# How's Work Going 2011

Nova Scotia Pension Agency Employee Survey Results



Evaluation & Accountability

June 2011

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ISBN: 978-1-55457-310-3

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### **Chapter 1 - Survey Background Information**

### 1.1 Why do we survey?

We regularly survey employees to understand how to improve the public service workplace. Asking employees what they think about their work environment is common in the employment world today. It is a fundamental part of building a strong public service and improving client service for our citizens.

"How's Work Going" employee survey measures employee engagement and the drivers that lead to organizational satisfaction and commitment. Employee Engagement is a critical element to the success of any organization. Increased levels of employee engagement results in an increase in employee performance and retention creating a productive and committed public service.

Research has shown that an increase in employee engagement results in an increase in client satisfaction which builds confidence in government.

### 1.2 Who did we survey?

The survey was sent to all employees in an online format. This report contains the results of all permanent, contract and term employees who responded to the survey. The Nova Scotia Pension Agency had a response rate of 81% (56% corporately). The survey was open between March 2-31, 2011.

#### 1.3 How to read this report?

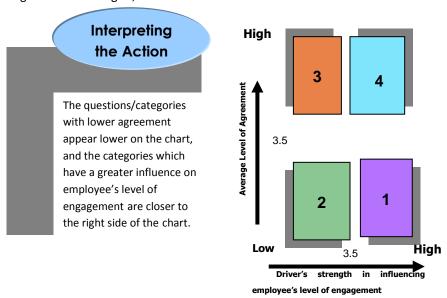
In this report, the results are presented in the following matter (note, due to the rounding of numbers the agreement scores may not equal 100%):

•	Engagement Score	Engagement index which measures the extent to which individuals feel connected to and involved in their job and their organization and their level of satisfaction and commitment.
•	Disagree- Agreement Percentage	Percentage of respondents who strongly disagreed and somewhat disagreed.
•	Neutral - Agreement Percentage	Percentage of respondents who either agreed or disagreed.
•	Agree - Agreement Percentage	Percentage of respondents who strongly agreed and somewhat agreed.
•	Mean Category Score	The respondents average score calculated for each category (1-5 range).

Category Guide				
Clear Strength	Strength	Area for Improvement	Area for Concern	
75% and over	60-74%	50-59%	Under 50%	

To help understand the results and to determine where government should continue to focus its response and action efforts, the 2011 survey was also analyzed using a method which comprises both the level of agreement and the strength of the category in influencing an employees' level of engagement (satisfaction and commitment)

The 2011 survey maps the average agreement score using descriptive statistics and driver strength on an action grid, as illustrated below:



### **Chapter 2 - Engagement Outcome Results**

### 2.1 Engagement Outcome Summary

In 2006, the Government of Nova Scotia established the Employee Engagement Index based on the Public Sector Interjurisdictional Engagement Model. The Employee Engagement Index measures the extent to which individuals feel connected to and involved in their job, organization, level of satisfaction, and commitment. The index is an average calculation of six satisfaction and commitment agreement scores. The percent who agreed with each of the six questions that comprise the Employee Engagement Index is also provided below.

	Agreement Score
Job Satisfaction	
Job Satisfaction	74
Organizational Satisfaction	
Department Satisfaction	74
Overall Satisfaction	77
Organizational Commitment	
Proud	65
Preference to stay with NS Government	71
Inspired	81
Would Recommend as a great place to work	61
Engagement Index	72

Table 1 Employee Engagement Agreement Scores

Nova Scotia Pension Agency's (NSPA) employee index is 72 and would be considered an area of strength. The corporate employee index is 62 and would be considered an area of strength as well.

### 2.2 Employee Engagement and Outcome Details

### 2.2.1 Engagement Outcome Details

Figure 1 below summarizes employees' responses regarding engagement outcome results.

