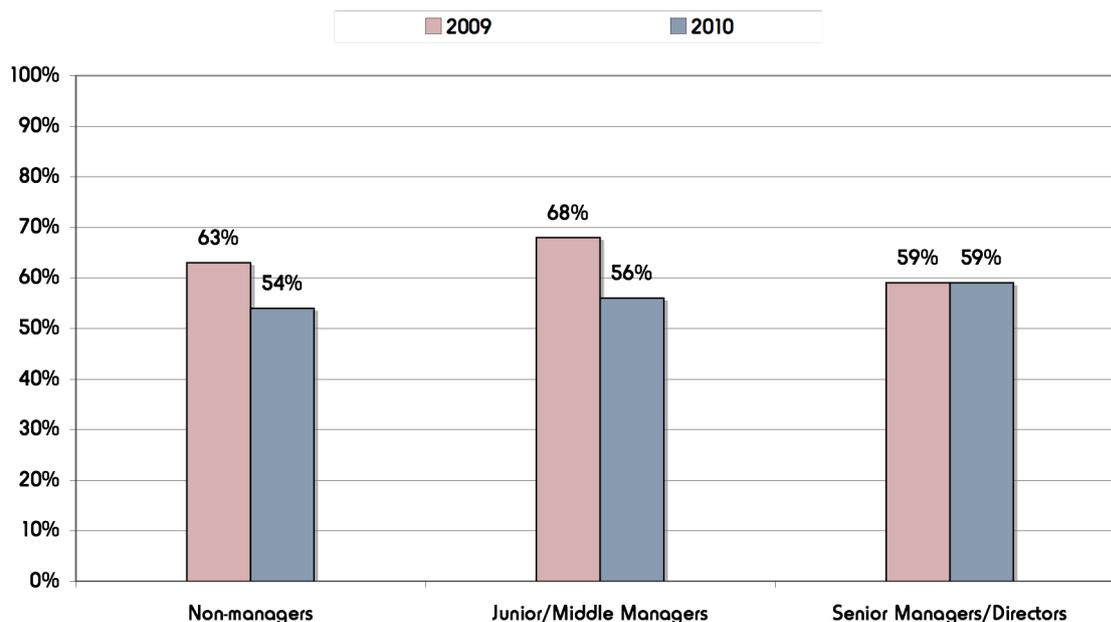
Note 2. Birdsong's June 2008 report: *The impact of bullying in the voluntary sector* explores this subject in more detail.

Time for pastures new?

19% of respondents tell us that they are planning to leave their charity this year, with a further 25% uncommitted. That means that only just over half - 56% - are planning to still be working for their current employer in 12 months time. This compares with last year's figure of 64%.

There are, however, variances between the intentions of different staff groups. For example, there has been no change in the intentions of charity senior managers over the past 12 months, but significant drops in the intentions of other staff.

Proportion of staff planning to be working for their charity in a year's time



The average length of tenure of a charity manager in 2010 is 5.2 years, compared to 3.1 years for non-managers.

Average lengths of tenure have increased over the past two years, with staff taking a more cautious approach to the job market. But this now looks likely to change - especially among more junior staff.

Fundraisers continue to be the most mobile staff group - especially those based in London. In the capital the average length of tenure for a fundraiser is currently 3.0 years - up from 2.3 years in 2008.

Managers who are thinking about leaving their charity are much more likely to cite workload and stress as contributory factors than non-managers. For non-managers, salary and career development are more important drivers when considering a move.

Reasons not to be cheerful

Comparing the survey responses of those who are looking to leave their organisation in the next 12 months with those who intend to stay put, provides some useful pointers on the causes of charity staff dissatisfaction.

The survey questions in the table below are listed in order of greatest variance in opinion between the two groups of staff - and a very clear pattern emerges. The top four questions relate to skills and career development and the next six to people management and leadership.

These ten areas are also the aspects of working life where staff have reported some of the biggest decreases in satisfaction over the past 12 months.

The ten questions with the biggest differences in opinion between stayers and leavers

Survey question	Staff who intend to STAY at their charity	Staff who intend to LEAVE their charity
My skills are used to the full in my present job	66% Agree	20% Agree
I feel supported in developing my career	61% Agree	18% Agree
There are good opportunities for personal development at this charity	61% Agree	20% Agree
I receive sufficient training / development to enable me to do my job well	71% Agree	31% Agree
I feel appreciated	83% Agree	43% Agree
I receive useful feedback on how I am performing	70% Agree	45% Agree
In the last week I have received praise for my work	67% Agree	35% Agree
My views are listened to and valued	79% Agree	49% Agree
The senior management team is effective	75% Agree	46% Agree
In the last year I have not been bullied at work	7% Disagree	33% Disagree

Top Ten Tips for charity leaders in a recession

With recession now biting in the voluntary sector - we conclude this report with a reminder of our Top Ten Tips to help charity leaders support and motivate their staff through difficult times:

- 1. Be clear about direction. Staff are looking to you**
- 2. Be open about the charity's situation. What will change and what won't?**
- 3. Don't shut yourself away. Be visible and available**
- 4. You are the message: your attitude and behaviour. What does yours say?**
- 5. Involve staff in solutions. How they can contribute?**
- 6. Resist the tendency to tighten controls. It reduces staff creativity when you need it most**
- 7. If training budgets are tight, get creative about developing staff in other ways**
- 8. Manage stress - yours and others. Be alert to the signs**
- 9. Develop staff resilience. Remind everyone what you've achieved together**
- 10. Show that you care!**

Birdsong Charity Consulting

People work best when they feel good about themselves - when they are enjoying their work, feeling motivated and appreciated. They don't work best when they feel stressed, over-worked and over-looked.

Healthy people create healthy organisations and Birdsong exists to help charities work more effectively with their people. We help charities to become thriving, vibrant organisations where people love to work.

To find out more about Birdsong's work or to download previous *Charity Pulse* survey reports visit: **www.bird-song.co.uk**

Charity Pulse 2011

Look out for *Charity Pulse 2011*!

The next survey will open in March 2011 in *Third Sector* magazine and the more charity people who take part, the more interesting the results will be.

If you would like to find out more about running a benchmarked *Charity Pulse* staff satisfaction survey for your charity, visit **www.bird-song.co.uk** or contact Frances Hurst at **frances@bird-song.co.uk**.