

# Engaging your staff: the NHS staff engagement resource

**Supporting you to increase  
staff engagement  
in your organisation**



# Staff engagement in the NHS: a summary

This document gives you an introduction to the key points about staff engagement in the NHS: [Staff Engagement – Making a difference within your organisation](#)

After reading this, you can navigate your way around the rest of the resource to get detailed information to help increase staff engagement for you and your organisation.

If you need to prepare something urgently, use the links below to skip through the pack:

- Help with preparing an [engagement strategy](#)
- Help with convincing the board – as well as the article above, the following may be useful:

[Executive summary](#)

[Business case for staff engagement](#)

[Note on financial benefit](#)

- Skip straight to [Tips, tools and resources section](#)



# Introduction

This resource provides you with the information and tools you could need to help increase staff engagement in your organisation.

There is a wide range of information, from an introduction to staff engagement, to practical working examples, to evidence on the benefits your organisation can achieve from having an engaged workforce.


The information will be useful across all staff groups, from clinicians, HR and communications to senior management.



# User guide

This resource is a click and go guide which enables you to find the information you want on specific topics quickly and directly.







The contents page shows what each section of the document covers. Click the section you want and you will go straight to it.

When you are at a section page, click on the topic you are interested in to find out what information and tools are available. You can click on the  button at any time if you want to return to the contents page.



# Navigation guide

To help you navigate your way around the resource there are a number of clickable buttons that take you back or forward to set places in the resource.

-  Takes you to the next page
-  Takes you to the previous page
-  Takes you to the contents page
-  Takes you to the key summary page
-  Takes you to the key contacts and further help page
-  Takes you back to the beginning





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# Section 1: Introducing staff engagement in the NHS

What is staff engagement?

How is staff engagement measured?

How can I improve staff engagement?

The national work on staff engagement

Summary of the pledges to staff in the NHS Constitution

Do all organisations providing NHS services have to address staff engagement?

The staff engagement star



# What is staff engagement?

- Staff engagement describes what happens when people think and act in a positive way about the work they do, the people they work with and the organisation that they work in.
- There are many definitions of what staff engagement is but all share a common theme especially describing how people behave when they're engaged.
- We all know what staff engagement is when we see it, be it in the way work colleagues act, or in the way staff act in other workplaces, for instance when you go shopping.
- Click on the following text to read more on

[1\) how staff engagement is defined and what it looks like](#)

[2\) how it has developed](#)





# How is staff engagement measured?

- It is possible to measure staff engagement precisely through the use of surveys.
- As staff engagement covers a number of behaviours and ways people go about their work, it is possible to ask sets of questions that will show how engaged staff are at any point in time.
- To read more detail and see how staff engagement is measured and reported in the NHS click on the link:

[How is staff engagement measured](#)



# How can I improve staff engagement?

- It is possible to influence levels of engagement among staff in any organisation.
- To improve staff engagement you need to examine all parts of the system that impact on it.
- The staff engagement star is based on the views of staff across the NHS. Using this as a framework can help you increase staff engagement within your organisation.
- Click on the link below to see how:  
[How can I improve staff engagement](#)



# The national work on staff engagement

A range of national levers work together to ensure that NHS organisations aim for high levels of staff engagement, now and in the future:

- The [NHS Constitution](#) sets out in one place the rights and [pledges](#) that staff can expect
- [Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS](#) confirms the Government's commitment to staff engagement
- The [Operating Framework for the NHS in England 2011/12](#) sets expectations of organisations to achieve high levels of staff engagement
- The [standard contract](#) requires providers to complete the NHS staff survey
- [Quality Accounts](#) guidance recommends including NHS staff survey results in returns
- The [Care Quality Commission](#) makes judgements about providers based on information that it receives from a range of sources, including national staff experience information
- In the future, the NHS Commissioning Board and GP Consortia may consider providers' staff experience results when making informed commissioning decisions
- Other organisations, including the economic regulator, Healthwatch and Health and Well Being Boards, may use staff experience to inform their views on local service provision



# Summary of the pledges to staff in the NHS Constitution

## The NHS commits:

- to provide all staff with clear roles and responsibilities and rewarding jobs for teams and individuals that make a difference to patients, their families and carers and communities
- to provide all staff with personal development, access to appropriate training for their jobs and line management support to succeed
- to provide support and opportunities for staff to maintain their health, well-being and safety
- to engage staff in decisions that affect them and the services they provide, individually, through representative organisations and through local partnership working arrangements. All staff will be empowered to put forward ways to deliver better and safer services for patients and their families.

(Section 3a. *Staff – your rights and responsibilities* p10 The NHS Constitution for England)





# Do all organisations providing NHS services have to address staff engagement?

High levels of staff engagement lead to better patient outcomes and better use of resources. These are outcomes that all organisations providing NHS services should aspire to. They are outcomes that every organisation will be contracted to achieve.

[Click here](#) to see how staff engagement relates to the [NHS Outcomes Framework 2011/2012](#)

The Health Act 2009, which came into legal force on 19 January 2010, creates a statutory duty for all NHS bodies, primary medical services, and third sector and independent providers of NHS services in England to 'have regard to' the NHS Constitution when performing their functions. This duty also covers Monitor and the Care Quality Commission.





# The staff engagement star: excellent staff engagement results from a number of factors



# Section 2: The benefits of staff engagement, the evidence

Better staff engagement means better patient outcomes

Better staff engagement means better staff experiences

Better staff engagement means better overall performance

Better staff engagement means better financial performance

Financial efficiencies can be achieved as a result of high levels of staff engagement

High levels of staff engagement have a positive impact

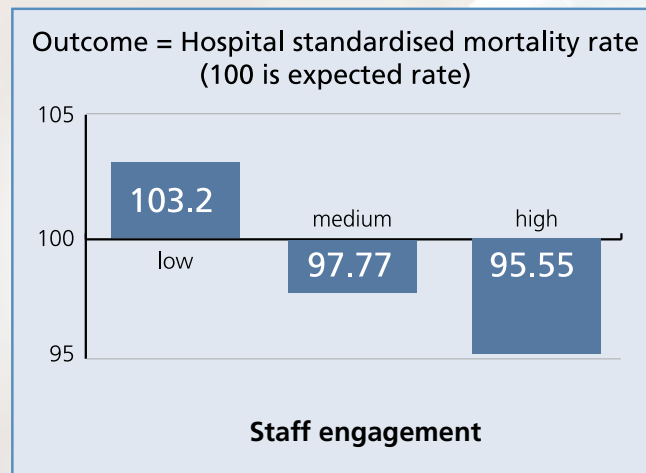
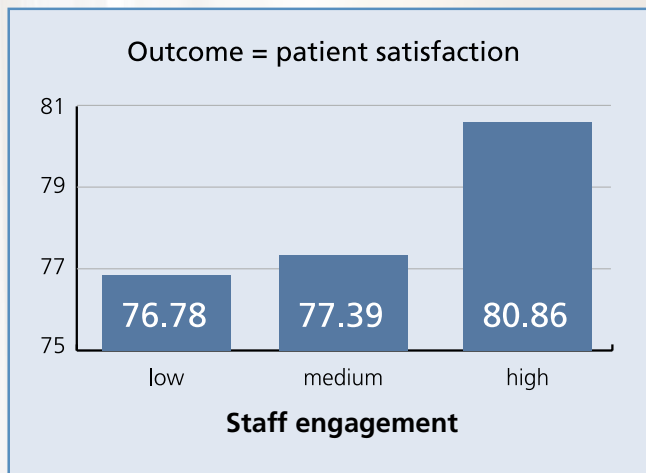
Experiences outside the NHS



# Better staff engagement means better patient outcomes

Research shows that where staff engagement scores are high, scores are also significantly **higher** for patient satisfaction and **lower** for standardised hospital mortality rates.

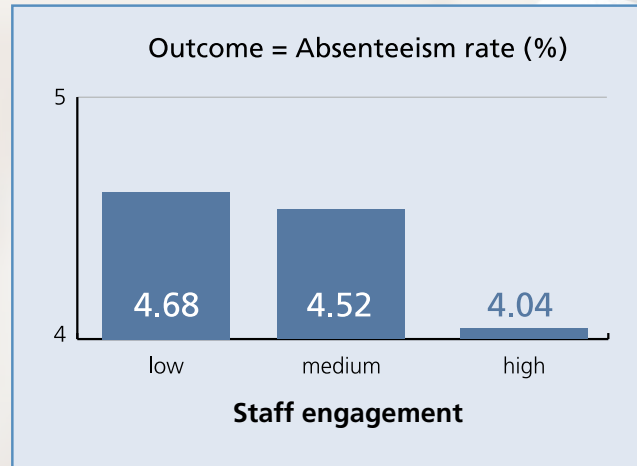
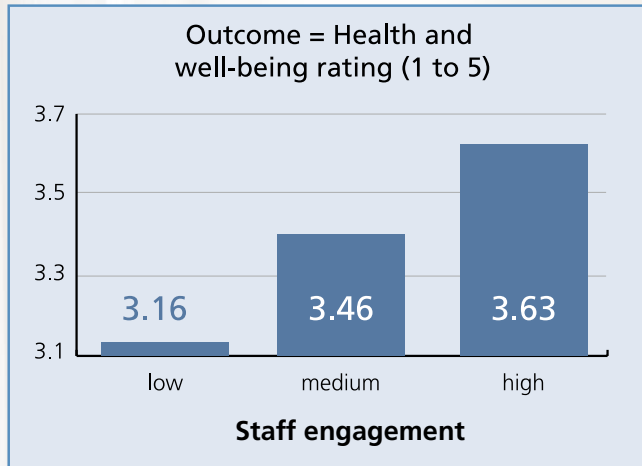
The charts below show these results notably moving from medium to high levels of staff engagement really makes a positive difference on patient outcomes:



# Better staff engagement means better staff experiences

Research shows that where staff engagement scores are high, scores are also significantly **higher** for staff health and well-being and **lower** for staff absenteeism.

The figures below show these results and that moving from medium to high levels of staff engagement makes a positive difference to staff experiences:



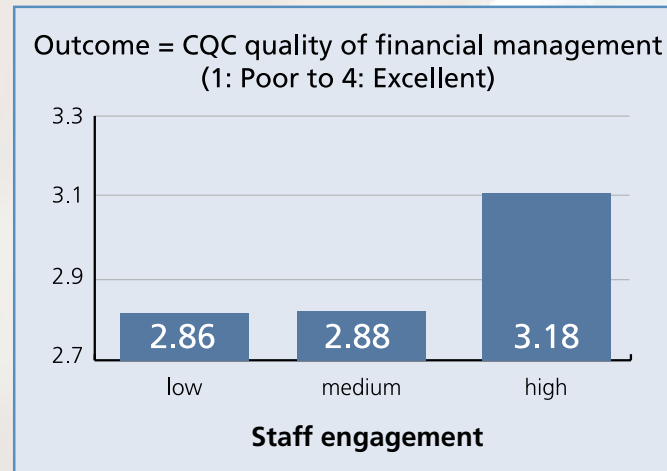
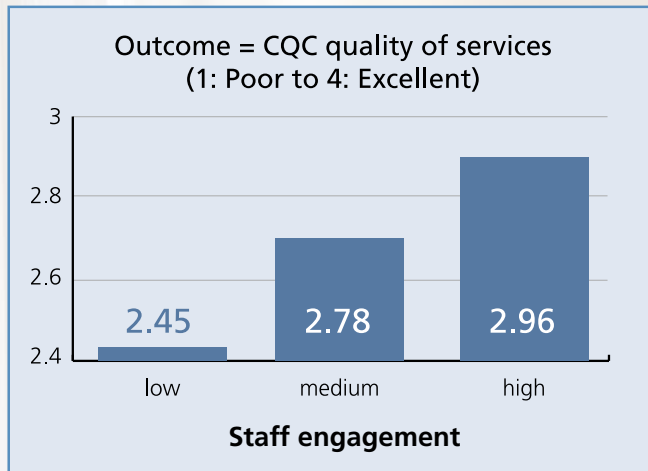
Click on the following link for a detailed insight on the importance of the health and well-being: [Staff engagement and health and well-being](#)



# Better staff engagement means better overall performance

Research shows that where staff engagement scores are high, scores are also significantly **higher** for performance as measured by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

The graphs below show these results and moving from medium to high levels of staff engagement makes a positive difference to the results of the headline CQC measures:





# Better staff engagement means better financial performance

High levels of staff engagement can lead to increased financial efficiencies as a result of a number of factors.

