

BRIEFING NOTE: ISSUES HIGHLIGHTED BY THE 2013 NHS STAFF SURVEY IN ENGLAND

Introduction

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

The 2013 NHS Staff Survey involved 265 NHS organisations in England. Over 416,000 NHS staff were invited to participate using a self-completion postal questionnaire survey or electronically via email. We received responses from 203,000 NHS staff, a response rate of 49% (50% in 2012). All full-time and part-time staff who were directly employed by an NHS organisation on September 1st 2013 were eligible. Fieldwork for the survey was carried out between late September and early December 2013.

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.

One Commissioning Support Unit 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.

Background

This briefing note provides results from the 2013 survey structured around four of the pledges in the staff NHS Constitution, with the additional themes “equality and diversity” and “raising concerns”.

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 five percent (63% in 2012) 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, 66% (62% in 2012) said that care of patients and service users is their organisation's top priority.

There continues to be an improvement in the proportion of staff receiving appraisals, up from 82% in the 2012 survey to 84% in 2013, however only 38% of staff said these appraisals were well structured (36% in 2012)

Only 41% of all staff were satisfied with the extent to which they felt that their trust values their work; this figure is lowest for ambulance staff at 21% (23% in 2012) and highest amongst CCGs at 65%. The proportion of staff who indicated that they would recommend their organisation as a place to work has increased from 55% in 2012 to 58% in 2013.

Only 36% said that communication between senior managers and staff is effective - this figure is the lowest for ambulance staff (19%) - and less than a third of all NHS staff (28%) reported that senior managers act on feedback from staff. Despite this, 74% said that they are able to make suggestions on how they could improve the work of their team or department.

Fifteen percent of NHS staff reported experiencing physical violence from patients, their relatives or other members of the public in the previous 12 months and 29% 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. Just under two-thirds (64%) of incidents of physical violence and 43% of bullying, harassment and abuse cases were reported.

It is important to note that ambulance staff work in a distinct and different environment to others in the NHS and they report poorer experiences on many of the issues picked up by the staff survey.

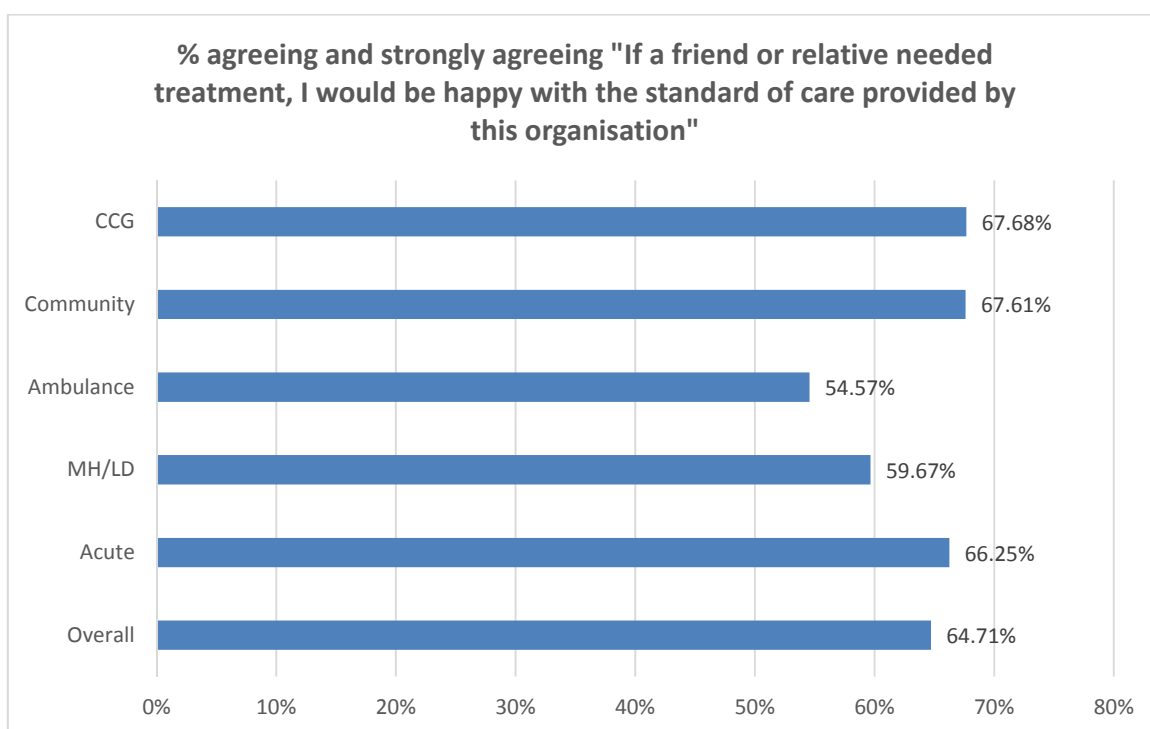
PLEDGE 1: ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND REWARDING JOBS

The patient experience

Chart 1 shows that 65% 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 notable increase from 63% in 2012.