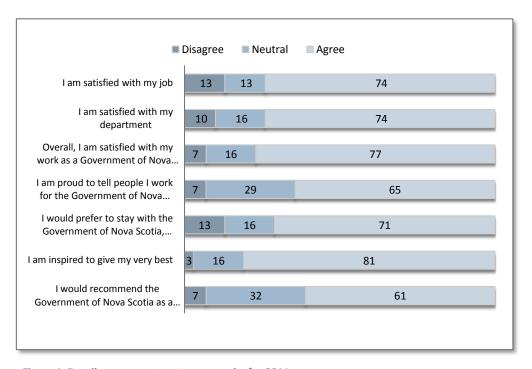


Figure 1 Detail engagement outcome results for 2011

### 2.2.2 How does the Department engagement compare?

Table 2 below compares the Department results to the overall corporate results for 2011 employee survey employee engagement outcome results.

	Agreement Scores	
	NSPA	Corporate
Job Satisfaction		
Job Satisfaction	74	59
Organizational Satisfaction		
Department Satisfaction	74	53
Overall Satisfaction	77	67
Organizational Commitment		
Proud	65	62
Preference to stay with Government of Nova Scotia	71	62
Inspired	81	68
Would Recommend as a great place to work	61	57
Engagement Level	72	62

Table 2 Employee Engagement score comparison

As noted in the table above, NSPA has stronger agreement scores for all the questions and has more areas of clear strength when compared to the corporate results. The overall engagement level is 17 percent higher in agreement when compared to the corporate result, and both are in the strength category.

Using the strength-improvement category guide, in comparison to the corporate results NSPA's responses are stronger the following areas:

- Job satisfaction
- Department satisfaction
- Overall satisfaction
- Inspired to do well
- Would recommend the Government of Nova Scotia as a great place to work

## 2.3 How can the level of employee engagement be improved?

To motivate and retain **employees** it is essential to understand what government employees **feel are important aspects** of their work environment. Management needs to know:

- What employees value?
- What attracted them to work for Government?
- What factor(s) influence employees' level of engagement (satisfaction and commitment)?
- How is the department performing in relations to the drivers (factors) of engagement?
- Where does NSPA need to focus to improve their employees' work environment to keep its employees engaged?

#### 2.3.1 What do employees value?

The survey results reveal that NSPA employees value:

- 1. Challenging and interesting work -78%
- 2. Pay and benefits 61%
- 3. Opportunities to balance work and personal life 61%
- 4. Working with people they like 50%
- 5. A chance to learn new skills and develop 43%
- 6. Freedom to make decisions about how I do my job 32%
- 7. A chance to make a difference 29%

#### 2.3.2 What attracted them to work for Government?

What is important to them is somewhat similar to what attracted them to work for the Government of Nova Scotia in the first place, which was:

- 1. Compensation 47%
- 2. Opportunities for work-life balance 47%
- 3. Work location 43%
- 4. Opportunity to work in chosen field 40%
- 5. Career advancement 30%
- 6. Desire to work in the public service 30%
- Support for training and related professional development activities –
   17%

## 2.3.3 What factors influence employees' level of satisfaction and commitment with the organization?

There are several drivers of employee engagement, which can be measured. These include employees perceptions of their opportunities for input into decisions that affect their work; productive, collaborative and respectful working relationships; clear expectations and sense of direction for the organization; confidence in leadership; job fit with skills and interests; opportunities for learning and development; recognition for their work; and, having the support they need to provide customers quality service while achieving a balance between work and personal life. Figure 2 below illustrates this

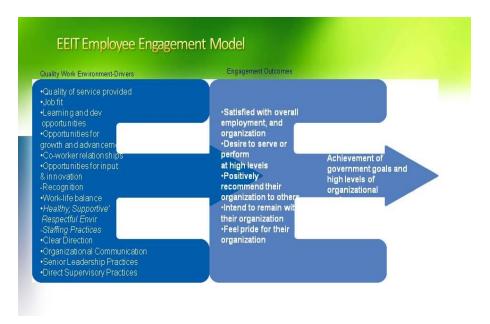


Figure 2 Employee Engagement Model

The Quality Work Environment indicators (drivers) used in this report are based on the Public Sector Interjurisdictional Engagement Model. The Quality Environment indicators can be grouped under four categories, see Figure 3 on next page.



