

BRIEFING NOTE: ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED BY THE 2014 NHS STAFF SURVEY IN ENGLAND

Introduction

This briefing note provides an overview of results from the twelfth annual national survey of NHS staff.

The 2014 NHS Staff Survey involved 287 NHS organisations in England. Over 624,000 NHS staff were invited to participate using a self-completion postal questionnaire survey or electronically via email. We received responses from 255,000 NHS staff, a response rate of 42% (49% in 2013). All full-time and part-time staff who were directly employed by an NHS organisation on September 1st 2014 were eligible. Fieldwork for the survey was carried out between late September and early December 2014.

The results are primarily intended for use by NHS organisations to help them review and improve staff experience so that staff can provide better patient care. The Care Quality Commission will use the results from the survey to monitor ongoing compliance with essential standards of quality and safety. The survey will also support accountability of the Secretary of State for Health to Parliament for delivery of the NHS Constitution.

Two Commissioning Support Units and one Social Enterprise took part in the survey, although they are included in the national data these organisation types have not been referred to in the report. Forty Clinical Commissioning Groups took part in the 2014 survey.

Background

This briefing note provides results from the 2014 survey structured around four of the pledges in the NHS Constitution, with the additional themes relating to “equality and diversity”, “raising concerns” and “patient experience measures”.

The NHS Constitution outlined the principles and values of the NHS in England including four pledges that set out what staff should expect from NHS employers. The following pledges are part of the commitment of the NHS to provide high-quality working environments for staff:

Pledge 1: 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 to communities.

Pledge 2: To provide all staff with personal development, access to appropriate education and training for their jobs, and line management support to enable them to fulfil their potential.

Pledge 3: To provide support and opportunities for staff to maintain their health, wellbeing and safety

Pledge 4: 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.

The results in summary

(Please note that numbers have been rounded to the nearest % for readability, numbers may differ with a higher degree of precision)

Sixty four percent (65% in 2013) of NHS staff said that if a friend or relative needed treatment they would be happy with the standard of care provided by their organisation. In addition, 67% (66% in 2013) said that care of patients and service users is their organisation's top priority.

The number of staff receiving appraisals has remained stable at 83%, however only 38% of staff said these appraisals were well structured (same as in 2013).

Only 41% of all staff felt that their trust values their work. The proportion of staff who indicated that they would recommend their organisation as a place to work has decreased from 58% in 2013 to 56% in 2014.

Only 37% said that communication between senior managers and staff is effective, however this has increase from 36% in 2013. Less than a third of all NHS staff (29%) reported that senior managers act on feedback from staff (this is an increase on the 2013 score of 28%). Despite this, 74% said that they are able to make suggestions on how they could improve the work of their team or department, the same as in 2013.

Fourteen percent of NHS staff reported experiencing physical violence from patients, their relatives or other members of the public in the previous 12 months, down from 15% in 2013. Twenty eight percent of all staff report that they experienced bullying, harassment and abuse from patients, their relatives or other members of the public in the previous 12 months – a decrease from 29% in 2013. Two-thirds (66%) of incidents of physical violence were reported compared to 64% in 2013 and 44% of staff reported bullying, harassment and abuse cases (43% in 2013).

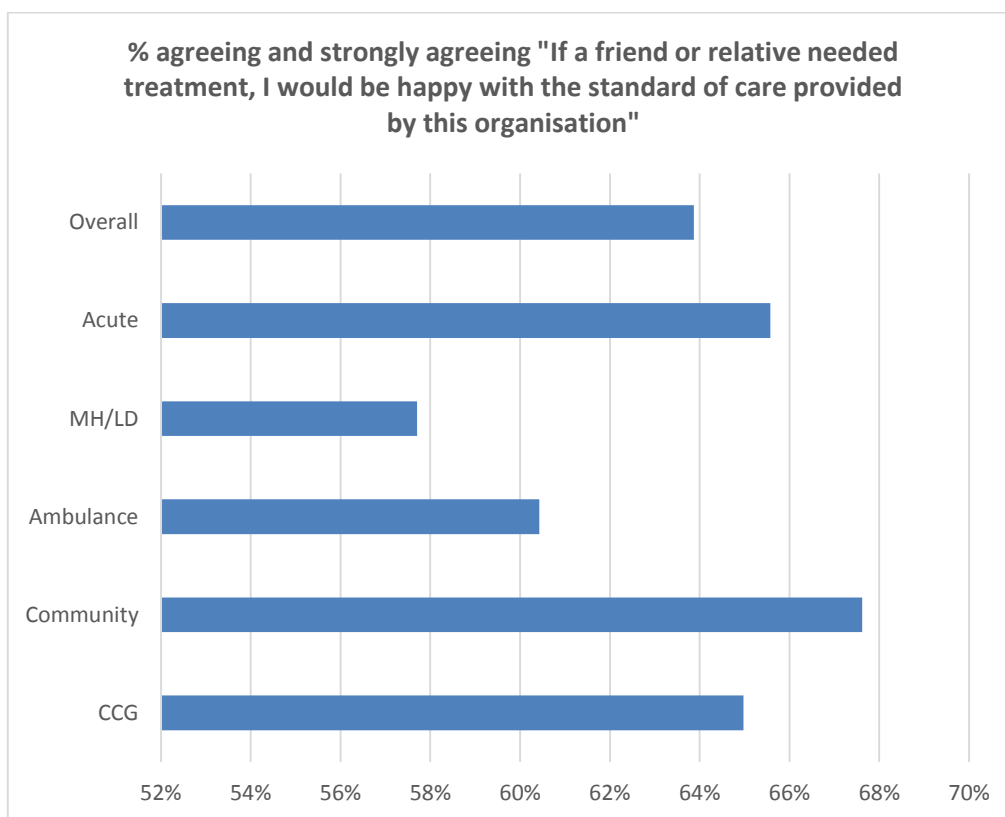
PLEDGE 1: ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND REWARDING JOBS