Staff were also asked whether or not they thought care of patients and service users was their organisation's top priority. Sixty-six percent, up from 62% in 2012, 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%).

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 (same as 2012).

Forty-one percent of staff are satisfied with the extent to which they felt that their organisation values their work, an increase from 40% in 2012. This figure is lowest for ambulance staff

(21%, down from 23% in 2012) and highest amongst mental health / learning disability staff (43%).

Just over a third of staff are satisfied with their level of pay (38%, same as in 2012).

Clearly defined job roles and work pressure

Eighty-five percent of staff said that they know what their work responsibilities are and 74% said they have clear, planned goals and objectives for their job (73% in 2012). However, under a third of staff (30%) feel that there are enough staff to enable them to do their jobs properly; this figure is highest amongst mental health / learning disability staff (31%) and lowest amongst ambulance staff (20%).

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

Staff appraisals

Overall, 84% of staff had an appraisal (up from 82% in 2012 and 80% in 2011). Of those to receive an appraisal, 54% said it helped them improve how they do their job, and 77% felt the appraisal helped them to agree clear objectives for their work. Sixty-two percent (up from 60% in 2012) said it left them feeling that their work is valued by their organisation.

Training, learning and development

In the last 12 months, health and safety training (74%) and infection control training (74%) remain 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 (77%, up from 73% in 2012 and 61% in 2011). There has also been an increase in the last 12 months in the proportion of staff who have received training in how to deliver a good patient / service user experience (49%, up from 45% in 2012 and 26% in 2011).

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 75% felt that it helped them to stay up-to-date with professional requirements (the same as 2012). Sixty-five 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 72% felt supported in a personal crisis. Fifty-seven percent feel that their manager gives them clear feedback about their work and 65% said they are satisfied with the support they get from their immediate manager.

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 (55% in 2012). However, only 44% said their organisation takes positive action on health and well-being.

Sixty-eight percent of staff reported that they had attended work in the previous three months despite not feeling well enough to perform duties (down from 69% in 2012). Of those who had attended work while unwell, 91% stated that they had put themselves under pressure to attend; 32% felt under pressure 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, this has risen from 38% in 2012. This figure is highest among staff in ambulance trusts (51%).

Violence, harassment, bullying and abuse

Table 1 shows 15% 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 (33%) and staff in mental health trusts (19%). 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 (31%).

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	84.7%	9.6%	3.2%	1.1%	1.5%
Acute	85.9%	9.1%	3.0%	0.9%	1.1%
Ambulance	67.2%	22.8%	7.2%	1.6%	1.3%
Community	91.2%	6.3%	1.5%	0.4%	0.5%
Mental Health	81.4%	10.2%	3.6%	1.6%	3.2%
CCG	99.8%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

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	70.8%	17.3%	6.4%	2.2%	3.3%
Acute	71.8%	17.4%	6.1%	2.0%	2.7%
Ambulance	52.0%	20.2%	12.9%	5.8%	9.1%
Community	73.6%	17.9%	4.9%	1.5%	2.1%
Mental Health	69.2%	16.5%	6.6%	2.6%	5.1%
CCG	92.3%	5.1%	0.7%	0.9%	1.0%

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

Just under two thirds (64%) of incidents of physical violence and 43% of bullying, harassment or abuse cases were reported.

Errors, near misses and incidents

Overall, 85% (86% in 2012) 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-three percent of staff felt that incident reporting was handled confidentially, while 62% (up from 61% in 2012) 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 44% (42% in 2012), and staff who felt that they were given feedback on changes made as a result of errors, near misses and incidents remains low being 44%, showing a slight improvement since 2012.

Availability of hand-washing materials

Sixty-one percent of staff said that hot water, soap and paper towels or alcohol rubs were 'always' available when they needed them (the same as 2012). Less than 1% reported that they were 'never' available (unchanged from 2012). Fifty-five percent of staff said that hand-washing materials were 'always' available to patients; this is the same as 2012.