For example, reduced absenteeism associated with high staff engagement will save an average trust £235,000 a year in salary costs alone.

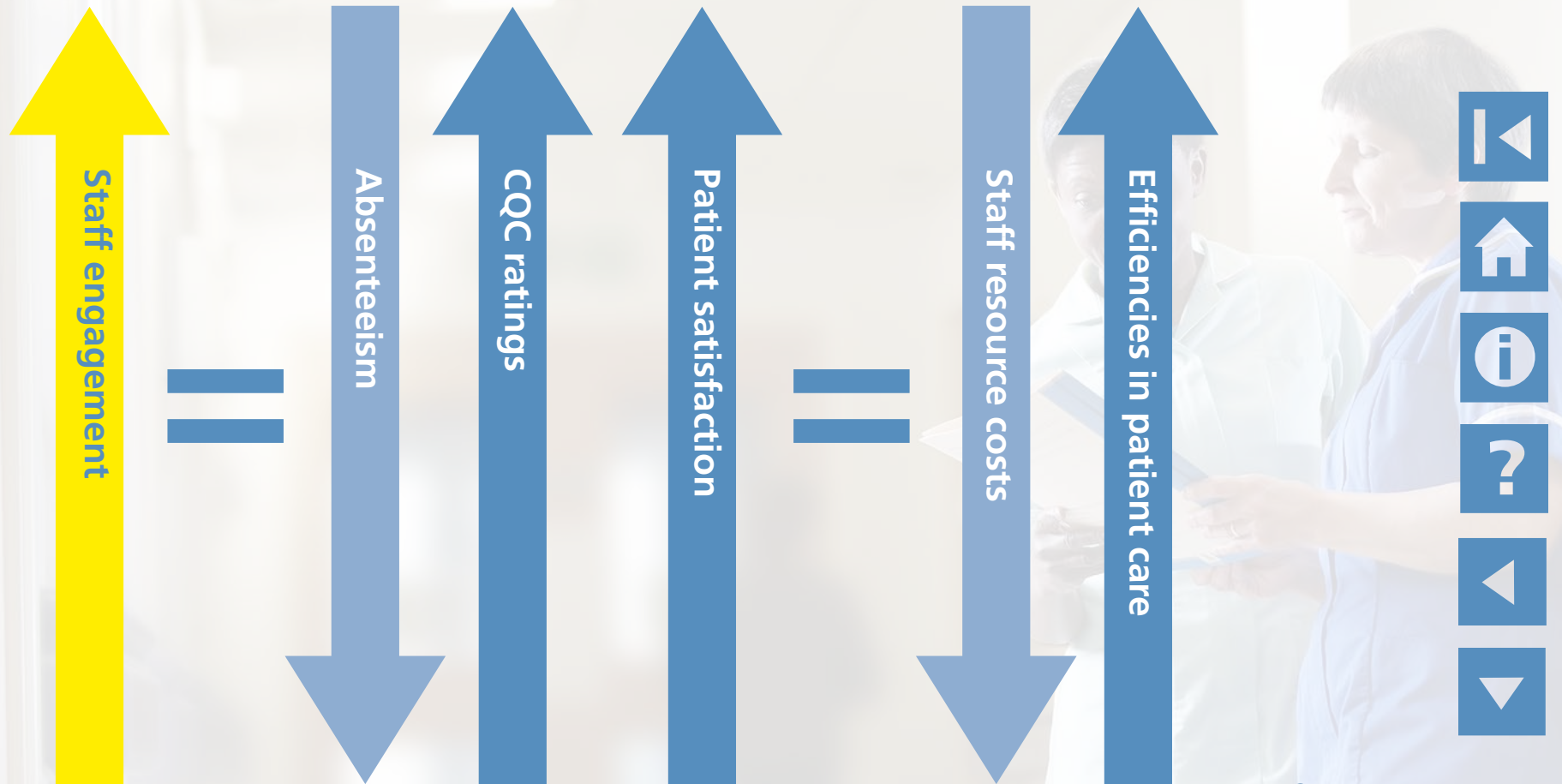
For a detailed explanation of the implication of these findings and how savings might be achieved click on the link below:

[\*\*Staff Engagement Insight: High engagement scores link to financial efficiencies in the NHS\*\*](#)

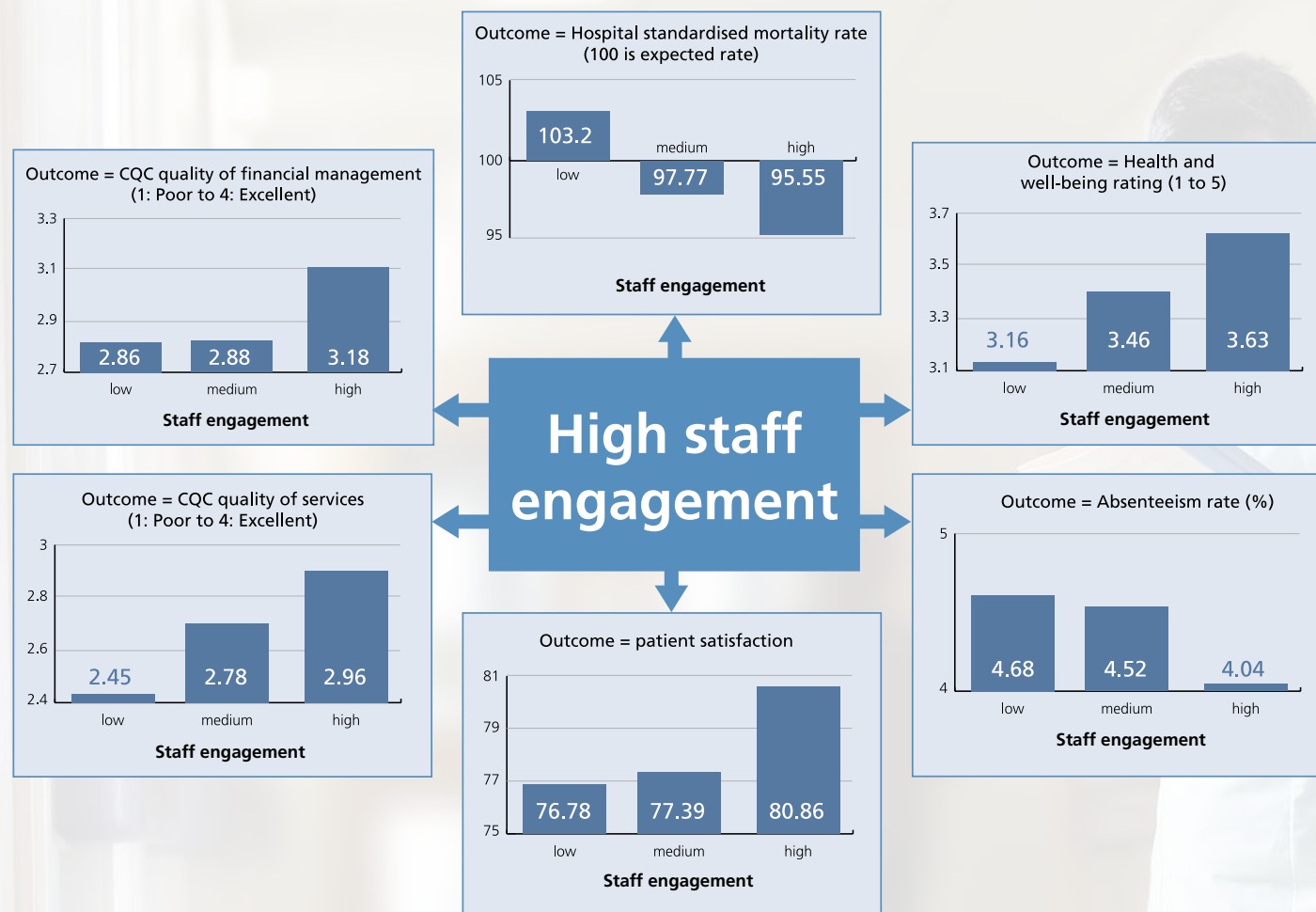
For a summary diagram [click here](#)



# Financial efficiencies can be achieved as a result of high levels of staff engagement



# High levels of staff engagement have a positive impact



# Experiences outside the NHS

The benefits of staff engagement are recognised by a wide range of organisations, both large and small, across varied sectors, both private and public. There are many detailed sources available to show you the evidence. Click on the following two links and use the extensive source lists within them:

**[1\) The Macleod review: An indispensable report featuring multiple case studies and discussion of the wider evidence](#)**

**[2\) Institute for Employment Studies review of current thinking](#)**

Below are some examples of organisations that realise the benefits an engaged workforce can bring. Nationwide Building Society uses its employee survey to track links with customer experience and branch profitability. First Direct has invested in improving staff experience in its call centres to avoid the high levels of disengagement usually found in them. The **[Cooperative Bank](#)** emphasises its distinct values as a means of fostering staff engagement and attracting talent in a highly competitive sector.

For more detailed examples click on the links below:

**[Engagement and the bottom line \(Sainsbury's\)](#)**

**[Engagement for improving public services \(Lewisham and Birmingham councils\)](#)**



# Engagement and the bottom line (Sainsbury's)

In 2004 Sainsbury's was losing market share and profits were at risk. A new chief executive identified staff disengagement as one cause of customer dissatisfaction. They developed a new business strategy to help improve staff engagement levels, which included:

- changing the way line managers manage, for example, introducing a daily meeting to allow instant staff feedback on operational issues
- introducing a new annual conference event to help update staff on its strategy and get their views
- development of an online communication tool to allow staff feedback in addition to its annual staff survey
- tracking of the links between staff and customer experience so that HR can focus on areas of concern
- bringing HR and customer service functions under the same directorate.

Sainsbury's believes its approach to staff engagement has been a key element in its more recent business success.





# Engagement for improving public services (Lewisham and Birmingham councils)

Lewisham and Birmingham councils have implemented innovative staff engagement strategies to help improve efficiency and services for local people.

Birmingham Council has been operating its staff engagement strategy (BEST) since 2009. BEST is based on “engagement leaders” whose main focus is to support staff to develop ideas for improving council services.

[Click here](#) for further information on the BEST programme.

“The Lewisham Way” is a local set of values which govern how staff are expected to work. Operational directors hold open meetings where staff can raise issues and ideas generated from staff have not only led to improved services and savings including major reductions in absence levels, but also an improvement in staff engagement levels (70 per cent of staff feel they understand the goals of the organisation) and resident satisfaction.



