

When the Bank published details of its new World Centre on the intranet, members working in Goodmans Fields were far from happy. Gogaburn staff clearly receive special treatment and better benefits than those working in London. Amongst the things that stood out was the provision of an on-site nursery at Gogaburn.

We decided we should approach the Bank on the matter, but felt we should first have your views on childcare as a whole, the support the Bank provides and what you want. We therefore carried out a survey, over four separate days in March and April last year on the Goodmans Fields campus, and had the results professionally analysed.

The survey was designed to ascertain how the individual dealt with childcare and how the Bank could help. Some 137 staff with children under sixteen were interviewed.

The majority required childcare whilst they were at work. Needs divided almost equally into full time, part time, before/after school and during school holidays. The average cost was £5.80 per hour. Only 13% had any backup if their regular care was unavailable or a child was taken ill suddenly. The majority of staff had had to take time off work during the last twelve months due to childcare problems, mostly as annual leave though some had had to make up the time instead. Special leave to deal with childcare emergencies was only granted in 11% of cases.

The majority of those interviewed wanted more assistance from the Bank in respect of childcare. RBS Elect vouchers only met 40% of childcare costs and had been taken up by only 11% of interviewees. The Bank's commitment, in relation to other comparable employers, to supporting childcare provision is minimal. While it says it is concerned to retain qualified staff, it actually does little to promote this when it comes to childcare support. Emergency provision, when regular provision was unexpectedly unavailable, along with on-site or local nursery facilities, would be the two things most welcome by staff, together with a more pro-active and understanding approach to childcare support in general. Gogaburn shows the Bank can do more.

In September, the Bank, having previously taken away our comments and concerns regarding childcare provision for consideration, eventually proudly announced that it would be providing help in respect of emergency childcare cover for those working at Gogaburn who have children up to primary school age. Whilst this step must be welcome by staff there, it further emphasises the continuing difference in approach to, and treatment of, Edinburgh and London based staff.