The patient experience

Chart 1 shows that 64% of NHS staff said that if a friend or relative needed treatment they would be happy with the standard of care provided by their organisation, which is a decrease from 65% in 2013.

Staff were also asked whether or not they thought care of patients and service users was their organisation's top priority. Sixty-seven percent, up from 66% in 2013, said that care of patients and service users was their organisation's top priority.

Chart 1: 'If a friend or relative needed treatment I would be happy with the standard of care provided by this organisation', by organisation type



Team working

Ninety-six percent of staff said that they work in teams, with three-quarters (77%) agreeing that team members have a set of shared objectives and that team members have to communicate closely with each other to achieve these objectives (79%). These scores are the same as in 2013.

Job satisfaction

Results for job satisfaction are slightly up from last year with just over three-quarters of staff (79%) satisfied with the support they receive from colleagues and 74% satisfied with the amount of responsibility they are given. These scores are the same as in 2013.

Forty-one percent of staff are satisfied with the extent to which they felt that their organisation values their work, the same as in 2013. Thirty-three percent of staff are satisfied with their level of pay this is a notable drop from 38% in 2013.

Clearly defined job roles and work pressure

Eighty-four percent of staff said that they know what their work responsibilities are and 73% said they have clear, planned goals and objectives for their job (74% in 2013). However, under a third of staff (29%) feel that there are enough staff to enable them to do their jobs properly.

PLEDGE 2: PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, ACCESS TO TRAINING AND SUPPORT FROM LINE MANAGEMENT

Staff appraisals

Overall, 83% of staff had an appraisal (also 83% in 2013 and 82% in 2012). Of those to receive an appraisal, 54% said it helped them improve how they do their job, and 78% felt the appraisal helped them to agree clear objectives for their work. Sixty-two percent said it left them feeling that their work is valued by their organisation (the same as in 2013).

Training, learning and development

In the last 12 months, health and safety training (75%) and handling confidential information about patients / service users (79%) are the most common areas where staff participated. For the third year running there is a marked increase in the proportion of staff who have had training in how to handle confidential information about patients (79%, up from 77% in 2013 and 73% in 2012). The proportion of staff who have received training in how to deliver a good patient / service user experience has remained stable at 50%.

Of those who had received some kind of training, learning or development in the past 12 months, 68% felt that it had helped them to do their job more effectively and 74% felt that it helped them to stay up-to-date with professional requirements (down from 75% in 2013). Sixty-four percent felt their training, learning and development helped them to deliver a better patient / service user experience.

Line management and supervisor support

Overall, 69% of staff reported that their manager helps them with difficult tasks and 73% felt supported in a personal crisis (up from 72% in 2013). Fifty-eight percent feel that their manager gives them clear feedback about their work (57% in 2013) and 66% said they are satisfied with the support they get from their immediate manager (up from 65% in 2013).

PLEDGE 3: MAINTAINING HEALTH, WELLBEING AND SAFETY

Health and well-being

Staff were asked whether their immediate manager takes a positive interest in their health and well-being with 56% saying that this is the case (the same as 2013). However, only 43% said their organisation takes positive action on health and well-being (44% in 2013).

Sixty-five percent of staff reported that they had attended work in the previous three months despite not feeling well enough to perform duties (a notable drop from 68% in 2013). Of those who had attended work while unwell, 91% stated that they had put themselves under pressure to attend; 30% felt under pressure (down from 32% in 2013) from their manager and 23% from other colleagues to attend.