PLEDGE 4: ENGAGING STAFF IN DECISIONS THAT AFFECT THEM

Trust management

Eighty-two percent of staff said they could identify who the senior managers are in their organisation (up from 81% in 2012), but only 30% felt that their managers involve staff in important decisions. Just over one third of staff felt that communication between managers and staff is effective (36%) and just over a quarter (28%) 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 stable (75%, compared with 74% in 2012) and 70% felt that they have frequent opportunities to show initiative in their role (compared with 69%, in 2012).

Staff as advocates

Over half (58%) of all staff would recommend their organisation as a place to work (up from 55% in 2012). Staff in ambulance trusts were the least likely to recommend their organisation as a place to work (36%), with acute staff being the most likely (60%).

Staff motivation

Fifty-three percent (52% in 2012) 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 (69%) and 75% 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 fraud, malpractice or wrongdoing (89%), 71% would feel safe raising these concerns and just over half (54%) would feel confident that their organisation would address them.

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

	% saying they would know how to report concerns	% saying they would feel safe raising concerns	% saying they would feel confident organisation would address concerns
Overall	89.4%	71.0%	54.5%
Acute	88.3%	71.3%	54.6%
Ambulance	85.9%	61.3%	41.2%
Community Trust	93.0%	71.9%	55.1%
Mental Health	93.4%	71.2%	56.2%
CCG	89.8%	85.3%	73.7%

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.

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.

There have been changes to the implementation of the 2013 survey, for the first time organisations were able to survey a census or a sample staff. In previous surveys census data has not been included in the reports or national level data. As a result of this change, the 2013 survey went out to nearly twice as many staff compared to 2012.

The 2013 NHS Staff Survey allowed 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 2013 and 2012			
	2013	2012	Difference
KF1. % feeling satisfied with the quality of work and patient care they are able to deliver	77.8%	77.6%	0.2%
KF2. % agreeing that their role makes a difference to patients	90.2%	89.5%	0.7%
*KF3. Work pressure felt by staff	3.06	3.06	0.00
KF4. % working in a well structured team environment	3.74	3.73	0.02
*KF5. % working extra hours	70.5%	69.7%	0.8%
KF6. % receiving job-relevant training, learning or development in last 12 months	80.8%	80.8%	0.0%
KF7. % appraised in last 12 months	84.3%	83.2%	1.2%
KF8. % having well structured appraisals in last 12 months	37.9%	36.2%	1.7%
KF9. Support from immediate managers	3.66	3.63	0.03
KF10. % receiving health and safety training in last 12 months	74.3%	72.5%	1.8%
*KF11. % suffering work-related stress in last 12 months	38.6%	38.1%	0.5%
KF12. % saying hand washing materials are always available	56.5%	56.8%	-0.4%
KF13. % witnessing potentially harmful errors, near misses or incidents in last month	31.6%	32.0%	-0.4%
KF14. % reporting errors, near misses or incidents witnessed in the last month	90.1%	90.5%	-0.3%
KF15. Fairness and effectiveness of incident reporting procedures	3.51	3.50	0.01

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

Appendix 1: Changes in Key Finding scores between 2013 and 2012			
	2013	2012	Difference
*KF16. % experiencing physical violence from patients / relatives in last 12 months	15%	15%	0.0%
*KF17. % experiencing physical violence from staff in last 12 months	2.7%	2.8%	-0.1%
*KF18. % experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from patients / relatives in last 12 months	29.2%	29.9%	-0.7%
*KF19. % experiencing harassment, bullying or abuse from staff in last 12 months	23.2%	23.5%	-0.3%
*KF20. % feeling pressure to attend work when feeling unwell in last 3 months	27.1%	27.9%	-0.8%
KF21. % reporting good communication between senior management and staff	29.5%	27.4%	2.1%
KF22. % able to contribute towards improvements at work	68.1%	67.6%	0.5%
KF23. Staff job satisfaction	3.61	3.58	0.02
KF24. Staff recommendation of the trust as a place to work or receive treatment	3.64	3.57	0.07
KF25. Staff motivation at work	3.84	3.82	0.02
KF26. % having equality and diversity training in last 12 months	60.0%	56.3%	3.7%
KF27. % believing trust provides equal opportunities for career progression or promotion	87.4%	87.4%	0.0%
*KF28. % experiencing discrimination at work in last 12 months	11.6%	11.9%	-0.3%
Overall engagement score	3.71	3.68	0.04

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