Figure 3 Drivers of Engagement category chart

To understand which drivers had a stronger influence for NSPA employees, a correlation analysis was conducted. An analysis of the correlations between the engagement drivers and indicators can show where action and attention should be focused to improve employee engagement and quality work environment. The Evaluation and Accountability unit of the PSC has performed this analysis. The list below outlines the factors influencing employees' level of commitment and satisfaction, based on the NSPA 2011 survey results.

- 1. Senior Leadership Practices
- 2. Job Satisfaction
- 3. Organizational Communication
- 4. Employee Involvement and Innovation
- 5. Learning and Development Opportunities
- 6. Recognition
- 7. Healthy, Supportive and Respectful Environment
- 8. Co-worker Relations/Teamwork

The list below outlines the top factors influencing employees' job satisfaction, based on the NSPA 2011 survey results.

- 1. Organizational Communication
- 2. Senior Leadership Practices
- 3. Employee Involvement and Innovation
- 4. Recognition
- 5. Healthy, Supportive and Respectful Environment

## 2.3.4 How is NSPA performing in relation to the drivers (factors) of engagement?

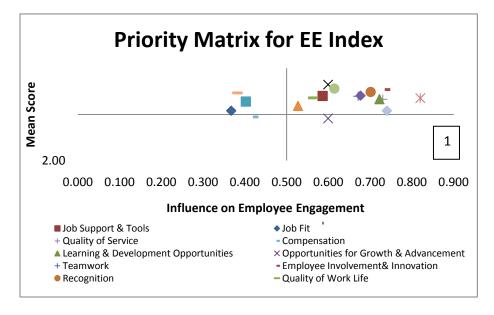
A Quality Environment Index can be used to understand how a Department is performing in relation to the drivers of employee engagement. This report calculates a Quality Work Environment Index which is based on the quality environment indicators used in the Public Sector Interjurisdictional Engagement Model. The Quality Work Environment index is an average calculation of the 13 EEIT drivers' agreement scores.

For NSPA the Quality Environment Index (Average of all the drivers of engagement) is 79. The Corporate Quality Environment Index is 60.

## 2.3.5 Where does NSPA need to focus to improve their employees' work environment and to keep employees engaged?

To help understand the results and to determine where NSPA should continue to focus its response and action efforts, the 2011 survey was analyzed using a method which comprises both the level of agreement and the strength of the individual drivers.

Evaluation and Accountability calculated the average scores for each of the 18 factors. The mean score and the driver strength score for each of the 18 drivers were then mapped on the scatter plot below. To provide a visual picture to illustrate with regards to how employees perceive their current work environment and what they consider as important to them,



**Figure 4 Priority Action Matrix Grid** 

As shown in Figure 4, the drivers with lower agreement appear lower on the chart, and the drivers which have a greater influence on employee's engagement are closer to the right side of the chart. The focus for NSPA would be in the lower right quadrant (Quadrant 1).

Based on the analysis of employee engagement drivers and analyzing how employees perceive their current work environment and what they consider as important to them NSPA's focus should be:

Opportunities for Growth and Advancement

The next section of this report provides insight into how NSPA is progressing with each driver. By reviewing how employees responded to the drivers of engagement along with drilling down further by examining the favourable score per question, management can gain an understanding where to focus to improve employees' level of engagement (satisfaction and commitment).

### **Chapter 3 - Quality Work Environment**

### 3.1 Your Job - Productivity Capacity

### 3.1.1 Productivity Capacity Details

Figure 5 below summarizes the disagreement, neutral and agreement scores for the Productivity Capacity results.

