

**STAFF CONSULTATION WORKING GROUP**

**ANNUAL REPORT TO SHW AS SAT 2021-2022**

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**Athena Swan at 10 years: Staff views on the Athena Swan initiative within**

**the School of Health and Wellbeing and priorities for the next 5-10 years**

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# Introduction

In keeping with the School of Health and Wellbeing’s Self-Assessment Team Action Plan, the Staff Consultation Working Group design and conduct a staff consultation annually with School of Health and Wellbeing (SHW) staff. The annual consultation seeks to learn from staff members’ experiences and perceptions and identify further actions to support staff and promote a positive and inclusive working environment.

Following ten years of Athena Swan activities in SHW, the 2022 staff consultation sought to understand staff members’ views of the Athena Swan initiative, including their experiences of Athena Swan activities within SHW and any perceived impact of Athena Swan activities within the workplace. The consultation also sought staff views on the future priorities for Athena Swan within SHW and to provide recommendations to guide future Athena Swan activities.

The staff consultation is typically designed and executed as a small number of 1:1 interviews with staff volunteers. As the 2022 consultation sought to capture staff views at the 10 year milestone for Athena Swan activities in SHW, a decision was taken to use an online survey to increase the reach of the consultation and learn from a more extensive set of staff views. This report summarises the responses to the consultation survey and identifies a number of themes for the Staff Consultation Working Group and Self-Assessment Team to consider further.

# Methods

Over a two-week period in June 2022 an online survey hosted on ‘Glasgow Online Surveys’ was distributed via staff email lists and other SHW networks to gather the views of SHW staff on the Athena Swan initiative in SHW. The staff consultation sought to include the views of staff across all job families, grades and levels of experience within SHW, irrespective of their familiarity and experience of engaging with Athena Swan initiatives.

The survey was anonymous, information was given about its aims and purpose (appendix 1), and staff were provided with a privacy notice (see appendix 2) describing how their provided information will be used. The consultation questions included in the survey were selected by the Athena Swan Staff Consultation Working Group with additional suggestions provided by SHW Athena Swan Champions.

The consultation comprised nine questions asking staff for their views about different aspects of Athena Swan within SHW. For these nine questions open-text responses allowed staff to respond in their own words and there was no limit on the length of response staff could provide. Socio-demographic and role information was also sought using multiple choice question formats. All question responses were optional, and staff could choose not to answer any or all of the questions. The nine open-text questions about different aspects of the Athena Swan initiative in SHW are presented below and a full list of survey questions can be seen in appendix 3.

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| **2022 Staff Consultation Questions**   1. In your own words, what is Athena Swan and what is its role? 2. What do you see as the positive aspects of Athena Swan within IHW[[1]](#footnote-1)? 3. What do you see as the negative aspects of Athena Swan within IHW? 4. Has Athena Swan impacted your own or your colleagues’ experience of working in IHW? If so, how? 5. Are there any groups or communities that have been well represented in Athena Swan activities in IHW? 6. Are there any groups or communities that have not been well represented in Athena Swan activities in IHW? 7. Thinking about day to day working life, what are experiences that everyone in IHW should have (for example, in the way people are treated or how they feel at work)? 8. Thinking about day to day working life, what are experiences that no-one in IHW should have (for example, in the way people are treated or how they feel at work)? 9. What do you think should be the top priority for Athena Swan activity within IHW over the next five years? |

## Analysis

At conclusion of the consultation a researcher screened survey responses to ensure no identifiable information was included within free-text responses provided by staff. Responses to the open text questions were read by the researcher and chair of the Staff Consultation working group. The researcher identified and organised staff views into common themes. Differences in the identified themes, based on staff socio-demographic and role information, were explored.

# Findings

Findings based on staff responses to the nine key consultation questions are presented separately in the order in which the questions were presented in the survey. The main themes and subthemes identified are briefly described with brief illustrative quotes presented. Some presented quotes have been edited to improve comprehension or remove potentially identifiable information. Individual staff responses might contribute to multiple subthemes associated with a consultation question. Notable differences in themes according to socio-demographic or role information are highlighted. Not all identified themes or staff comments are described given the substantial amount of data generated.

