Tell us about your boss

IT'S NOT easy being a line manager; the pressures are there for everyone to see – especially in nursing. Line managers have the power to make or break careers. They must be fair to all their staff, but the bottom line is the work has to be done. A hard juggling act at the best of times, but for nurse managers these days is the added pressure of having to provide 24-hour patient care against a background of staff shortages.

So no one is going to come down too hard on the line manager who fails to implement the kind of employee friendly arrangements the government is talking about. Up against it, something has to give. Ironically, this short-term pragmatism is often what drives nurses out of the NHS and repels potential recruits.

One thing we know from our Making Time campaign survey is that when it comes to employee friendly policies, line managers are the key.
Your trust may have all the right words on the right pieces of paper, but if your line manager doesn’t have the will to make it work, you don’t get the time off. Alternatively, readers have told us of line managers prepared to stick their necks out, even where there is no policy to say the trust will back them up.

Nurses and police must support each other

PSYCHIATRIC nurse Lorette McQueen has been awarded £30,000 by a civil court, in damages against the Metropolitan Police. Ms McQueen suffered a terrible ordeal; she was arrested at gunpoint on suspicion of possessing a firearm in July 1996, while talking with two former patients.

In spite of showing five different types of identification, including a pass to Holloway Prison, she was taken to a police station, strip searched and detained for three hours before being released without charge.

Although the court ruled last week that the arrest was unlawful, it held that Ms McQueen had suffered an assault during the arrest. It resulted in her needing both psychiatric care and physiotherapy.

If your line manager has been there for you when you have needed it, why not give them a pat on the back?

Any NHS initiative designed to help nurses balance life and work will stand or fall depending on the commitment of frontline managers. That is why Nursing Standard is asking readers to tell us about the ones who get it right.

For details of how to nominate your line manager, see Making Time campaign page 26

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