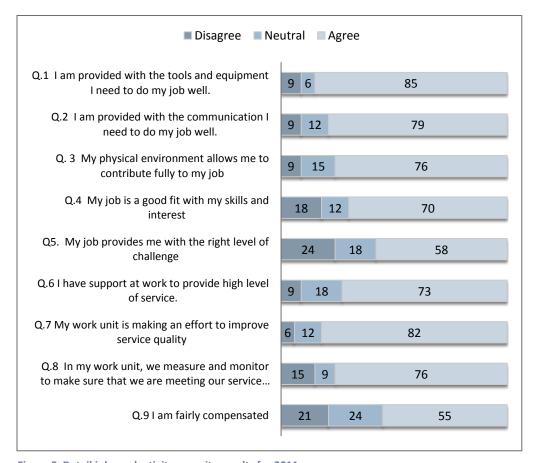


Figure 5 Detail job productivity capacity results for 2011

### **3.1.2 Productivity Capacity Comparison**

Table 3 below compares the NSPA results to the overall corporate results for 2011 employee survey employee engagement outcome results.

	Agreement Scores	
	NSPA	Corporate
Job Support and Tools		
Provided with the tools and equipment needed to do job well	85	72
Provided with the communication needed to do job well	79	58
Physical work environment allows employees to fully contribute to job	76	71
Job Fit		
Job is a good fit with skills and interests	70	79
Job provides right level of challenge	58	66
Quality of Service Provided		
Have support at work to provide high level of service	73	61
Work unit is making an effort to improve service quality	82	68
Work unit measures and monitors to make sure they are meeting their service quality	76	56
Compensation		
Compensated fairly for job	55	44

**Table 3 Productivity Capacity comparison** 

As noted in the table above, NSPA has similar agreement scores for some of the questions compared to the corporate results but has more areas of clear strength.

Using the strength-improvement category guide, in comparison to the corporate results NSPA employees' agreement responses are not as strong in the following areas:

- Job fit
- Level of job challenge

Using the strength-improvement category guide, in comparison to the corporate results the agreement responses are stronger in the following areas:

- Job support and tools (all areas)
- Work units making an effort to improve service quality
- Work units measuring and monitoring to make sure they are meeting their service quality
- Compensation

### 3.2 Talent Capacity - Your Career

### 3.2.1 Talent Capacity Details

Figure 6 summarizes the disagreement, neutral, and agreement scores for the career-talent capacity results.

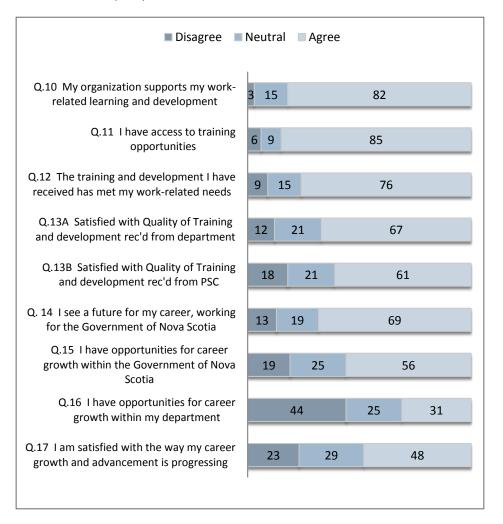


Figure 6 Detail talent capacity results for 2011

### 3.2.2 Talent Capacity Comparison

Table 4 below compares NSPA's results to the overall corporate results for 2011 employee survey talent capacity results.

	Agreement Score	
	NSPA	Corporate
Learning and Development Opportunities		
Organization supports work-related learning and development	82	62
Have access to training opportunities	85	62
Training and development received met work-related needs	76	62
Satisfied with the quality of training and development received from department	67	54
Satisfied with the quality of training and development received from PSC	61	53
Opportunities for Career Growth and Advancement		
See a future for career working for the Government of Nova Scotia	69	60
Have opportunities for career growth within the Government of Nova Scotia	56	42
Have opportunities for career growth within the department	31	32
Satisfied with the way career growth and advancement is progressing	48	38

**Table 4 Talent Capacity Comparison** 

As noted in the table above, NSPA has few similarities compared to the Concern for opportunities for career growth and corporate results. advancement and satisfaction with career progress are corporate-wide issues. NSPA does not have any unique areas of concern.