* 1. **Consultation respondents**

Fifty-three members of SHW staff responded to the consultation survey, though some chose not to respond to all questions. Three quarters of staff reported they had ‘ever been a member of an Athena Swan group’ and identified as women. Two thirds belonged to the Research and Teaching job family and most staff were grades 6-7 (43%) or 8- 9 (23%). Staff from Mental Health and Wellbeing (28%) and the MRC/CSO SPHSU (26%) were the majority respondents and most staff (64%) did not have line management responsibilities. Most staff had worked in SHW for nine years or less, though around 1 in 5 had worked in SHW for 2 years or less. Around 1 in 4 respondents were staff with part-time contracts. Most respondents were aged 50 years or less (60%), identified as heterosexual (75%) and did not come from an ethnic minority background (87%). Around 1 in 5 staff reported having a disability and half did not have any caring responsibilities. For full details see appendix 4.

* 1. **What is Athena Swan and what is its role?**

53 staff responded to this question. Athena Swan was predominantly referred to as having a focus on equality (n= 26), particularly with regard to gender (n= 14) and supporting improvements in the workplace (n= 9). Some staff (n=7) also described Athena Swan in more negative terms.

* + 1. **Equality and diversity**

Almost half (n=26) of respondents said that Athena Swan sought to address issues of equality; most (n=22) did not specify particular populations or characteristics targeted.

*‘It's a group with a focus on equality and support in the workplace’*

*‘Athena Swan is mechanism for improving equality in academia.’*

Around a quarter described the role of Athena Swan as having a specific focus on gender equality, which is generally true of the Athena Swan initiative and its origins in SHW.

*‘Encourage gender equality’*

*‘Athena Swan is a staff led organisation which examines gender equality and recommends action to management.’*

A small number (n=4) of respondents highlighted the more recent broader scope of Athena Swan (particularly within SHW) to address issues around equality and diversity rather than a specific focus on gender.

*‘Originally an initiative aimed at helping women academics working in STEM subjects to thrive and progress, but now – thankfully! – covering equality, diversity and inclusion for ALL staff and students, and ensuring that colleagues from protected groups feel safe and comfortable at work/in their studies and are treated equitably.’*

*‘Athena Swan is a charter mark scheme intended to prompt discussion and action on gender inequalities in higher-education in terms of career progression, experience and achievement. More recently, it has broadened its focus to other forms of inequality.’*

*‘It's about diversity, inclusion and equality, its role is to raise awareness, provide evidence and educate.’*

*‘An initiative to encourage diversity and equity’*

Staff who referred to Athena Swan as addressing issues around gender equality alone, in comparison to those who referred to a broader scope, were less likely to report having been involved in Athena Swan working groups.

* + 1. **Workplace culture**

Respondents (n=9) also referred to the Athena Swan initiative as having a role in promoting positive working environments and practices (*‘To promote positive working culture and inclusivity’, ‘It is an initiative that promotes good practice in the workplace’*).

* + 1. **Negative comments**

Respondents (n=7) also provided more negative comments when describing Athena Swan and its role, some referring to the underlying motivation for engaging in Athena Swan activities. These responses referred to Athena Swan as a superficial and bureaucratic ‘box-ticking’ exercise, awards system or a prerequisite for accessing research funding streams or resources.

*‘Athena Swan is a process needed to be employed to be eligible for funding from research councils’*

*‘A framework to allow the university to say that they have addressed equality concerns. I have no confidence that is actually does address equality concerns.’*

*‘It's hard to be kind to Athena Swan. It seems to be a pretty superficial award scheme aimed at encouraging and training people to behave like senior academics as if the cause of inequalities in academia are down to individual behaviour and not structural issues.’*

* 1. **What do you see as the positive aspects of Athena Swan within SHW?**

47 staff responded to this question. Common positive aspects referred to included open discussion/ improved awareness (n= 23), core meeting hours policies and flexible working (n=13) and providing generally for a more supportive working environment.

* + 1. **Open discussion and awareness raising**

A common view among staff (n=28) was that Athena Swan enables or creates an environment to have open discussion around different issues, allowing individuals to discuss topics safely and confidently. Some staff also felt the increased acceptability of discussions around certain issues had led to improved awareness of important issues among staff.