Thirty-nine percent of NHS staff reported that during the last 12 months they have felt unwell as a result of work related stress, though the proportion of people who felt this way in 2013 was also 39%, if the numbers were presented to more decimal places, a small observable difference would be shown.

Violence, harassment, bullying and abuse

Table 1 shows 14% of NHS staff overall reported experiencing physical violence from patients, their relatives or other members of the public in the previous 12 months. This figure is higher amongst staff in ambulance trusts (31%) and staff in mental health trusts (17%). Table 2 shows that 28% of staff reported that they experienced bullying, harassment and abuse from patients, their relatives or other members of the public in the previous 12 months. Again, the figures are higher among all staff in ambulance (48%) and mental health trusts (30%).

Table 1: Physical violence abuse of NHS staff by patients / service users or other members of public, by organisation type

How many times in the last 12 months have you personally experienced physical violence at work from patients / service users or other members of public? (%)					
	Never	1-2 times	3-5 times	6-10 times	More than 10
overall	85.53%	9.08%	2.99%	1.03%	1.37%
Acute	86.35%	8.79%	2.82%	0.92%	1.12%
Ambulance	68.79%	21.83%	6.93%	1.49%	0.96%
Community	92.19%	5.83%	1.20%	0.35%	0.43%
Mental Health	82.56%	9.62%	3.67%	1.56%	2.59%
CCG	99.51%	0.42%	0.07%	0.00%	0.00%

Table 2: Bullying and harassment of NHS staff by patients / service users or other members of public, by organisation type

How many times in the last 12 months have you personally experienced harassment, bullying or abuse at work from patients / service users or other members of public? (%)					
	Never	1-2 times	3-5 times	6-10 times	More than 10
overall	71.65%	16.62%	6.19%	2.28%	3.26%
Acute	72.13%	17.01%	6.02%	2.13%	2.71%
Ambulance	52.44%	19.97%	12.55%	6.16%	8.88%
Community	75.72%	16.18%	4.95%	1.42%	1.73%
Mental Health	70.44%	15.80%	6.45%	2.53%	4.78%
CCG	91.96%	5.33%	1.75%	0.42%	0.54%

Around 3% of all staff said they had experienced physical violence from other staff. Twenty-four percent of staff reported they had experienced bullying, harassment or abuse from either their line manager or other colleagues.

Two thirds (66%) of incidents of physical violence and 44% of bullying, harassment or abuse cases were reported.

Errors, near misses and incidents

Overall, 85% of all staff felt encouraged by their organisation to report errors, near misses and incidents. Only 14% of all staff felt that reporting of errors would lead to punishment or blaming of those involved.

Sixty-two percent of staff felt that incident reporting was handled confidentially, while 62% thought that action was taken to prevent similar errors occurring in the future. Although reporting rates were high, the percentage of staff that felt informed about errors, near misses or incidents was 45% (44% in 2013), and staff who felt that they were given feedback on changes made as a result of errors, near misses and incidents remains low at 44%.

PLEDGE 4: ENGAGING STAFF IN DECISIONS THAT AFFECT THEM

Trust management

Eighty-one percent of staff said they could identify who the senior managers are in their organisation (also 81% in 2013), but only 31% felt that their managers involve staff in important decisions. Just over one third of staff felt that communication between managers and staff is effective (37%) and just over a quarter (29%) reported that senior managers act on feedback from staff.

Improving the way we work

The proportion of staff saying they are able to make suggestions on how they could improve the work of their team or department has remained at 74% and 70% felt that they have frequent opportunities to show initiative in their role (70% in 2013).

Staff as advocates

Over half (56%) of all staff would recommend their organisation as a place to work (down from 58% in 2013).

Staff motivation

Fifty-two percent (53% in 2013) of all staff indicated that they often or always look forward to going to work. Two thirds were often or always enthusiastic about their jobs (68%) and 74% of staff said that time passed by quickly when they were working.

5. ADDITIONAL THEMES

The themes in this section are not mentioned specifically by the staff pledges, but are still covered by the NHS Constitution.

Raising concerns (Whistle-blowing)

Table 3 shows that the majority of NHS staff would know how to report any concerns they have about unsafe clinical practice (93%), 68% would feel secure raising these concerns about unsafe clinical practice and just over half (57%) would feel confident that their organisation would address their concern.