# Section 3: How to embed staff engagement in the NHS

Click on the links below for examples of trusts that are working to increase staff engagement, including the steps they took and what they have achieved so far.

[Providing better patient care](#)

[Achieving financial efficiency](#)

[Promoting a healthy and safe work environment](#)

[Delivering great management and leadership](#)

[Enabling involvement in decision making](#)

[Ensuring every role counts](#)

[Supporting personal development and training](#)



# Providing better patient care: St George's Healthcare NHS Trust

Improved staff engagement can help deliver better care for patients.

The St George's Healthcare NHS Trust decided to focus on improving engagement in its clinical support staff.

- It set up a programme to ask staff in non clinical roles to look at how they interacted with patients and visitors.
- Staff visited a range of other public service organisations to see how they were treated as customers. They then used their experience to review and develop ideas to improve service delivery.
- The trust reports an increased willingness of staff to recommend it as a place to receive treatment.

[Click here](#) for further information and to download a presentation from St George's Healthcare NHS Trust.



# Achieving financial efficiency: Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust

Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust is a high performing hospital trust in the North West. Like all NHS organisations it needs to make a recurrent cost reduction (£48m over the three year period to the end of 2012-13).

It has sought to get staff to help find ways to reduce waste, improve performance and [efficiency](#).

Staff can make suggestions through a scheme called 'Smart Health = Smart Savings'. This has attracted hundreds of ideas. These are considered on a monthly basis, the best ones being selected for development and consideration for encouragement awards and higher levels of recognition. Ideas have been highly practical, for example new scrub brushes in operating theatres.

This initiative is part of a wider programme which includes major changes to staff appraisal linked to the development of local values and performance management.

Improving staff engagement can help achieve the objective of the Quality, Innovation, Productivity and Prevention (QIPP) programme.

[Click here](#) for more information and resources on QIPP.





# Promoting a healthy and safe work environment: Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Where employees feel that their health and well-being is being safeguarded they are more likely to feel engaged.

In 2010, Homerton University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust decided to tackle long standing issues of poor workplace health and high levels of absence. Working with a private sector partner the trust aimed to develop an Olympic Legacy by:

- improving occupational health provision and promoting a healthier lifestyle
- focusing on particular groups such as midwives with long standing issues which were having an impact on service delivery.

Ongoing evaluation of the programme showed that there were measurable positive effects on the health of participants and overall absence levels fell from over four to around three per cent during the programme. The trust also improved its staff engagement score from 3.80 in 2009 to 3.87 in 2010 and in scores for health and well-being.

It is important for the NHS to address staff health and well-being as identified through the two recent reviews:

**“Working for a healthier tomorrow” – Dame Carol Black’s review of the health of Britain’s working age population**

**NHS health and well-being – Dr Steven Boorman’s review**





# Delivering great management and leadership: South Essex University Hospital Foundation Trust (SEPT)

High quality leadership and management at all levels is a vital component of staff engagement.

The South Essex University Hospital Foundation Trust (SEPT) is a mental health provider. It has had a long standing commitment to staff engagement and this approach is led by its chief executive.

- Engagement is encouraged at all levels and the chief executive and other senior leaders have an open approach to communication with a focus on listening to views of front line staff especially around service redesign and change.
- A lot of effort is made to explain the organisational objectives and values. Line managers are supported to enable them to develop engagement with their teams and there is delegation of decision making to teams.
- From 2009 to 2010 the trust improved its NHS staff survey staff engagement score from 3.77 to 3.93 and maintained position as top rated mental health trust.

[Click here](#) for further information on SEPT.



# Enabling involvement in decision making: The Royal Bolton Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

Being involved is a key element of achieving a sense of engagement.

The Royal Bolton Hospital NHS Foundation Trust is a large acute provider. In 2009 it embarked on a project with the aim to “make Bolton Hospital a great place to work”. The aim was to embed engagement into the trust through a series of listening events with staff aimed to get their ideas and thoughts to support ongoing service improvements.

- The trust used a range of methods to seek to involve staff ranging from ‘big conversation’ style events to taking soundings from a wide range of staff and smaller ‘focus group’ type events.
- It sought to develop initial actions that could be taken to secure improvements in short term known as ‘just do it’ actions. In longer term they have identified that action needs to be taken in areas such as line manager training, appraisal systems and local values.
- The work on engagement has been conducted in partnership with their local staff side and with support from the national Social Partnership Forum.
- From 2009 to 2010 the trust improved its NHS staff survey staff engagement score from 3.60 to 3.66.



# Ensuring every role counts: Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust

Evidence from research shows that staff engagement will be sustained where staff have a clear idea of how their role contributes to the overall objectives of the organisation.

Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust is a small specialist hospital in the North West. It is the leading integrated neurosciences trust in the UK and it also provides diagnostic and treatment services. As part of ongoing programme to improve services it has developed a local set of values known as the Walton Way.

- Based on the values in the NHS Constitution the trust has developed its own local set of values to help improve staff engagement. The Walton Way values are: **Caring, Dignity, Respect, Openness, Pride**
- The trust seeks to reflect the Walton Way in its appraisal processes and in how managers should lead their teams.
- It also seeks to have an open organisational culture with two-way dialogue with staff.





# Supporting personal development and training: Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust

Personal development has a positive link to high levels of staff engagement. It can increase effectiveness and provide opportunities for individuals to progress and can help staff to feel valued by the organisation.

Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust is a large acute provider in the North West. In recent years it has focused on training and development and in particular improving appraisal rates and take-up of the Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF).

- The trust sought to simplify KSF processes and ensure that it was seen as useful by line managers and staff.
- This has new core dimensions including safety and quality.
- It also links KSF assessment to training via its personal development planning process.
- It is a top rated acute trust and has the best 2010 staff survey score for effective team working and staff believing their role makes a difference to patients.

[Click here](#) for further information on Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust.



# Section 4:

## Tips, tools and resources

Practical advice for increasing staff engagement

- [Top tips on improving staff engagement](#)
- [What to include in your engagement strategy](#)
- [Tool for continuous assessment of staff engagement](#)
- [Communicating and involving your staff](#)
- [Advice for line managers](#)
- [Tips for staff engagement during the transition](#)
- [Tips for induction to support staff engagement](#)
- [Using your NHS staff survey scores](#)
- [Tips for staff engagement and partnership working](#)

Headline messages

- [Executive summary](#)
- [Summary of the benefits of staff engagement](#)
- [The staff engagement star](#)
- [Business case for staff engagement](#)
- [Note on financial benefits](#)

Useful links

- [The NHS Constitution toolkit](#)
- [Living local values](#)
- [The Productive Series](#)
- [The Medical Engagement Scale](#)

- [Test your understanding of this resource](#)
- [Give us your feedback](#)





# Tips for staff engagement during the transition

The NHS Employers website has information on how the Government is legislating for and implementing the reforms set out in its Health White Paper in July 2010.

The site provides signposts to all the relevant, legislation, consultations and guidance issued by the Department of Health on the transition to the new arrangements.

[Click here](#) to go to these pages.



# The NHS Constitution toolkit

The NHS Constitution, its pledges, principles, values and responsibilities need to be fully embedded and ingrained into everything the NHS does.

All NHS organisations are under a legal obligation to have regard to the NHS Constitution in all their decisions and actions.

To help you do this, the Department of Health and NHS Employers have produced a suite of guidance and tools which can be found by clicking the link below

[NHS Constitution toolkit](#)



# Living local values

The NHS Values underpin the rights and responsibilities that the NHS has to patients and staff and provide everyone in the country with a common vision of what the NHS stands for.

Working with the staff, many employers have developed their own local values. The NHS Employers website has examples that look at the actions that have been taken to involve staff in the development of a set of local values, how this was done and offers tips for other trusts carrying out similar work.

[Click here](#) to visit the NHS Employers website section on living local values.



# The Productive Series

The Productive Series supports NHS teams to redesign and streamline the way they manage and work. This helps achieve significant and lasting improvements – predominately in the extra time that they give to patients, as well as improving the quality of care delivered whilst reducing costs.

The key to the success of The Productive Series is that improvements are driven by staff themselves, by empowering them to ask difficult questions about practice and to make positive changes to the way they work. The process promotes a continuous improvement culture leading to real savings in materials, reducing waste and vastly improving staff morale.

For further information and resources [click here](#) to visit the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement website.



# The Medical Engagement Scale

The Medical Engagement Scale (MES) is a tool designed to assess medical engagement in management and leadership in NHS organisations.

The MES differentiates between the individual's personal desire to be engaged and the organisation's encouragement of involvement.

It also includes a framework of organisational strategies to enhance medical engagement and performance. The scale is particularly useful in respect to strategic planning and service delivery.

For further information and resources [click here](#) to visit the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement website.





# Test your understanding of this resource

A survey has been designed to help test your understanding of this resource and the main points you need to know about staff engagement.

Click here [www.nhsemployers.org/staffengagement](http://www.nhsemployers.org/staffengagement) to complete the survey.



# Give us your feedback

This is designed to be a growing resource and new information may be added at any time.

Please help us to keep this resource up to date by letting us know of any problems you find. Email: [staffengagement@nhsemployers.org](mailto:staffengagement@nhsemployers.org)

You can also leave feedback online at  
[www.nhsemployers.org/staffengagement](http://www.nhsemployers.org/staffengagement)



# Key contacts and further help

If you want to find out more about any aspect of staff engagement there is a wealth of information in [section 4: tips, tools and resources on staff engagement](#)

If the information in this or any other section does not answer the questions you have, please email NHS Employers at:  
[staffengagement@nhsemployers.org](mailto:staffengagement@nhsemployers.org)



# How is staff engagement defined and what does it look like?

We know that staff engagement can be seen in the way people think and behave at work. People with high levels of engagement will think and behave positively, which will enable them to have high levels of performance at work.

This is summed up very well by Lord Currie, former Dean of Cass Business School in the Macleod review of staff engagement in the UK<sup>1</sup> who says:

*"You sort of smell it, don't you, that engagement of people as people. What goes on in meetings, how people talk to each other. You get the sense of energy, engagement, commitment, belief in what the organisation stands for"*

The main question this way of thinking about staff engagement raises is, 'if we can sense what staff engagement is, can we define it?'

Previous work looking to answer this question shows that there is not one simple catch all

definition that covers what staff engagement is.

Importantly, staff engagement means different things to different people, in different places at different times.

Instead of a simple definition, a wide range of descriptions of engagement are now available, mostly developed from research with employees in different settings, focussing on what engaged staff will feel, how they will act and the behaviours they will display.

What can be done is to look at these descriptions and pick out the important themes that are considered by most to be central to describing staff engagement, in terms of what staff feel and how they act. These are summarised as:

- When at work, engaged staff will experience a blend of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, involvement in

the direction of their own job and a feeling of empowerment

- Engaged staff will be advocates for their organisation and the work it does
- Engaged staff will have a desire to improve the way things are in their organisation, both for themselves, their colleagues and the outcomes of the organisation itself
- Engaged staff will work well in teams, encouraging and facilitating the development of others to achieve positive outcomes for the team

Achieving engagement is two-way. Organisations must work to engage their staff, who in turn will have a choice about the level of engagement to give back. Over time, each will reinforce the other.

Overall, it needs to be stressed that the wide range of available definitions and their different aspects is not a bad thing.

1. [Engaging for Success: enhancing performance through employee engagement, MacLeod D. and Clarke N., 2009](#)



# How is staff engagement defined and what does it look like?

The variation in definitions suggests that any work on staff engagement has to be tailored to suit the specific factors that are most relevant in any organisation or specific local workplace within that organisation.