*‘AS is opening discussion on practices within IHW and addressing them in consultation with those affected/involved. Their open discussions lead to better information for those who would otherwise not know about potential opportunities or perceived barriers.’*

*‘Raising of issues people may have been unaware of previously.’*

*‘Probably raised the profile of some groups of discrimination.’*

*'Awareness raising that the workplace can easily become a discriminatory space for a range of reasons’*

* + 1. **Core meeting hours, flexible working and gender**

Staff (n=21) referred to flexible working initiatives and policies as positive aspects linked to Athena Swan. Almost all responses were from women and most had caring responsibilities.

Comments referring to this positive aspect of Athena Swan cited flexible working and policies that require meetings and other activities to take place between 10am-4pm. This was felt to be beneficial to those with commitments including caring, travel to and from schools/ nurseries. Benefits of flexible working and policies such as core meeting hours were commonly mentioned in the context of gender inequality and caring responsibilities.

*‘Highlighting issues that disproportionately impact on women and their ability to manage their work and lives in a demanding profession.’*

*' I feel able to say no to work meetings out with 10-4, and for one of the first times in my life I feel I don't need to apologise for having caring commitments I also feel because that is the starting point there is a lot flexibility which allows me to make work, work’*

*‘I see a lot of positives! the 10am-4pm policy allows me to be flexible about start and finishing times and fit health care appointment into my week.’*

*' Lots! You only have to talk to academics elsewhere to realise how good it is to be working in a Gold institute. Positives are - tackling issues such as the gender pay gap, setting standards for 10-to-4 working, support for ECR, support to line managers (360 feedback initiative), policies for career development.’*

At the same time staff who did not cite commitments such as caring also found the core working hours policy provided for a quieter start/ end to their working day, allowing them to focus on other work-related activities.

*‘For me, the most positive thing has been only having meetings in core hours of 10-4. This makes seminars etc accessible to people doing the school run, recognises the nature of parental labour but it means I get some space to think/read/do emails before the meetings begins.’*

* + 1. **Supporting staff**

12 staff referred in more general terms to Athena Swan providing a more supportive environment, again often in relation to gender, but also citing examples of different aspects which contributed to an overall more supportive environment.

*‘Supports women in all areas of work including working hours, promotions, caring roles and equality.’*

*‘…helps make IHW a better and more supportive place to work.’*

* 1. **What do you see as the negative aspects of Athena Swan within SHW?**

45 staff responded to this question. Views on the negative aspects of Athena Swan formed around themes of ‘burden of work’ (n= 12), a ‘narrow focus’ (n= 10) on particular characteristics or groups and ‘tokenism’ (n= 9).

* + 1. **Burden of work**

12 staff indicated that the burden of work, arising through Athena Swan working group engagement, was a prominent negative aspect of Athena Swan. All views contributing to this theme came from those who had experience of membership of an Athena Swan working group.

*‘I don't see any negatives other than additional workload to staff to make it all happen.’*

This theme included the burden on people chairing working group activities, as well as the administration involved with arranging meetings, preparing and circulating minutes. Some (n=5) staff also highlighted the uneven distribution of tasks within and between Athena Swan groups.

*‘… Some people (albeit the minority) pay lip service, join groups but do none of the actual work. We need to find a way to stop this happening as it's demoralising for those of us who are committed…’*

* + 1. **Narrow focus**

Some (n=10) respondents suggested that Athena Swan activities are overly focused on a narrow range of characteristics or groups; the full range of characteristics and groups experiencing workplace inequalities are not sufficiently addressed nor the root causes/determinants of these.

*‘I think we need to [think] of equality in the broadest sense and ensuring that everyone appreciates that we are interested in more than just gender equality.’*

*‘It is focussed almost entirely on women and ethnic minorities to the detriment of addressing much larger barriers such as age and social class in early life and by doing so makes the effects of these barriers worse.’*

One member of staff also highlighted that there may be a greater tendency to report information on some issues or inequities experienced in the workplace relative to others.

*‘A sense that there are certain statistics we are happy to delve into, e.g. Male/Female splits in different courses, and others less so because they're less appealing: e.g. how many buildings have disabled access, how many women go on maternity leave etc.’*

* + 1. **Tokenism**

12 staff commented that Athena Swan initiatives could be tokenistic, serving the purpose of enhancing the reputation of UofG, providing access to funding streams which mandate an award or because engagement in Athena Swan activities can contribute towards annual performance review or strengthen applications for promotion.