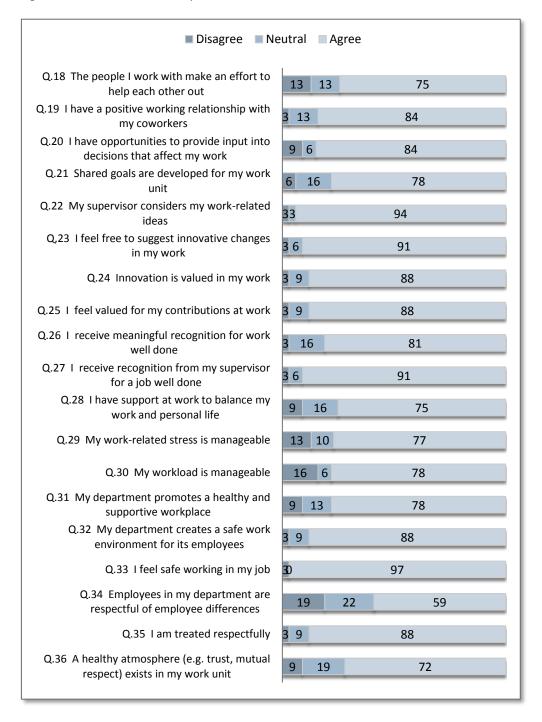
Using the strength-improvement category guide, in comparison to the corporate results NSPA employees' agreement responses are stronger the following areas:

- Learning and development opportunities (all areas)
- Opportunities for career growth within the Government of Nova Scotia

### 3.3 Workplace Culture - Your Workplace

#### 3.3.1 Workplace Culture Details

Figure 7 (continued on next page) summarizes the disagreement, neutral, and agreement scores for the workplace culture results.



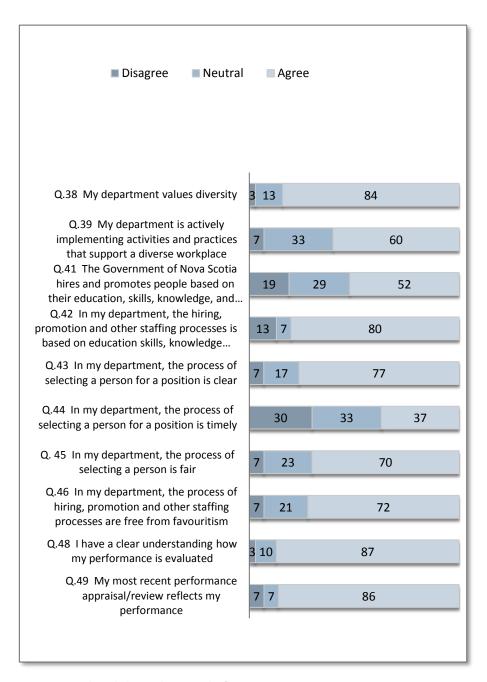


Figure 7 Detail workplace culture results for 2011

### 3.3.2 Workplace Culture Comparison

Table 5 (continued on next page) compares the Workplace Culture results for NSPA to the overall corporate results for 2011.

	Agreement Scores	
	NSPA	Corporate
Coworker Relationship		
The people I work with make an effort to help each other	75	77
Have a positive working relationship with coworkers	84	84
Employee Involvement and Innovation		
Have opportunities to provide input into decisions that affect their work	84	60
Shared goals are developed for work unit	78	51
Supervisor considers their work-related ideas	94	69
Feel free to suggest innovative changes in their work	91	67
Innovation is valued in their work	88	54
Recognition		
Feel valued for contributions at work	88	54
Receive meaningful recognition for work well done	81	47
Receive recognition from supervisor for a job well done	91	58
Quality of Work Life		
Have support at work to balance work and personal life	75	62
Work-related stress is manageable	77	59
Workload is manageable	78	58
Healthy, Supportive and Respectful Environment		
Department promotes a healthy and supportive workplace	78	59
Department creates a safe work environment for its employees	88	73
Employees feel safe working in their job	97	78
Employees in department are respectful of employee differences	59	69
Treated respectfully at work	88	74
A healthy atmosphere (trust, mutual respect) exists in work unit	72	62
Diverse and Inclusive Environment		
Department values diversity	84	67
Department is actively implementing activities and practices that support a diverse workplace	60	54
Staffing Practices		
NS Government hires and promotes people based on their education, skills, knowledge and experience	52	49
In the department, the hiring, promotion and other staffing processes is based on their education, skills, knowledge and experience	80	48
In the department, the process of selecting a person for a position is clear	77	47