Considering all the aspects that previous work has uncovered, the image opposite sums up some of the key ways in which an engaged member of staff might think and act at work. This can also be interpreted to give an explanation of what staff engagement might look like when observing how people work.

Focusing on ways to help staff achieve these positive behaviours has been the key point of staff engagement work that has been undertaken in many companies.

In reality, it doesn't matter how staff engagement is defined, as long as strategies can be implemented that deliver an engaged workforce.





# How has staff engagement developed?

## Past development:

- To understand more about staff engagement it is worth thinking about the different theories and work that have led us to where we are now, with staff engagement being a major part of strategy across organisations in the full range of different sectors.
- Trying to affect how staff feel about and act at work to improve performance is not new, it has been around since the early 1900s, when purpose built factory villages such as Bourneville took workers out of inner city slums to locations that would give them better lives, centred around their place of work.
- By the 1930s the importance of managers, rather than location, was recognised; by leading, motivating and communicating directly with employees it was managers that followed set systems who could help increase productivity.

- Through the 1950s to the 1980s the established ideas moved on to recognise that rather than just manage employees; emotional factors such as recognition and responsibility were needed to help create motivated workers, with an associated increase seen in production rates.
- In the 1980s and 1990s management philosophies and practices developed that encouraged workers to share their ideas and initiatives. Involving them in, for example, the development and monitoring of business process.
- These previous developments all contributed to the design of wider Human Resource Management (HRM) systems that help create a positive feeling for employees while also achieving the wider goals of a given business.
- Staff engagement as a concept is the culmination of all of these theories and applications and forms an integral part of successful HRM systems within all sectors of employment.

## Future development:

- We now know that staff engagement is not a one-size fits all measure across the NHS, and it needs work at the local level to assess exactly what is important where, and what can be done to improve levels of engagement for staff.
- In itself, staff engagement will always be a developing concept, and one that is not set in stone across any organisation.
- As we learn more about the way staff experience their work, the way engagement practices are constructed will evolve.



# How is staff engagement measured in the NHS?

Levels of staff engagement are usually measured through an overall score calculated from responses to a number of questions in surveys given out to staff in organisations.

Because we know that there is not one universal definition of staff engagement, each survey can ask different questions to make up the overall engagement score, usually dependent on the structure of the organisation taking part in the survey, and the type of work that it does.

To enable specific measurement of engagement levels in the NHS, a staff engagement indicator has been introduced to the annual NHS staff survey, which is currently completed by all NHS trusts and will be a contractual requirement for all organisations delivering NHS-funded care.

To develop the staff engagement indicator in the NHS staff survey, stakeholders across the healthcare system worked with experts to develop a score that covers the factors that we know help create staff engagement.

The overall score is calculated from responses to questions that cover three key components of staff engagement in the NHS:

## **Involvement**

- How staff feel about their role in decisions and changes that affect them and the place they work.

## **Advocacy**

- How positive staff are about the quality of their organisation for patients and themselves.

## **Motivation**

- How staff feel about their job and how they feel when doing it.

The results from the following questions in the survey are used in the calculation of the overall staff engagement score:

## **Involvement**

- I am able to make suggestions to improve the work of my team/department
- There are frequent opportunities for me to show initiative in my role
- I am able to make improvements happen in my area of work

## **Advocacy**

- Care of patients/service users is my trusts top priority
- I would recommend my trust as a place to work
- If a friend or relative needed treatment I would be happy with the standard of care provided by this trust



# How is staff engagement measured in the NHS?

## Motivation

- I look forward to going to work.
- I am enthusiastic about my job.
- Time passes quickly when I am at work.

All of the questions are answered on a five point scale, where 1 is the lowest score you could give, and 5 the highest. With the numbers corresponding to either how much staff agree with the question, or how often it happens.

These scores are then combined to give an overall engagement score between 1 and 5, with 5 being the highest that could be achieved. As an illustration, in 2009 the overall score for acute trusts in the NHS was 3.64.

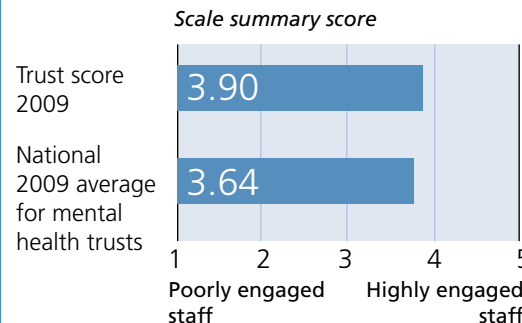
The graph opposite shows how the staff engagement scores are reported to each trust as part of their staff survey results.

## Appendix 1

### Overall staff engagement score for South Essex Partnership Foundation Trust (SEPT) benchmarked against other mental health trusts.

The figure below shows how SEPT compares with other mental health trusts on an overall measure of staff engagement. Possible scores range from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating that staff are poorly engaged (with their work, their team and their trust) and 5 indicating that staff are highly engaged. The trust's score of 3.90 was in the highest (best) 20 per cent when compared with trusts of a similar type.

#### Overall staff engagement (The higher the score the better)



This overall staff engagement score has been calculated for the first time this year. It uses the individual questions that make up the Key Findings 33, 36 and 37. These Key Findings (KF) relate to the following aspects of staff engagement: staff members' perceived ability to contribute to improvements at work (KF33); their willingness to recommend the trust as a place to work or receive treatment (KF36); and the extent to which they feel motivated and engaged with their work (KF37).



# How is staff engagement measured in the NHS?

The table opposite shows how Mid Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust compares with other acute trusts on each of the sub-dimensions of staff engagement.

Full details of how the overall staff engagement measure was created can be found in the document *Making sense of your staff survey data*, which can be downloaded from [www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)

The Department of Health has produced a framework to help NHS organisations develop local staff engagement policies. The can be downloaded from [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)

	<b>Ranking, compared with all acute trusts</b>
<b>Overall staff engagement</b>	Lowest (worst) 20 per cent
<b>KF33 Staff ability to contribute towards improvements at work</b> <i>(The extent to which staff are able to make suggestions to improve the work of their team, have frequent opportunities to show initiative in their role, and are able to make improvements at work)</i>	Lowest (worst) 20 per cent
<b>KF36 Staff recommendation of the trust as a place to work of receive treatment</b> <i>(The extent to which staff think care of patients/service users is the Trust's top priority, would recommend to others as a place to work, and would be happy with the standard of care provided by the Trust if a friend or relative needed treatment)</i>	Lowest (worst) 20 per cent
<b>KF37 Staff motivation at work</b> <i>(The extent to which they look forward to going to work, and are enthusiastic about and absorbed in their jobs)</i>	Below (worse than) average



# How can I improve staff engagement?

We know that staff engagement is seen in the ways that people behave, think and act. Influencing these things in a positive way will increase the level of engagement that staff have at work.

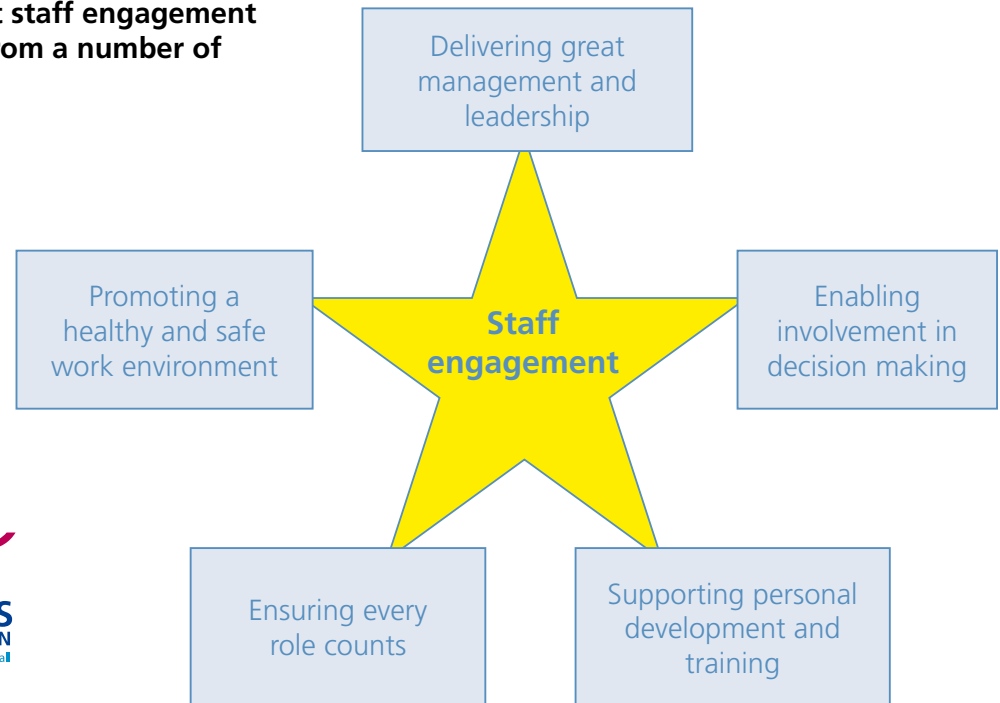
The below model shows the parts of the system that can be worked on by organisations and individuals in the NHS to get excellent staff engagement.

In the model shown in this image, each factor on the five points of the star feed into staff engagement.

The five factors points are all interlinked in two ways:

- 1) Getting one point to work really well will mean the other elements are more likely to be developed at the same time.
- 2) Once all the points are in place and operating effectively, this is when higher levels of staff engagement will be achieved and NHS staff survey scores will improve.

**The staff engagement star:  
excellent staff engagement  
results from a number of  
factors**





# How can I improve staff engagement?

**Great management and leadership**, which among other factors, includes visibility, accountability and good communication, needs to run throughout the organisation, from the board, through to senior managers and as important, to first line managers.

If this flows in the best way it can, both down and back up through your management structure you will have one of the key components of staff engagement in place.

**Involvement in decision making** means making sure staff feel they have influence on the direction of their work, changes made to working practices and other decisions that affect patient care taken across the organisation.

This process cannot be a one off exercise and to be most effective has to include a circular process of consulting staff, acting on what they say, asking staff about the consequences, making adjustments as necessary and then consulting staff again.

Ways to achieve increased staff involvement include working in partnership with the unions, having an effective communications programme and promoting proactive work

on the NHS staff survey results in your organisation.

**The right training and development** needs to be identified and provided to suit the needs of both individual staff and the organisation over time.

Through using the principles of great management and leadership, together with involvement in decision making, the organisation as a whole will more easily identify areas for development both in teams and for individuals. This can help achieve a better quality of work for colleagues and a consequential improvement in care for patients.

**Making every role count** is a crucial factor in aligning staff engagement with the vision and aims of the organisation itself.

Each and every staff member has to be enabled to understand how their role fits into the overall structure of the organisation and how they actively help achieve the ultimate outcome of better patient care.

If the three key factors above this are effectively implemented, by their nature they

will combine to help achieve making every role count in your organisation.

**A healthy, safe, work environment** needs to be provided and maintained so that staff have high levels of health and well-being and feel protected and secure at work at all times.

Where this type of environment exists in your organisation, staff can work more effectively in their day to day jobs and will be more receptive to the other key factors in the model.