*‘Tokenistic involvement from many people.’*

*‘It is a tick box exercise. The purpose is to be eligible for funding.’*

* + 1. **Other comments**

Seven staff felt there were no negative aspects to Athena Swan, all were women and affiliated with two of the research groups in SHW.

‘*I don't think there are any [negative aspects] for me (but I am female).’*

Other comments included the view that there were a lack of implementation of some ideas or recommendations from Athena Swan activities *(‘sometimes it could be talked about but not implemented*’) and some of issues should be addressed through University-wide policy and process (*‘Some issues are being addressed by a small group of staff, rather than being addressed by the university/HR’*).

* 1. **Has Athena Swan impacted your own or your colleagues’ experience of working in SHW? If so, how?**

43 staff provided a response suitable for analysis, with a further five staff responding they were ‘unsure’, four providing no response and one responding ‘yes’ but without further elaboration. Responses formed around themes of no impacts (n= 10), improved awareness (n= 9) and positive working culture (n= 9). Overall, views that Athena Swan had positively impacted staff experiences of working in SHW were typically from those who were, or are, part of an Athena Swan working group.

* + 1. **No impact**

10 staff felt Athena Swan had not impacted their own experiences within SHW and three expressly stated they had not discussed Athena Swan with colleagues. Most (8/10) staff who stated that Athena Swan had not impacted their own, or others’, experiences were grades 6-7 and just over half (6/10) were not part of an Athena Swan working group[[2]](#footnote-2).

* + 1. **Improved awareness**

Similar to the themes previously discussed (see section 3.3.1. ‘open discussion and awareness raising’), nine staff reported that Athena Swan had increased their awareness of equality and diversity issues. This increase in awareness was valued.

*‘Yes, it has opened my eyes to a more diverse and equal workspace and given some policies which people within my role had not had previously’*

*‘I think it has really improved working in IHW and transformed the culture to one which is aware of inequalities and genuinely focused on trying to address them.’*

* + 1. **Positive working culture**

Nine staff reported that Athena Swan had improved the working culture for either themselves, or a colleague. All reported ‘ever’ having been involved in an Athena Swan working group and six reported caring responsibilities.

*‘Athena Swan has made IHW a very pleasant place for me to work, even compared to what I hear from other parts of the University. I wouldn't want to work anywhere else.’*

*‘I have enjoyed taking part in the ECR group. It is an open and welcoming environment and promotes a healthy culture in the uni.’*

A small number of staff (n=2) commented that, as a result of Athena Swan, the positive working culture of SHW sets it apart from other institutes/schools within UofG.

‘*It has improved my impression of the University, particularly IHW which seems to be a very caring institute compared to others*’.

* + 1. **Negative impacts**

Some staff (n=4) commented that Athena Swan had negatively impacted upon their own or colleagues’ experience of working in SHW. Comments did not coalesce around a specific issue and were provided by those who had experience of involvement in Athena Swan working groups, as well as those who did not.

*'Yes, Detrimentally.’*

*‘Emphasised that my forms of marginalisation are not meaningfully recognised.’*

*‘It has just clogged up email.’*

*‘Increased workload’*

* + 1. **Other comments**

Other comments referred to a range of positive impacts, including the benefits of having core working (n=6) and meeting (n= 4) hours, professional development (n=6) and achieving work/life balance (n= 5).

* 1. **Are there any groups or communities that have been well represented in Athena Swan activities in SHW?**

35 staff are included in the findings for this question. A further six staff left this question unanswered and 12 stated they were unsure which, if any, groups or communities had been well represented by Athena Swan. This included 11 staff who were/are members of an Athena Swan working group. Of the answers included for analysis, most responses were listed with limited additional context.

* + 1. **Women/ Females**

11 staff stated that women or females were well represented in Athena Swan activities in SHW, including six responses where women/ females were the only group listed*.* Staff who expressed this view included eight women.

*‘Women’, ‘I think women have been well represented.’*

* + 1. **Parents**

Nine staff stated that parents were well represented by Athena Swan activities and an additional member of staff felt that ‘maternity’ was well represented without further context.

