

Center's 'sickout' staff returns

State workers who staged a sickout last Friday to protest what they said were inadequate staffing levels in three Staten Island Developmental Center buildings were back at work yesterday

in normal numbers.

The three buildings, 12, 13 and 15, are staffed by a combination of state employees and workers hired by the United Cerebral Palsy Association of New

York, a private group that took over care of more than 600 of the institution's retarded residents in September.

State workers, who declined to be identified, said the apparent job action was called to protest what they said were staff shortages in the shared-staff buildings.

Felton King, president of the Willowbrook institution's chapter of the Civil Service Employees Association, said the sickout, in which about one-quarter of 63 state workers assigned to the buildings failed to report on one shift had not been sanctioned by the union.

"I guess it was just a case of short illnesses," King said yesterday, adding that "overworked employees" had "recuperated enough to go back."

King said that a meeting between himself and Robert Schonhorn, executive director of UCP, is planned for tomorrow to discuss conditions in the three buildings.

Spokesmen for the state and UCP said yesterday that the facilities in which the apparent job action was taken are allotted similar coverage to other buildings on the grounds of the 382-acre institution.