Table 3: Raising concerns and perception of actions, by organisation type

	% saying they would know how to report concerns about unsafe clinical practice	% saying they would feel secure raising concerns.	% saying they would feel confident their organisation would address concerns.
overall	92.97%	68.37%	57.02%
Acute	92.18%	68.04%	56.55%
Ambulance	90.91%	61.21%	46.01%
Community	96.00%	72.65%	62.22%
Mental Health	94.80%	68.41%	57.21%
CCG	92.75%	83.21%	80.46%

Equality and diversity

Six percent of staff said that they had experienced discrimination at work from patients, relatives or other members of the public in the previous 12 months, and 8% of staff reported that they had experienced discrimination at work from other colleagues. Of those staff who said they had experienced discrimination, 4% reported this was on the basis of their ethnic background, 2% on the basis of their gender or age, 1% on the basis of religion, disability or sexual orientation and 4% cited other reasons.

Patient experience measures

Seventy-three percent of staff report that patient experience measures are collected in their directorate / department, 56% receive regular updates about patient / service user experience feedback and 50% report that this feedback is used to make improvements in their directorate / department.

Notes on the survey

This briefing note provides percentage results for England as a whole by aggregating responses from individual respondents at each organisation. As employees in smaller organisations have a higher chance of being selected to participate in the survey, and because response rates vary between organisations, the results are weighted so that they reflect unbiased estimates of all NHS staff in England. Doing this means that responses from each organisation contribute an amount to the total that is directly proportional to the number of staff employed.

Organisations participating in the NHS Staff Survey are able to conduct a census or extended sample, this option is now being employed more widely and we have seen an increase in the number of participants due to this. More than 200,000 extra staff were asked for their opinions compared to the 2013 survey.

The 2014 NHS Staff Survey continued to allow electronic/online options to be used as a means of delivering the survey, the paper and electronic results have all been included together.

All participating organisations have now received their individual survey results, including detailed feedback on how they compare with organisations of a similar type. A report for each participating organisation is available on the staff survey co-ordination centre website:

www.nhsstaffsurveys.com

Appendix 1: Changes in Key Finding scores between 2014 and 2013			
	2014	2013	Difference
KF1. % feeling satisfied with the quality of work and patient care they are able to deliver	76.34%	77.75%	-1.41%
KF2. % agreeing that their role makes a difference to patients	89.55%	90.16%	-0.61%
*KF3. Work pressure felt by staff	3.09	3.06	0.03
KF4. % working in a well structured team environment	3.75	3.74	0.00
*KF5. % working extra hours	71.46%	70.47%	0.99%
KF6. % receiving job-relevant training, learning or development in last 12 months	80.23%	80.83%	-0.60%
KF7. % appraised in last 12 months	84.07%	84.32%	-0.25%
KF8. % having well structured appraisals in last 12 months	38.07%	37.87%	0.20%
KF9. Support from immediate managers	3.68	3.66	0.02
KF10. % receiving health and safety training in last 12 months	74.51%	74.30%	0.21%
*KF11. % suffering work-related stress in last 12 months	39.50%	38.61%	0.88%
KF12. % witnessing potentially harmful errors, near misses or incidents in last month	31.05%	31.61%	-0.56%
KF13. % reporting errors, near misses or incidents witnessed in the last month	89.97%	90.12%	-0.14%
KF14. Fairness and effectiveness of incident reporting procedures	3.52	3.51	0.01
KF15 % agreeing that they would feel secure raising concerns about unsafe clinical practice (NEW 2014)	68.37%		

An asterisk indicates a key finding for which a lower score is better

Appendix 1: Changes in Key Finding scores between 2014 and 2013			
	2014	2013	Difference
*KF16. % experiencing physical violence from patients / relatives in last 12 months	14.47%	15.28%	-0.81%
*KF17. % experiencing physical violence from staff in last 12 months	2.65%	2.66%	-0.01%
*KF18. % experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from patients / relatives in last 12 months	28.35%	29.22%	-0.87%
*KF19. % experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from staff in last 12 months	23.68%	23.20%	0.48%
*KF20. % feeling pressure to attend work when feeling unwell in last 3 months	25.00%	27.13%	-2.13%
KF21. % reporting good communication between senior management and staff	30.40%	29.51%	0.89%
KF22. % able to contribute towards improvements at work	68.00%	68.10%	-0.10%
KF23. Staff job satisfaction	3.60	3.61	0.00
KF24. Staff recommendation of the trust as a place to work or receive treatment	3.62	3.64	-0.02
KF25. Staff motivation at work	3.82	3.84	-0.02
KF26. % having equality and diversity training in last 12 months	62.65%	60.02%	2.63%
KF27. % believing trust provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion	85.66%	87.42%	-1.77%
*KF28. % experiencing discrimination at work in last 12 months	11.98%	11.59%	0.39%
KF29 % agreeing that feedback from patients/service users is used to make informed decisions in their directorate / department (NEW 2014)	54.30%		
Overall engagement score	3.70	3.71	-0.01

An asterisk indicates a key finding for which a lower score is better