*‘Parents’, ‘Younger woman and women who have young children’*

* + 1. **Early Career Researchers**

Eight respondents reported that early career researchers were well represented by Athena Swan activities.

*‘A lot is done to hear ECR voice and listen to them.’*

*‘ECR group’*

* + 1. **LGBTQ+**

Seven respondents expressed that LGBTQ+ populations were well represented*.* Four members of staff who identified as LGBTQ+ responded to this question, with only one citing LGBTQ+ communities as being well represented.

*‘I think LGBTQ+ staff have been particularly well represented’*

*‘LGBT - i think there is a start and more work can be done for inclusion and representation.’*

* + 1. **Carers**

Six respondents reported carers were well represented by Athena Swan activities.

*'People with caring responsibilities.’*

*‘Parents and carers.’*

* + 1. **Older workers**

Five respondents reported felt that ‘older workers’ were well represented by Athena Swan activities.

*‘Recognizing the issues of older workers.’*

*‘Older workers group.’*

* 1. **Are there any groups or communities that have not been well represented in Athena Swan activities in SHW?**

23 staff provided an interpretable response to this question. Of the other 30 staff, 22 expressly stated they didn’t know or were unsure of any communities which had not been well represented by Athena Swan in SHW. A further eight staff left this question unanswered. 20 of the 30 staff who did not provide an interpretable response reported a history of involvement in Athena Swan working groups.

* + 1. **Minority ethnicity**

Seven staff stated that ethnic minorities had not been well represented or that better representation is needed in Athena Swan activities in SHW. Most comments acknowledged that some efforts had been made but suggested there was a need or opportunity for improvement. None of the staff in this group identified as belonging to a minority ethnic background.

*‘Please let's do more for people from ethnic minorities. This is sensitive and therefore challenging work but the E&D unit could guide us I'm sure. (But well done IHW for making the Moodle race in the workplace course mandatory.)’*

* + 1. **Physical and mental disabilities, neurodiversity**

Six staff stated those with long-term physical and/or mental health disabilities or neurodiversity, have not been well represented by Athena Swan activities.

*‘Disability - all very well holding awareness sessions, but that doesn't filter down into meaningful action and active inclusion on the ground…’*

*‘Neurodivergent and disabled staff members. People with mental health issues.’*

* + 1. **LGBTQ+**

Four staff stated LGBTQ+ have not been well represented by Athena Swan activities.

*‘Bit slow getting off the mark with lbtgq+ group’*

*‘I think we have work to do to support … the LGBTQ+ community to ensure we aren't missing barriers for these communities.’*

* 1. **Thinking about day to day working life, what are experiences that everyone in SHW should have (for example, in the way people are treated or how they feel at work)?**

48 staff answered this question with most staff listing two or three experiences they believed staff should have in SHW. In total, 20 experiences were identified across the survey responses. The leading themes based on comments provided were experiences consistent with respect and equality (n= 23), being valued (n= 15) and those related to workplace safety (n= 9).

* + 1. **Respect and equality**

27 staff commented that everyone should experience respect in SHW. Around a third of these respondents also commented on the importance of equality.

*‘People should be treated with respect - but I would say the same for any human interaction - not just in IHW’*

*‘To feel respected, supported, and to have equal opportunities’*

* + 1. **Valued**

15 staff stated that feeling valued was an important experience for staff in SHW. Most of these staff did not refer to experiences of ‘respect and equality’. Several staff linked experiences of feeling valued to workplace opportunities and support, including opportunities to continue or progress in their careers.

*‘People should know that they are valued and have a future at the IHW if they want it.’*

*‘Everyone should be made to feel welcome at their office and know that their effort and work are appreciated.’*

* + 1. **Safety**

Nine staff provided comments highlighting the importance of experiencing work as a safe place.

*‘Everyone should feel their work is a 'safe space' where they can express themselves without judgement’*

*‘No bigots, racists, bullying, or homophobes.’*

* + 1. **Inclusivity**

Six staff highlighted that all staff should feel included, without further context as to what this means or ‘looks like’. All participants within this group were women.