**For you to improve staff engagement, you need to start by looking at the strengths and weaknesses of your organisation against each of the factors in the staff engagement model and then think about how you can address the weak areas while maintaining or improving the strong areas.**



# Staff engagement and the NHS Outcomes Framework

*"A dip in staff morale is the first sign of a dip in quality."*

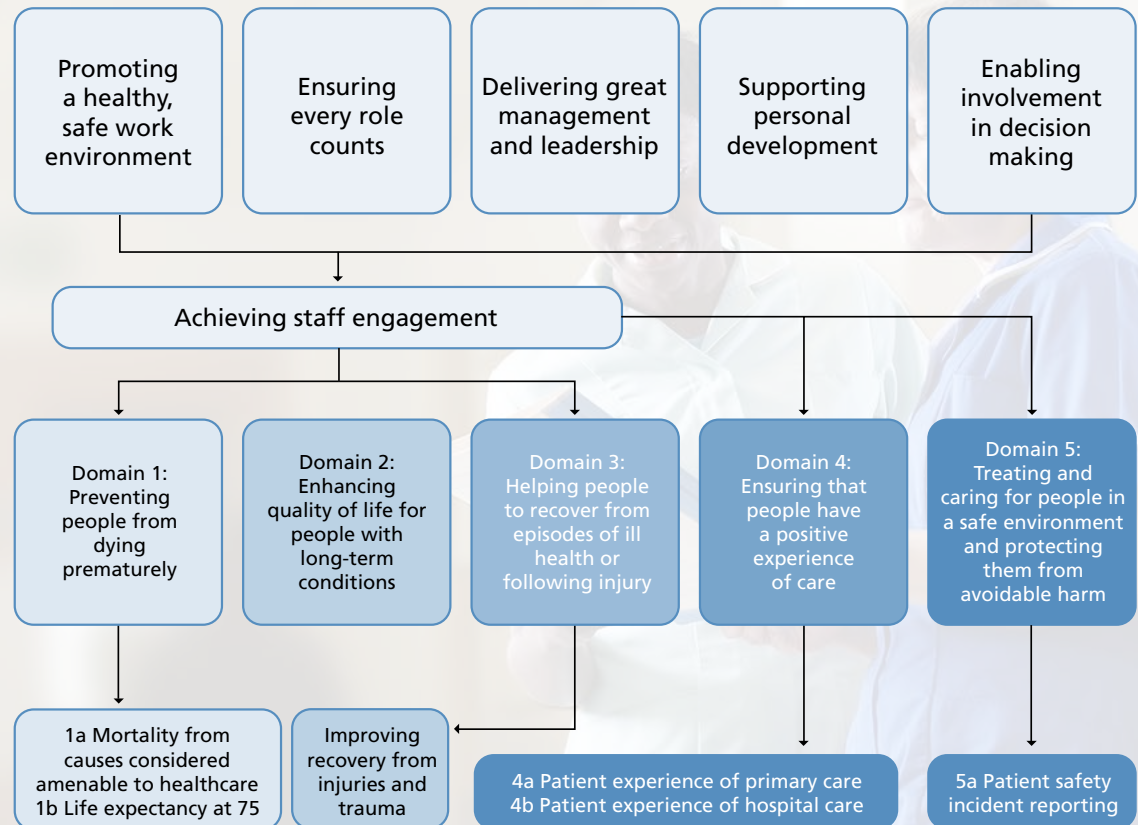
(Sir David Nicholson, SPF Feb. 2011)

Evidence from public and private sectors shows that high levels of staff engagement can be achieved if an NHS organisation supports staff in five key areas:

- Promoting a healthy, safe work environment
- Ensuring every role counts
- Delivering great management and leadership
- Supporting personal development
- Enabling involvement in decision making

Evidence also shows direct links between these areas, staff engagement and the domains and improvement indicators that form the Outcomes Framework.

The diagram shows what can be achieved in the NHS Outcomes Framework as a result of supporting staff engagement.



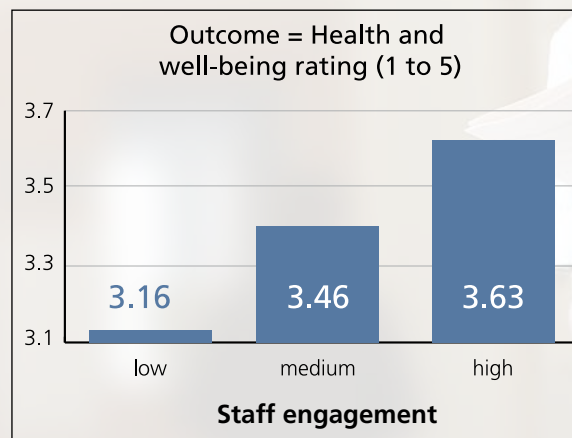
# Staff engagement insight: High levels of staff health and well-being are closely linked with high levels of staff engagement in the NHS

New research findings show that staff engagement is directly linked with multiple aspects of the experience staff have at work. This gives organisations that provide NHS services more evidence that building and increasing levels of staff engagement can lead to improvements in a wide range of outcomes.

An important connection that has been highlighted by the research is between staff engagement and the health and well-being of staff. An increasing body of evidence, such as the Boorman review of health and well-being in the NHS, show that the level of general health and well-being of any workforce is a key indicator of, and contributor to, increasing organisational performance.

To test for links between health and well-being and staff engagement in the NHS, researchers at Aston Business School performed statistical analyses to compare the two factors and found:

**Where NHS trusts have high levels of staff engagement, there are correspondingly high levels of staff health and well-being.**



- The chart below shows that the lowest levels of staff engagement are associated with the lowest health and well-being in NHS trusts.
- Those trusts ranking in the lowest 10 per cent of staff engagement scores show much lower overall levels of health and well-being than the middle ranking trusts, suggesting that even a small improvement in engagement levels could lead to significant improvements.



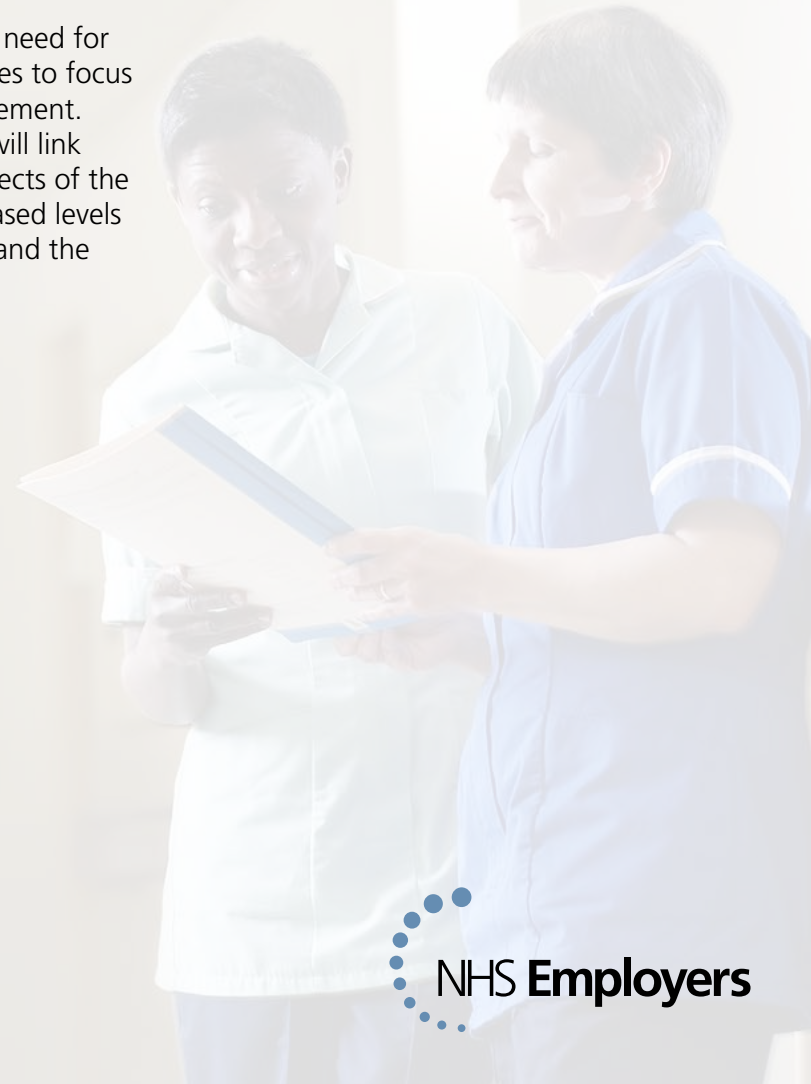


# Staff engagement insight: High levels of staff health and well-being are closely linked with high levels of staff engagement in the NHS

The benefits of moving from low to high levels of health and well-being are documented widely and can be seen for both individuals and subsequently for the organisations in which they work:

- Individuals with high levels of health and well-being have lower absence rates, are at a much lower risk of long term health factors and are more likely to display positive behaviour changes, such as increased morale over time.
- These high levels of health and well-being for individuals also translate into benefits for whole organisations, helping them function more effectively in terms of both financial management and delivery of quality care. Lower sickness absence and turnover deliver efficiencies through resource savings that can then be used across the organisation. Where individual staff display positive behaviours, patients are much more likely to not only receive higher quality care, but report it themselves in survey results.

This new evidence strengthens the need for organisations delivering NHS services to focus on policies to promote staff engagement. Achieving high staff engagement will link into high levels for many other aspects of the staff experience. In this case, increased levels of health and well-being for staff, and the associated benefits from that.





# Staff engagement: executive summary

## What is staff engagement?

Staff engagement is a measure of employees' emotional attachment to their job, colleagues and organisation which profoundly influences their experiences at work and their willingness to learn and perform.

**Engaged employees are fully involved in, enthusiastic about and committed to their work and willing 'to go the extra mile.'**

High levels of engagement result from a combination of experiences at work which includes involvement in decision making, personal development and training, great management and leadership and a healthy, safe, work environment, where every role counts.

## The importance of staff engagement

Through the pledges in the NHS Constitution the NHS has committed to ensure staff have a positive experience at work.

Through *Equity and excellence: liberating the NHS*, the coalition government has made a commitment to uphold the NHS Constitution and to promote staff engagement.

A range of national levers work together to ensure that NHS organisations aim for high levels of staff engagement including; *The Operating Framework for the NHS in England 2011/12*, The standard contract, Quality Accounts, and the Care Quality Commission.

**The way that highly engaged staff act at work can have a major impact on patient choice, response to treatment and overall health.**

Evidence tells us that highly engaged and empowered staff not only generate better outcomes for patients but there are further benefits such as:

- improved quality of services
- reduced patient mortality
- improved staff health and well-being
- lower levels of sickness absence
- greater financial efficiencies.

## Action for senior leaders

Senior leaders within NHS organisations have the most influence in making important changes within their trusts.

To assess the need for change, the NHS staff survey reveals a great deal about staff engagement. It provides a structured, evidence-based way for employers to engage with their staff and to gather information about important areas relating to staff experience, including where staff can see potential and actual risks.

Measuring and acting on staff experience information collected from the national NHS staff survey is therefore important for delivering improvements for staff, patients and the organisation.

**A series of trusts have already seen significant benefits, including financial savings, from making small changes based on recommendations from staff survey results.**



# Staff engagement: executive summary

There are a number of ways in which senior leaders can develop a culture of engagement within their organisation, these include:

- **making a commitment to employee development**
- **encouraging employees to challenge assumptions and voice their opinions**
- **showing that employees are valued**
- **acting in an honest and consistent manner**
- **being visible and available to employees at all levels.**

In challenging times, maintaining an engaged workforce is more important than ever. Staff have an invaluable perspective on what is happening within their organisation and their views of how their service is operating provide an important perspective to inform service delivery.