In the department, the process of selecting a person for a position is timely	37	21
In the department, the process of selecting a person is fair	70	41
In the department, hiring, promotion and other staffing processes are free from favouritism	72	38
Performance Management Practices		
Participated in a performance appraisal/review with direct supervisor in the past 12 months (yes/no scale)	96	65
% who didn't participate in a performance appraisal/review who would like to	n/a	76
Have a clear understanding of how performance is evaluated	87	59
Most recent performance appraisal/review reflects performance	86	67

Table 5 Workplace Culture comparison with corporate results for 2011

As noted in Table 5, NSPA shares few similar strengths and areas for improvement with the corporate results; however, they score higher in agreement in the majority of questions with more areas of clear strength.

Using the strength-improvement category guide, in comparison to the corporate results NSPA employees' agreement responses are stronger the following areas:

- Employee involvement and innovation (all areas)
- Recognition (all areas)
- Quality of work life (all areas)
- Departments promoting a healthy and supportive workplace
- Departments creating a safe environment for employees
- Employees in department are respectful of employee differences
- Being treated respectfully at work
- Diverse and inclusive environment (all areas)
- Employees who feel the Government of Nova Scotia hires/promotes people based on their education, etc.
- Employees who feel their department hires/promotes people based on their education, etc.
- Clarity of staffing practices
- Fairness of staffing practices
- Staffing practices are free from favourtism
- Performance management practices (all areas)

### 3.4 Leadership - Your Leader

#### 3.4.1 Leadership Details

Figure 8 summarizes the disagreement, neutral, and agreement scores for leadership practices results.

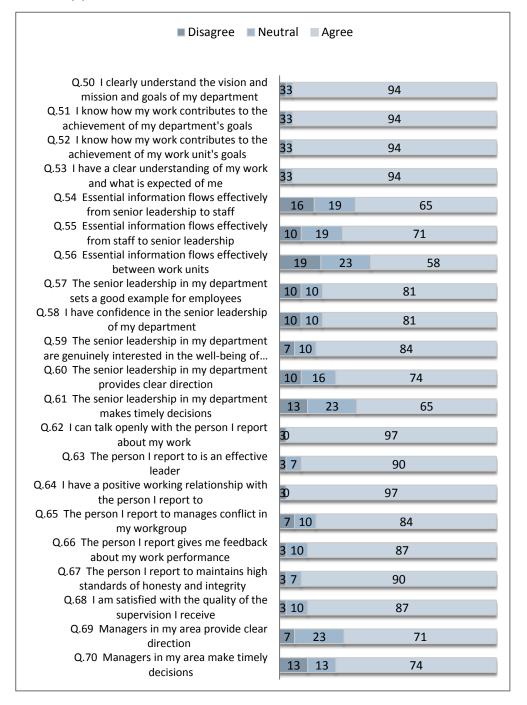


Figure 8 Leadership Capacity details

### 3.4.2 Leadership Comparison

Table 6 below compares NSPA results to the overall corporate results for 2011 employee survey leadership results.