*‘Staff should feel welcome every day, and inclusive of the working group.’*

* + 1. **Work/life balance**

Six staff highlighted that all staff should be able to maintain a good work/ life balance and that there should be recognition that people have commitments beyond work which fluctuate over time. This theme was raised exclusively by women.

*‘Understanding that work is just one part of people’s lives and that everyone is working around various other commitments’*

*’Everyone should be able to have a good work-personal life balance.’*

* 1. **Thinking about day to day working life, what are experiences that no-one in SHW should have (for example, in the way people are treated or how they feel at work)?**

45 staff responded to this question. The range of themes identified which related to negative experiences that no one in SHW should have, was smaller than the number of themes identified for positive experiences which all SHW staff should have (see section 3.8). Themes in this question included bullying/ harassment/ discrimination (n= 36), feeling undervalued (n= 19) and feeling overworked and with unreasonable demands placed upon them (n=9).

* + 1. **Bullying/ harassment/ discrimination**

Most staff (n= 36) referred to bullying, harassment and discrimination as experiences that no-one should have in SHW. This included physical, verbal and emotional abuse.

*‘No-one should feel bullied, or made to feel they are a lesser person than anyone else.’*

*‘Discrimination, being made to feel uncomfortable, unacceptable expectations relating to workload.’*

* + 1. **Feeling undervalued**

19 staff, almost all women, provided comments that suggested SHW staff should never experience their contribution or their work as less valuable or of lower status /significance.

*‘…We should not always feel we need to achieve amazing things. Being "ordinary" and good enough should be sufficient.’*

*‘No colleague should ever feel that they are not enough as they are. Everyone has different aspirations and no matter how big or small these personal aspirations are, it should be enough, as long as we are performing to the best of our ability.’*

* + 1. **Overworked and unreasonable demands**

Nine staff, almost all (8/9) women and all below the age of 50 years, referred to being overworked and having unreasonable demands placed upon them, as experiences that no one in SHW should have.

*‘…Being overworked by line managers’*

*‘They shouldn't have unreasonable deadlines, that aren't actually discussed with them but rather imposed without consideration of the time to complete the task’*

* 1. **What do you think should be the top priority for Athena Swan activity within SHW over the next five years?**

42 staff answered this question with a range of priorities identified. The major themes identified are identified individually below with any remaining themes listed briefly under ‘other’ (section 3.10.6).

* + 1. **Marginalised groups**

11 respondents suggested priorities should include a continued or expanded focus on groups at risk of marginalisation. Groups and characteristics which Athena Swan activities should address included: age, race, disabilities, gender, social class and those going on maternity/ paternity leave.

*‘I think we should be continuing with present activities but extend our focus to have greater emphasis on equality related to ethnicity/disability…’*

* + 1. **Workload**

15 staff identified workload as priority area for Athena Swan activity over the next five years.

*‘Work with line managers to increase awareness that people they have responsibility for are a valuable resource who are probably stretched beyond their workload limits’*

* + 1. **Career progression**

Career progression and promotion were priority areas for five respondents, all who worked full-time and range of years with SHW spanned from 2 to 10+.

*‘Focus should be on the wider job, not just select areas that some people are advantaged in e.g., grants/ papers.  Opportunities should be for all, not just those at certain levels/ on certain contracts.  People should have more autonomy over their own career rather than relying on the whims of those more senior who may decide that that person is their favourite and will therefore get opportunities for career development.’*

*‘staff should be encouraged/ supported to develop and towards promotion along with job security/planning (part of feeling valued is knowing you are supported in career development)’*

* + 1. **Precarity**

Precarious contracts and job security were referred to by four respondents as priority areas. All four participants were ‘ever’ part of an Athena Swan group.

*‘Reducing precarity’*

*‘Addressing structural conditions that lead to lack of job security’*

*‘Come up with a plan to improve job security.’*

* + 1. **Flexible working**

Five staff expressed a priority should be supporting flexible working to aid a work/life balance, including use of hybrid working.

*‘[Address] work-life balance issues, lead on integrating hybrid working into standard working patterns.’*

*‘I think flexible working will continue to become more of a priority for people and I think there is a potential for both increased equality and inequality.’*

* + 1. **Other comments**

One member of staff highlighted that a priority should be ensuring that Athena Swan-led policies are adhered to, for example ensuring that core meeting hours policies do not inadvertently signal the availability of staff before 10am and after 4pm. Another respondent suggested enhancing the credibility and commitment of Athena Swan should be a priority.