## **Purpose of this staff engagement resource**

This resource has been designed to help organisations to improve staff engagement. It contains a wide scope of information and tools from the research and evidence base to practical advice.

Senior leaders may find it helpful to read the following:

- [Staff engagement – Making a difference within your organisation](#)
- [Staff engagement insight: High engagement scores link to financial efficiencies in the NHS](#)
- [The business case for staff engagement](#)

In addition the following report provides comprehensive information on the role of leadership in staff engagement:

- [Leading for engagement: how senior leaders engage their people. A study into engaging leadership practices](#)



# Top tips on improving staff engagement

Staff engagement is an integral part of employment policy.

## 1. The organisation should:

- have a clear business strategy that has been discussed with staff
- have communication mechanisms to allow dialogue with staff
- ensure staff understand how their role supports overall objectives.

## 2. Line managers should engage staff by:

- ensuring the team meets regularly and discusses how to improve its effectiveness
- encouraging senior managers to involve staff in decision making
- ensuring effective communication between senior management and staff encouraging staff to suggest and explore new ideas for improving services.

## 3. The organisation should measure and monitor staff engagement through:

- local staff surveys (see section on [continuous assessment of staff engagement](#)) for advice
- the national NHS staff survey – using the national staff survey individual trusts can benchmark their level of engagement over time and against similar organisations.

## 4. Experience in those organisations which have successfully improved staff engagement include:

- staff engagement is part of wider staff experience and is particularly challenging to maintain during a period of major organisational change
- there needs to be strong support for staff engagement from senior leaders and the board giving support to HR, and HR also needs to involve communications colleagues

- senior leaders need to act in an engaging way themselves 'walking the walk' well as 'talking the talk'
- organisations need to prioritise and create sustainable staff engagement programmes and find ways to develop capacity.





# How to develop a staff engagement strategy

It is essential that staff engagement strategies are developed according to local conditions and based on discussion with key stakeholders.

Developing your approach to staff engagement may feel like an overwhelming challenge. Given the range of other issues facing the NHS, it may even feel like a distraction. Improving staff engagement is however a key part of meeting these challenges as it is linked to better financial performance, increased staff health and well-being and improved services for patients.

## First steps

- Assess the current levels of staff engagement for an overview of current issues and areas for action. See [making effective use of the staff survey](#) and [tips for continually assessing staff engagement](#) for advice of how to do this.
- Secure support for the new focus through a discussion with the board/senior leaders.
- Organise direct engagement between senior leaders and front line staff. This needs to be done carefully to avoid being tokenistic or unsustainable.
- Ensure line managers understand and feel they are part of the new approach, for example, by running briefing or training sessions.
- Review and improve internal communications, making best use of all available communication methods and ensuring dispersed staff are kept informed. See [Approaches to engaging staff](#) for more advice.
- Run an engagement exercise around a particular issue, for example, the reorganisation of services in a particular area.
- Make the links with patient satisfaction and improved quality and productivity. See [section 2: The benefits of staff engagement, the evidence](#) for more information. Some organisations have implemented approaches which get staff to put themselves in patient's shoes or give staff direct access to patient feedback.
- Link to other priority areas, such as [health and well-being](#). It is clear that staff engagement influences issues such as staff absence levels.
- Make reference to local values statements that build on those contained in the [NHS Constitution](#).
- Refer to the [staff pledges in the NHS Constitution](#) and especially the pledge of staff involvement.





# How to develop a staff engagement strategy

## Developing the strategy

- Your activity on staff engagement should be linked to the overall workforce strategy of the organisation rather than a separate initiative.
- It is recommended that the development of policy on staff engagement is not led solely by HR. There needs to be visible support for the policy from the board/chief executive and involvement of operational managers and clinicians. The communications team will have a key role to play.
- One approach would be to form a working group of HR and other senior managers to take forward the plan and develop ideas (a group of five to seven people is the best size). You should share your plans with other stakeholders such as staff side representatives to help shape the strategy and give it more credibility.
- It is essential that your staff engagement strategy is one which has a broad appeal. Non-HR managers will be most interested in the operational rather than employment relations benefits. For example, explaining the links between engaged teams and better performance may help you convince line managers. Clinicians will be most interested in the impact on patient satisfaction. You should work with communications colleagues to develop communications messages around staff engagement which are appropriate for the differing audiences.
- The staff engagement policy should set out clear objectives. These will range from running specific events to increasing scores in the national staff survey. As with any objectives, these should be measurable.

## Measures of success

- The staff engagement strategy needs to have some short term evaluation criteria for example, attendance at staff engagement events or feedback from staff. In the medium term the staff engagement scores in the staff survey results will be a key outcome measure. In the short term the organisation will need interim measures. One method of assessing this is through what are known as “pulse” surveys, which allow the organisation to gain an understanding of employee opinion on a more limited range of topics. In longer term you should also seek to assess benefits in overall performance.



# The business case for staff engagement

NHS boards will want to understand the business benefits of increasing staff engagement. There is a large body of research evidence from studies in the private sector that demonstrate that:

- organisations with above average levels of staff engagement also have higher levels of profitability than average comparable companies
- over the longer term they appear to generate growth in turnover
- they have higher levels of customer satisfaction especially in businesses where customer contact is direct and ongoing such as finance and retail.

## The evidence

There is a large body of evidence on the impact of engagement from private and public sectors over the last decade. The most recent and comprehensive review of the

evidence by academics in the USA on behalf of Gallup found that employee engagement had especially strong effects on issues such as improving quality. They concluded that:

*The relationship between engagement and performance at the business unit level is substantial and highly generalisable across companies. The data from the present study provide further substantiation to the theory that doing what is best for employees does not have to contradict what is best for the business or organisation.<sup>1</sup>*

## Engagement in healthcare

The Gallup study also demonstrated a strong link between engagement and quality. In particular, patient safety seems to improve where staff are more engaged.

There is also evidence of a link between high levels of staff engagement and turnover and better relationships with supervisors.

## Experience in the UK economy

A number of UK studies have demonstrated positive benefits from staff engagement strategies and successful examples of staff engagement can be found in sector leaders such as Sainsbury's, Tesco and Nationwide Building Society. Investment in staff engagement played a key role in the revival of B&Q and Marks and Spencer. As an employee owned enterprise, John Lewis has had a long-standing commitment to staff engagement. Local authorities who have high levels of staff engagement such as Birmingham and Lewisham also appear to improve wider performance.

## Engaged employees

Employee engagement has a strong link to key measures of employee effectiveness such as improved attendance, higher productivity and greater "discretionary effort". Engaged employees may also be less likely to leave the

<sup>1</sup> [Meta-Analysis: The relationship between engagement at work and organizational outcomes, GALLUP 2009](#)



# The business case for staff engagement

organisation especially in the early stage of their career. They have higher levels of trust in management and greater understanding of their role within it. This can help when the organisation needs to make difficult decisions during challenging periods. High levels of staff engagement can also support successful organisational change.

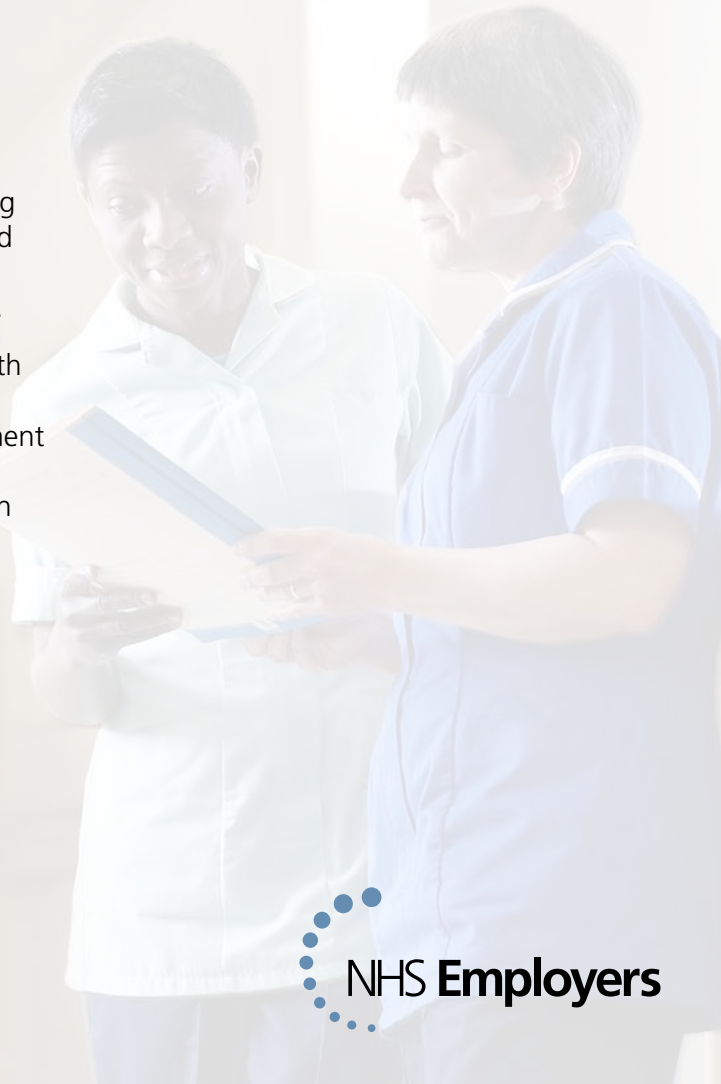
## Engagement and the NHS

Evidence from research by Aston Business School<sup>2</sup> has looked at the relationship between engagement scores in the NHS staff survey and overall assessment of organisational performance. This is discussed in [Section 2: The benefits of staff engagement](#), the evidence and shows clear links between high levels of staff engagement and overall organisational effectiveness. In particular, staff engagement appears to be linked to financial effectiveness, patient satisfaction and to some measures of clinical effectiveness. They found:

- higher staff engagement scores are associated with higher performance as measured by the CQC Health Check measures and patient satisfaction

Staff engagement appears to have a strong link to improved health and well-being and as a result, trusts with high levels of staff engagement have lower levels of absence.

There are also many examples of trusts with high levels of staff engagement that have successfully involved staff in the improvement of services and in helping make financial savings. Engaged employees can also as an advocate for the organisation.



<sup>2</sup> [Report available from July 2011 at: www.nhsemployers.org](http://www.nhsemployers.org)



# Tool for continuous assessment of staff engagement

The staff engagement score reported in your NHS staff survey results gives something that can be used at any time to keep you up-to-date with what is happening with staff engagement across your organisation.

Conducting periodic snapshots of staff engagement will give you extra information to help you:

- a) assess the affect of any work your organisation has done
- b) find out how wider factors or one-off occurrences might be affecting levels of staff engagement.

## How to take snapshots of staff engagement in your organisation

To take a snapshot of engagement levels you need to:

- collect the data by asking people the same set of questions that are used in the NHS staff survey
- collate the responses to get an overall score.

Before you start on this type of assessment and monitoring exercise there are a few technical issues that you will need to know about.

## Technical guidance to understand before conducting snapshots

When taking a snapshot of staff engagement there are a few issues that you must always remember to think about to make sure you get usable results and to protect the people who are filling in the survey:

- think about how many people you need to respond to your survey to get a reliable result. Organisations with around 3000 staff need about 340 responses, but 1000 staff need 280. For exact numbers, sample size calculators are available free on the internet
- think about how to make the responses anonymous so that people can't be linked to their answers
- make sure the responses are stored in a safe place or destroyed.