	Agreement Scores			
	NSPA	Corporate		
Clear Direction and Expectations				
Clearly understood the vision, mission and goals of the department	94	68		
Know how work contributes to the achievement of department goals	94	73		
Know how work contributes to the achievement of work unit goals	94	79		
Have a clear understanding of their work and what is expected of them	94	79		
Organizational Communication				
Essential information flows effectively from senior leadership to staff	65	37		
Essential information flows effectively from staff to senior leadership	71	43		
Essential information flows effectively between work units	58	33		
Senior Leadership Practices				
Department senior leadership sets a good example	81	48		
Have confidence in the department senior leadership	81	48		
Department senior leadership are genuinely interested in the well being of employees	84	49		
Department senior leadership provides clear direction	74	42		
Department senior leadership makes timely decisions	65	36		
Direct Supervisory Practices				
Employees can talk openly with the person they report to about work	97	76		
Person report to is an effective leader	90	63		
Employees have a positive working relationship with the person they report to	97	77		
Person they report to manages conflict in the workgroup	84	54		
Person they report to gives employees feedback on their work performance	87	63		
Person they report to maintains high standards of honesty and integrity	90	72		
Satisfied with the quality of supervision received	87	65		
Managers provide clear direction	71	56		
Managers make timely decisions	74	51		

**Table 6 Leadership Comparisons** 

As noted in the table on the previous page, NSPA shares a few of the same strengths; however, they have higher agreements scores for many of the questions with more areas of clear strength. Concern for the organizational communication and senior leadership practices are corporate wide issues, however, the NSPA agreement scores is in the clear or basic strength category, apart from effective communication flow between work units which is an area for improvement.

Using the strength-improvement category guide, in comparison to the corporate results NSPA employees' agreement responses are stronger the following areas:

- Clearly understood the vision, mission and goals of the department
- Know how work contributes to the achievement of department goals
- Organizational communication (all areas)
- Senior leadership practices (all areas)
- Person they report to is an effective leader
- Person they report to manages conflict in the work group
- Person they report to gives employees feedback on their work performance
- Person they report to maintains high standards of honesty and integrity
- Satisfaction with quality of supervision received
- Managers provide clear direction
- Managers make timely decisions

### **Chapter 4 - Other Work Environment** Questions

### 4.1 Respectful Environment

As shown in the survey results, 7% of NSPA employees have experienced bullying behavior in the last 12 months. However, only 50% of employees who experienced bullying behavior reported the behavior. Corporately 25% of employees experienced bullying, with 45% stating they reported the behavior.

100% of the behaviour was experienced from a coworker or colleague.

#### **4.2 Inclusive Environment**

As shown in the survey results, 0% of NSPA respondents reported that they have experienced racism and/or discrimination in the last 12 months. Corporately 7% of employees experienced racism and/or discrimination, with 30% stating they reported the behavior.

### 4.3 Employees' Retention Intentions

As shown in the table below, 24% of NSPA employees are planning on leaving within the next 5 years. The main reason for leaving is retirement and to pursue other employment opportunities.

The table below outlines employees stated intentions to stay with the Government of Nova Scotia.

Employees intend to stay:	
2 years or less	12%
Between 3-5 years	12%
Between 6-10 years	35%
11 years or more	41%

Table 7 Employees retention intentions for 2011

Table 8 outlines the reasons an employees is planning on leaving the organization within the next 5 years.

Reason for Leaving:	
Retirement	33%
Job itself (not interesting work or lack of challenge)	33%
Pursuing other employment opportunities	17%
Management (lack of support or recognition	17%

Table 8 Reason employees are planning to leave the department

### **Appendix I** Mean Scores

Mean Score **Productivity Job Support and Tools** Provided with the tools and equipment needed to do job well 4.18 Provided with the communication needed to do job well 3.91 Physical work environment allows employees to fully 4.21 contribute to job Job Fit Job is a good fit with skills and interests 3.79 Job provides right level of challenge 3.45 **Quality of Service Provided** 4.00 Have support at work to provide high level of service Work unit is making an effort to improve service quality 4.12 Work unit measures and monitors to make sure they are 3.85 meeting their service quality **Compensation** Compensated fairly for job 3.42 **Talent Capacity Learning and Development Opportunities** 4.27 Organization supports work-related learning and development Have access to training opportunities 4.24 Training and development received met work-related needs 4.03 Satisfied with the quality of training and development received 3.88 from department Satisfied with the quality of training and development received 3.58 from PSC **Opportunities for Career Growth and Advancement** See a future for career working for the Government of Nova 3.78 Scotia Have opportunities for career growth within the Government 3.56 of Nova Scotia Have opportunities for career growth within the department 2.78 Satisfied with the way career growth and advancement is 3.35 progressing **Workplace Culture Coworker Relationship** The people I work with make an effort to help each other 4.00