*‘Convince people that you really mean it and that it is not a tick box exercise.’*

1. **Summary**

Fifty-three members of SHW staff responded to the consultation, with representation across grades, job families, working pattern, age and years worked in SHW. Around three quarters of respondents identified as women and had contributed to an Athena Swan working group.

* Staff understand Athena Swan as a scheme to address issues around in/equality in the workplace. Some staff consider Athena Swan to be a scheme to address gender in/equality specifically, while other staff have a broader interpretation that Athena Swan addresses issues of equality, diversity and inclusivity to promote positive working environments and practices.
* Some staff hold negative views about the role of Athena Swan as a box ticking exercise, with limited meaningful impact for marginalised groups. Athena Swan activities are felt by some to be tokenistic and used for institutional and personal gain, including reputation enhancement, annual performance review, promotions applications and gaining access to resources which are contingent on Athena Swan award status.
* Athena Swan in SHW has led to an improvement in staff members’ awareness of issues of equality and diversity and their willingness and confidence to discuss these in the workplace.
* Specific policies including ‘core meeting hours’ and flexible working arrangements are highlighted, particularly by women and those with caring responsibilities, as enabling and inclusive aspects of Athena Swan. These were referred to throughout the consultation as contributing to a positive and more equal working culture that had impacted upon staff experiences of working in SHW. At the same time some staff report they have observed no impact of Athena Swan on their experiences at work.
* While improved awareness of equality and diversity issues may has been achieved through Athena Swan, working group contributions adds to workload and the burden of work is unequally distributed across working group members.
* Some staff are concerned that activities within SHW are narrowly focused on particular characteristics.
* Staff highlighted various groups as being well represented through Athena Swan activities in SHW including women, parents, ECRs, carers and older workers.
* While some staff were unsure/did not know which groups which had not been well represented, other staff suggested minority ethnic groups, individuals with neurodiversity, and those with physical and mental health disabilities had not been well represented.
* Views were mixed on whether LGBTQ+ groups have been well represented.
* The experience of day to day working in SHW should be underpinned by respect and equality, a sense that one is valued, and that work is a safe place. There is no place for bullying/harassment/discrimination and staff should not be made to feel that their work or contribution is of lesser value or status than that of others. Feeling over-burdened by workload or unrealistic expectations should also not be part of the day-to-day experience of working in SHW.
* According to staff, priorities for Athena Swan activities in SHW over the next 5 years should be:
  + A continued focus, or expansion, of activities to address groups or those with characteristics which place them at risk of inequality (including age, race, those with disabilities, gender, social class, and new parents)
  + Staff workload
  + Career progression and promotion
  + Precarity/job insecurity
  + Flexible working

1. **Recommendations**

* Ensure staff ‘priorities over next 5 years’ are incorporated within SAT strategic planning and explore how best to take these forward.
* Some staff do not see current progress or efforts to address inequalities experienced by different groups as sufficient. Greater visibility and engagement around some of the ongoing work with these groups should be considered.
* Support dissemination and promotion of working group activities and outputs, showcasing the range of equality and diversity issues addressed across the 10 SHW Athena Swan working groups.
* Identify and implement approaches to support Athena Swan working groups, including a more equal distribution of workload.
* Continue to promote current ‘Dignity at Work’ messaging currently embedded in SHW leadership emails,

1. **Acknowledgements**

The Staff Consultation working group would like to thank members of SHW staff who contributed to the consultation survey, Heather McClelland for carrying out analysis and drafting the report, SHW Administration for advice and resources and SHW Athena Swan Champions for providing advice and suggestions on the consultation survey.

1. Shortly after the consultation ended the name of the administrative unit changed from the Institute of Health and Wellbeing or ‘IHW’ to the School of Health and Wellbeing or ‘SHW’. For the purposes of this report this represents a change in name only and the staff make-up remains unchanged. While participant quotes and original surveys items refer to ‘IHW’, ‘SHW’ is used when reporting. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. No respondent quotes are provided given limited detail in the responses. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)