There is a lot more detailed guidance and information about what you need to consider when conducting surveys like this on the internet. Key search terms that you can start with are 'survey sample size', 'protecting survey data', 'confidence intervals and 'conducting surveys'.

## Tool to measure staff engagement

[This tool](#) can be filled in by people in your organisation to give their staff engagement score. The process you need to follow is to send it out, get the responses sent back, and collate and analyse the results.

To send it out you can email it, or print it out for people to fill in manually. The electronic version will automatically give the engagement scores. If it is filled in manually you will need to calculate the scores yourself – see next page for guidance.





# Tool for continuous assessment of staff engagement

Once your responses are all back (and you have calculated the scores where needed) you need to put all of the individual scores together (we recommend in an excel file) then add them up and divide by the number of overall responses to get your overall engagement score.

## Guidance on calculating your scores

If you choose to send out the questions in a paper format, to calculate the engagement scores you need to get the responses back and then:

- 1) Assign a value from one to five for the response to each question, on a scale where strongly disagree =1, disagree =2 up to strongly agree =5
- 2) Calculate the average score for each of the three elements of engagement by adding up the responses to the relevant questions and dividing the total by three.
  - The advocacy questions are the first, second and third.
  - The involvement questions are the fourth, fifth and sixth.
  - The motivation questions are the seventh, eighth and ninth.
- 3) Calculate the overall engagement score by adding up the scores from the three elements listed above and dividing the total by three.



# Communicating and involving your staff

This section provides some ideas on the process of involving your staff, which is one element of achieving a highly engaged workforce.

Good communication is key to maintaining an engaging culture within an organisation. Whether this be from senior leaders keeping staff informed of business developments to managers telling their staff about things that affect their work.

Good quality communication is not only vital in engaging colleagues with their work and with that of the wider organisation, but also in understanding current performance issues and in recognising improvement opportunities. It builds trust and rapport with team members across networks, and enables everyone to share vital information needed for the smooth running of any organisation.

Evidence tells us that staff who feel informed and involved in decisions perform better within an organisation and have improved morale and a greater sense of well-being. Good communication within and between teams is key to this.

## Top tips for creating meaningful and engaging communications

In order to create effective communications, where your message is seen, heard and understood, there are a number of things you need to consider:

### Your audience

- How well do colleagues know and understand the issue to be discussed?
- How are they likely to feel about the issue?
- Are there any specific issues to be aware of, for example, levels of cynicism, cultural differences?
- What do I want them to do as a result of this message?
- What new attitudes, perceptions and behaviours will they need to adopt to be and feel successful?

## What to say

- What do people need to know?
- What do I want to tell them?
- Where can they go for more information?
- What's 'in it for them'?

## When to say it:

- Will my message compete with other messages or be affected by other events?
- How time-sensitive is it?

## How to say it

There are various different methods to communicate your message. Depending on your answers to the questions above, you may consider using any or a combination of the suggestions below:

Events and conferences, intranet, staff notice boards, posters, bulletins and newsletters, podcasts,

forums, email and other internal correspondence, Internet, workshops and training events, face-to-face meetings or 1:1s, team and branch meetings, social networking (For example, Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, NHS Comms Link and NHS Networks).

There are challenges of communicating with dispersed workforces and staff that work at night.

Top tip: don't just use one method – people respond differently to different medias. To engage with as many people as possible use a combination of methods.



# Communicating and involving your staff

The pledges to staff in the NHS Constitution require staff to be given the opportunity to be involved in decisions which affect their working lives. The NHS staff survey looks in detail at the degree of involvement that staff feel in their organisation.

Involvement can be developed in a range of ways ranging from formal negotiation and consultation forums and representation on the trust board to informal team based.

## Improving communications in response to the NHS staff survey

Measuring and acting on staff experience information collected from the NHS staff survey is important for delivering improvements for staff and patients.

The NHS staff survey provides a structured, evidence-based way for employers to engage with their staff and to gather information about important areas relating to staff experience, including where staff can see potential and actual risks.

Read about how [Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust and Lincolnshire Community](#)

[Health Services NHS Trust](#) have both taken steps to address an issue with communication between staff members and the executive team, highlighted by the results of their staff survey.

You don't have to wait until the annual survey results are available to understand staff opinion. Providing staff with opportunity to give regular feedback will help you keep on top of any problems. Regular discussion forums or conducting pulse surveys (see [Tool for continuous assessment of staff engagement](#) for more advice) throughout the year can help maintain an engaging culture.

## Shared learning

Creating a culture of engagement can take time, but small steps in the right direction can add up to bigger benefits. Several trusts have already shown how small changes can make a big difference and examples can be found in this resource pack and on the [NHS Employers website](#)

Two commercial techniques to support staff engagement include 'The Big Conversation'

and Listening into Action. Both involve regular discussion between frontline staff and senior management. A number of NHS organisations have used these approaches either in-house or with partners.

- See the example from [The Royal Bolton Hospital NHS Foundation Trust](#) who used 'The Big Conversation' type model.
- Visit the NHS employers website to see how [Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals](#) used the Listening into Action model.





# Communicating and involving your staff

## Creating an engagement network

Social networking is a great tool for sharing and communicating ideas within and beyond your organisation.

You can register and join an existing staff engagement network at [www.networks.nhs.uk](http://www.networks.nhs.uk) (staff engagement) or [www.nhscommmlink.nhs.uk](http://www.nhscommmlink.nhs.uk) (strengthening staff engagement) and start sharing your experiences today.

## Staying informed

You can keep up to date with staff engagement news by joining the NHS Employers virtual community. Simply email your details to [staffengagement@nhsemployers.org](mailto:staffengagement@nhsemployers.org)





# Line managers and staff engagement

High quality leadership and management at all levels is vital to successful staff engagement. Staff need to have confidence in the leadership of their organisation and believe it is well managed, but it is line managers that have the biggest influence on employee outlook and behaviour.

Leaders need to set the agenda for the organisation by having a clear strategy and ensuring employees understand what the organisation is trying to achieve.

Leaders throughout the service can lead by example in developing an 'engaging' managerial style. This is about valuing colleagues, encouraging questions, and listening. It does not mean avoiding difficult decisions or not addressing performance. Engaging managers delegate and build up skills in their team.

Line managers who supervise staff have a key influence on the work environment, how employees are treated, and on communication between the organisation

and staff. In particular, they play a crucial part in ensuring that staff understand how their role contributes to the overall objectives of the organisation.

Research<sup>1</sup> shows that the role of line managers can make a significant difference, where positive, engaging behaviour by line managers can increase engagement among staff. Conversely, negative behaviour, such as continual lack of support for staff and unacceptable conduct, bullying or harassment has a disengaging effect.

Unless line managers are fully involved in attempts to improve staff engagement, any initiatives instigated by trusts are unlikely to be successful or enduring. Support from senior leaders, although necessary, is unlikely to be sufficient on its own and without line manager involvement, staff engagement strategies from human resource departments will not be sustained.

Line managers have the most immediate impact on the experience of staff. The way

they interact with staff and the approach they take to managing staff will be key in sustaining engagement. Towers Perrin, a global HR consultancy firm, described this relationship as 'pivotal' and estimate that up to 40 per cent of differences in performance can be explained by the role of the line manager.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) have identified line management behaviour, particularly involvement of staff in decision-making, and conflict and performance management, as one of seven key drivers for staff engagement<sup>2</sup>.

Private sector organisations that have invested in staff engagement, such as Tesco, B&Q and Sainsbury's, have sought to improve the training of line managers in engagement skills, highlighted engagement within appraisal systems, and in some cases linked managerial reward to engagement levels in their teams.

1 [For example: The drivers of employee engagement, Institute for Employment Studies, 2004](#)

2 [Working life: employee attitudes and engagement, CIPD, 2006](#)



# Line managers and staff engagement

## Impact of an engaging style

Research demonstrates that if managers develop an 'engaging' managerial style they will achieve better results. For example, a recent large-scale study by Beverley Alimo Metcalfe, (Professor of Leadership at Bradford University School of Management) into the characteristics of high-performing community mental health teams, found that those teams whose managers were described by staff as 'engaging', were more successful across a range of measures. The presence of an engaging leadership style was the most significant predictor of performance taking context into account<sup>3</sup>.

## What does an engaging style consist of?

The Chartered Institute for Personnel Development identifies the key features of

the engaging leader as someone who:

- values others and encourages involvement
- helps others to develop critical thinking
- works with others to build a shared vision.

Research by the Institute of Employment Studies (IES) identified some common characteristics of managers that develop staff engagement in their teams (see box below). Engaging managers appear to undertake broadly the same functions as other managers but differently. Engaging managers do not see engagement as a separate initiative but as part of the way they undertake their managerial role<sup>4</sup>.

Engaging managers are also good at explaining the link between the role of the team and the overall objectives of the

organisation. Ashridge Business School has identified that whether employees understand this link is a key factor in sustaining engagement, especially in challenging times<sup>5</sup>.

Engaging managers are not 'soft' and do not delay when urgent or difficult decisions are needed. They are able to combine toughness with understanding and empathy. They can break bad news by explaining why decisions are being taken. This ability of engaging managers to explain change will be vital in current times when organisations need to defend difficult decisions.

The IES did not find that any one personality type made for a better manager and did not find any magic formula for 'engagement skills'.

3 [\*The impact of leadership factors in implementing change in complex health and social care environments: NHS plan clinical priority for mental health crises resolution teams, Alimo-metcalfe B., 2007\*](#)

4 [\*The engaging manager, Institute for Employment Studies, 2009\*](#)

5 [\*Motivation and employee engagement in the 21st Century: a survey of management views, Ashridge Business School, 2009\*](#)



# Line managers and staff engagement

## Common characteristics of managers that develop staff engagement in their teams

This list can be used as a guide for managers to improve their skills and as a checklist in appraisals/for staff to provide feedback.

### An engaging manager:

- acts a mentor, guide and coach and aims to lead by example, inspire their team, sets out expectations clearly, and explains them to staff
- deals fairly and effectively with performance issues
- communicates well and in particular is a good listener and accepts feedback
- creates an environment where staff are able to make suggestions for improvement and can implement their ideas
- is good at providing guidance and support to enable employees to deliver to their full potential
- values and recognises the contribution of staff and provides praise where appropriate
- can give constructive criticism and enable employees to learn
- reflects on their own performance and accepts they can learn from their staff
- is loyal to the organisation but also prepared to defend the interests of their team
- accepts responsibility for the actions of the team and does not play 'blame games'
- has good interpersonal skills and is able to manage any tensions between team members
- combines technical competence with broader leadership skills
- maintains a positive attitude and seeks to motivate their team in challenging times
- gain the loyalty of their teams who then 'go the extra mile'
- cares about the health and well-being of their team.

## How to develop engaging managers

There are many ways to support line managers to foster staff engagement:

- recognise their role, involve them in developing staff engagement approaches, and provide them with skills training
- publish a set of values that managers and staff can support
- build engagement into the managers' appraisal process for managers
- use recruitment and talent management to identify people with appropriate skills and develop them
- line managers need to ensure they get the basics right such as knowing your team and taking a personal interest in them.





# Line managers and staff engagement

## Lessons from outside the NHS

B&Q implemented a major staff engagement programme in 2006 following a financial crisis seen as linked to poor staff experience and interaction with customers. The programme aimed to re-engage the business with its staff. A new team briefing system and staff survey were introduced and the business retrained managers and included staff engagement in their appraisals. It also introduced regular one-to-one meetings between staff and their line managers.