	Mean Score
Have a positive working relationship with coworkers	4.19
Employee Involvement and Innovation	
Have opportunities to provide into decisions that affect their work	4.16
Shared goals are developed for work unit Supervisor considers their work-related ideas	4.03 4.53
Feel free to suggest innovative changes in their work	4.50
Innovation is valued in their work	4.31
Recognition	
Feel valued for contributions at work	4.19
Receive meaningful recognition for work well done	4.09
Receive recognition from supervisor for a job well done	4.41
Quality of Work Life	
Have support at work to balance work and personal life	4.09
Work-related stress is manageable	4.03
Workload is manageable	4.00
Healthy, Supportive and Respectful Environment	
Department promotes a healthy and supportive workplace	4.06
Department creates a safe work environment for its employees	4.31
Employees feel safe working in their job	4.59
Employees in department are respectful of employee differences	3.59
Treated respectfully at work	4.22
A healthy atmosphere (trust, mutual respect) exists in work unit	3.87
Diverse and Inclusive Environment	
Department values diversity	4.10
Department is actively implementing activities and practices that support a diverse workplace	3.73
Staffing Practices	
NS Government hires and promotes people based on their education, skills, knowledge and experience	3.45
In the department, the hiring, promotion and other staffing processes is based on their education, skills, knowledge and experience	4.03
In the department, the process of selecting a person for a position is clear	4.03

	Mean Score
In the department, the process of selecting a person for a position is timely	3.10
In the department, the process of selecting a person is fair	4.00
In the department, hiring, promotion and other staffing processes are free from favouritism	4.07
Performance Management Practices	
Have a clear understanding of how performance is evaluated	4.23
Most recent performance appraisal/review reflects performance	4.18
Leadership	
<u>Clear Direction and Expectations</u> Clearly understood the vision, mission and goals of the department	4.39
Know how work contributes to the achievement of department goals	4.55
Know how work contributes to the achievement of work unit goals	4.55
Have a clear understanding of their work and what is expected of them	4.39
Organizational Communication	
Essential information flows effectively from senior leadership to staff	3.61
Essential information flows effectively from staff to senior leadership	3.77
Essential information flows effectively between work units	3.48
Senior Leadership Practices	4.00
Department senior leadership sets a good example  Have confidence in the department senior leadership	4.06 4.10
Department senior leadership are genuinely interested in the	4.10
well-being of employees	2.04
Department senior leadership provides clear direction  Department senior leadership makes timely decisions	3.94 3.77
	3.77
<u>Direct Supervisory Practices</u>	
Employees can talk openly with the person they report to about work	4.61
Person report to is an effective leader	4.42 4.65
Employees have a positive working relationship with the person they report to  Person they report to manages conflict in the workgroup	4.65
Person they report to manages connect in the workgroup  Person they report to gives employees feedback on their work	4.13
performance Person they report to gives employees reedback on their work performance	4.52
resonancy report to maintains mgm standards of nonesty and	7.52

	Mean Score
integrity	
Satisfied with the quality of supervision received	4.45
Managers provide clear direction	4.00
Managers make timely decisions	3.94
<u>Overall</u>	
Work for an effective organization	4.03
Satisfied with my job	3.87
Satisfied with my department	3.87
Overall satisfied with work as a Government of Nova Scotia employee	4.06
Proud to tell people work as a Government of Nova Scotia employee	3.90
Prefer to stay with the Government of Nova Scotia, even if offered a similar job elsewhere	3.94
Inspired to give my very best	4.16
Would recommend the Government of Nova Scotia as a great place to work	3.87