When BP introduced its major change programme in 2000 it decided to focus on its first line leaders with a development programme to raise their skills and acknowledge their importance. It also made staff engagement part of the appraisal of leaders.

Greggs the bakers sees its store managers as key to securing engagement and improving retention. It aims to train them to build motivated teams and resolve staff conflicts. As a result it has higher than average levels of staff retention.

Another method for fostering engaging managers is to use 360 degree appraisal techniques. This allows staff to give feedback about their manager as part of the appraisal process. This needs to be implemented carefully to avoid damaging managerial engagement. Organisations also need to ensure continual support for line managers alongside adequate training and development.

## Line managers in the NHS

In the NHS line managers often have a clinical background and have been promoted based on clinical expertise rather than people skills. In many cases they may also carry out clinical duties. Their span of control can be quite large, with some responsible for up to 25 people.

According to the 2010 NHS Staff Survey, staff generally see their manager as good at assisting them with their work, supportive in crisis, and taking an interest in health

and well-being. However, they are seen as less successful at communication and consultation.

Some NHS organisations have developed their own local values and 'behaviour statements' to help managers develop staff engagement. Others have developed and adapted the [Knowledge and Skills Framework](#) and appraisal to support this process. A number of organisations are now looking for 'engagement skills' when selecting line managers.





# Induction – what an opportunity!

## Top tips

### What to think about:

- ☐ Design induction to suit local conditions and the job area
- ☐ When to conduct the induction
- ☐ Length of tenure
- ☐ How to get feedback on the induction process

### What to include:

- ☐ An introduction to the organisation
- ☐ Principles, values and behaviours of the organisation
- ☐ Overview of organisational structure – who's who
- ☐ Business plan and objectives of the organisation
- ☐ Overview of policies for example, overtime, childcare, confidentiality
- ☐ Summary of NHS staff survey results
- ☐ Opportunity to meet key personnel
- ☐ Buddying or mentoring scheme
- ☐ Mandatory training and essential procedures (health and safety, fire drill)
- ☐ Appraisal, KSF and personal development

## The importance of a good induction

Achieving high levels of staff engagement requires an organisation to have a culture that demonstrates its belief that its staff are its primary means of achieving its goals. An organisation which recognises that effective induction of new staff is fundamental to its success is taking explicit action to achieve an engaged workforce.

A comprehensive, well-designed and engaging induction process tells your new staff that you care about them and that you want them to have a thorough understanding of the values, purpose and behaviours that you wish them to believe and enact in their work. What better opportunity will your organisation have to convey such fundamental messages than when your staff are excited about their new job, have few preconceptions and are ready to be impressed by you?

As a starter in an organisation, it is often intimidating when everyone else knows about the place except you. Having a real understanding of how the organisation is set up, who are its leaders, what you can expect

in terms of your development, your health and safety and your success at work really empowers you at a time when otherwise you will feel at your least confident.

Peer support is tremendously powerful too. Meeting colleagues who are also learning the ropes, going through the same process of change and who are, like you, keen to get their feet under the table is reassuring and automatically introduces you to an exclusive club, one which can often foster long term working friendships and networks.

An induction at the very outset of a new job gives staff the chance to ask all those questions that are difficult to ask once you have been in post for a while. Whether your organisation recognises the importance of an engaged workforce or not surely it is a good idea to ensure that your new staff know the facts, figures and faces they will need to be able to do their jobs well?



# Induction – what an opportunity!

Just understanding the common language in any new job is a challenge in itself – and the NHS is famous for this. Every organisation has its own codes, ways of speaking and will certainly have all kinds of acronyms, which should be busted at the earliest possible opportunity. Good induction provides the perfect vehicle for ensuring that your new staff know what on earth everyone is talking about, but also gives your organisation the chance to hear what it sounds like through the insight of people who haven't yet 'gone native'.

## What to consider and include

Here is a quick set of prompts to consider – not an exhaustive list and you will find much more by approaching the [Chartered Institute of Personnel Development](#) or the [Institute of Employment Studies](#):

### 1. Design induction to suit local conditions and the job area

For an induction programme to be really effective for your staff it should be designed locally to reflect local conditions and may need to vary depending on the group of staff involved

– medical staff may require specific information that will be different to administrative colleagues – however, the fundamentals of the organisation will always be the same irrespective of type of job.

### 2. Induction for people coming from similar organisations or another department

The induction should suit the needs of the people involved, those transferring from a similar or partner organisation or another department may already know most of the basics of your organisation. Do some research on your new starters and avoid unnecessary repetition.

### 3. Length of tenure

Consider how the needs of new employees differ based on the length of their employment. Information relevant to long-term employees may differ from those only contracted for a short periods.

### 4. Timing

When the induction takes place is important. Induction should be as soon

as possible. This ensures new staff are told about everything they need to know before starting work, however there will be a lot to take in at one time. Consider what/how much information can be made available beforehand. Do not leave the induction too late, (weeks or months down the line) where the new employee has been forced to find out everything for themselves or has gathered misleading or confusing information from elsewhere.

### 5. An introduction to the organisation

The programme should always include an introduction to the organisation – clear, simple and straightforward. Face to face meetings are most effective with an up to date handbook useful as a reference guide and access to staff intranet.



# Induction – what an opportunity!

## 6. Principles, values and behaviours of the organisation

The induction programme should seek to highlight the fundamental principles that underpin the organisation, for example the NHS Constitution, Staff Pledges and Local Values statements where applicable. Where an organisation has developed its local “behavioural standards” these should also be explained.

## 7. Overview of organisational structure

Who’s who is always important – staff always like to know who is leading the organisation and it provides the organisation with the opportunity to be explicit about the beliefs, values and hopes of its leaders.

## 8. Business plan and objectives of the organisation

The business plan and overall objectives for the organisation should not just be described but also illustrated with clear examples – for most people, especially when new, a business plan tends to be a turn-off until it is brought to life.

## 9. Summary of NHS Staff survey results

Including an overview of how your organisation compares to others based on NHS staff survey results will give new employees an understanding of where you fit into the bigger picture and help them understand the organisations objectives. An explanation of what local questions are used and why will also be helpful.

## 10. Overview of policies

An explanation of how the organisation’s general policies work, e.g. ‘family friendly’, overtime, and confidentiality policies, and where to find more information about them is very helpful at the outset of a new job. As is an idea of who their staff side representative is and how to contact the relevant unions.

## 11. Opportunity to meet key personnel including senior leaders

The induction programme provides a great opportunity to meet key personnel – it also gives those movers and shakers in an organisation an ideal opportunity to meet and hear from their newest colleagues. If possible arrange a time where new members and staff can meet the Chief Executive or other senior leaders early on.





# Induction – what an opportunity!

## 12. Buddying or mentoring scheme

Buddying and mentoring schemes can play a key role in supporting new employees. Thinking back to when you started in new jobs didn't you benefit from having the advice, insight and friendship of colleagues who new their way around?

## 13. Mandatory training and essential procedures

Health and safety and other mandatory training and other essential procedures e.g. for incident reporting need to be explained – but, make it interesting and engaging as staff will remember it if it is been presented in a way which attracts interest, better still make it enjoyable!

## 14. Appraisal, KSF and personal development

All organisations will also need to explain appraisal/knowledge and skills frameworks as they apply to new staff. Your organisation needs to let new staff know that it is going to invest in their development and takes the issue seriously – it should be able to demonstrate that it is not rhetoric, it is true.

## 15. Getting feedback

Keep it fresh – get feedback from recipients of the induction process – straight after and then a few months later. Knowing whether it had a significant impact on colleagues' ability to do their job is clearly important feedback but so is whether it was congruent with how the organisation operates in 'real life'.





# Induction – what an opportunity!

Consider incorporating a question on induction in your local NHS staff survey questions. For more instant feedback there are a number of sample induction feedback forms available free on the web for you to use or adapt, a set of sample questions is included opposite:

## **Examples of induction feedback questions**

### **Within a month ask:**

- Were you personally introduced to your new colleagues, managers and other appropriate people during your first few days in post?
- Has your Induction helped you understand your job, responsibilities, work standards?
- Have appropriate policies and procedures, important to your job (health and safety, regulations, work processes), been shown to you and explained to you?
- Have the materials/sections in the Induction Pack been of use to you?
- Have you discussed/completed an Induction Training and Development Plan?
- If there was one aspect of your Induction that could be improved what would it be, and how might we improve it?
- What would you say has been the least useful, and why?
- Was the Induction process well managed for you? Was it clear who was responsible for what?
- Are there any areas where you feel that your Induction failed you in any way? How could we improve this aspect?
- Overall, how would you rate your experience of Induction?
  - o Excellent – it has given me a full grasp of my job
  - o Good – I have a firm grasp of my job, but with some gaps
  - o Satisfactory – learnt a number of things, but have several significant concerns
  - o Poor – some aspects covered well but many areas still vague/unaddressed
  - o Very poor – I know little more now than when I started

### **After a few months ask:**

- Overall, what have you found the most useful part of your Induction, and why?



# Making effective use of the staff survey

The staff survey contains a range of information on the issues around staff engagement. The level of participation in the survey is in itself a useful indicator of staff engagement. The survey gives data on a range of dimensions of staff which can be used to develop your approach to staff engagement.

## Using the data

The overall staff engagement index score gives an overall rating for performance. It can be used to assess changes in performance over time as well comparison with organisations of a similar type. Your “benchmark” score is especially relevant for 2010 when overall scores slipped slightly. An above average decline in scores in on year should be a catalyst for action.

The scores for individual issues can be used to compare performance in different areas of engagement. It can for example show action is needed to support greater staff engagement in service improvement or may show that the main issues are around communication. You can also use the staff

survey to highlight the links between staff engagement and wider issues such as absence levels.

Your staff engagement scores may also show different levels of engagement in different parts of the organisation and amongst different staff groups. This may show issues with managerial practice or working conditions in some areas. Your approach needs to take this into account and direct activity where it will have most impact.

## Giving feedback

You should share information about the staff survey results as openness will enhance your credibility. You should seek to show staff that you are acting on issues raised in the staff survey, for example, by sending out regular “you said: we did” messages.

Where it is not practicable to take action you should seek to explain the reasons why as this will build confidence and may help increase participation.



# Staff engagement and partnership working

Staff engagement policy should be developed within the framework of the existing employment relationships with staff side representatives and complement partnership working. Staff engagement policies in particular in relation to involvement of staff should be developed in partnership with staff side representatives to sustain staff engagement.

Staff engagement is closely linked to key areas of employment where there will be locally agreed policies, for example job design, health and well being and training related areas such as appraisal. During periods of organisational change relationships with staff side representatives will be particularly important.

Improving staff engagement has a number of dimensions including improved communication and greater involvement of staff in decision making.

Improved direct communication methods with employees should run alongside improved communication with staff side representatives.

The scope and remit of consultation and negotiation bodies should be reviewed to facilitate wider discussion on organisational issues and exchange of information with staff representatives. This has been done successfully in a number of organisations. For example, the London Ambulance service has developed a Partnership Forum to involve staff side representatives in strategic decisions, as well as promoting involvement in decision making at station level and more senior management visibility, communication and leadership.

Other examples include the [Royal Bolton NHS Foundation Trust](#) which developed its staff engagement policy with full involvement from staff side representatives. The Barnet and Chase Farm Trust organised staff engagement events jointly with local staff side.

An example of partnership working from the USA can be found here [www.impartnership.org](http://www.impartnership.org)

