

# NHS Staff Survey

## Health and Wellbeing local question guidance

NHS Staff Survey Co-ordination Centre

### Introduction

There is a large drive across the NHS to improve the health and wellbeing of staff. The [NHS Health and Wellbeing Framework](#) is a programme that provides evidence-based knowledge and resources to help improve the health and wellbeing of staff. Improving health and wellbeing is also a commitment of the [NHS Long Term Plan](#).

Additional health and wellbeing questions may allow organisations to better understand the type of support required by their staff and the impact and reach of their current initiatives, and help to shape their thinking on what sort of health and wellbeing initiatives and interventions to deliver in the future. They may also allow organisations to compare and contrast impact and access across different staff groups, departments and demographics within their organisation. The data could be used to help organisations evidence their work and fill any gaps in the information which is available through the relevant questions in the core questionnaire.

### Question guidance

The following guidelines should help you create local questions that will accurately measure how staff view health and wellbeing initiatives used by your organisation:

- When asking staff about a health and wellbeing initiative your organisation has run, always ask about a specific, named initiative (e.g. “Have you used the Cycle to Work scheme?”). If the question is too vague, there is a risk different staff will think of different initiatives when answering, meaning the data collected would not be useful.
- Be specific. For example, “exercise” is a fairly vague term. Make sure you set specific conditions (e.g. “at least 30 minutes of intense exercise”) in the question and/or provide a definition underneath the question to guide respondents – otherwise a ten minute walk could become conflated with an hour in the gym.
- Keep the wording of your questions simple. Questions that are too long or contain complicated words will make it harder for respondents to answer.
- Tie questions to a period of time where possible (e.g. “In the last 12 months...”, “In the last month have you...”, “On average, how often do you...”)
- Consider whether staff at your organisation will be happy to answer the questions, or find any of them too intrusive. This is particularly important if staff in your organisation have concerns about the confidentiality of the survey, in which case it might be preferable to avoid sensitive questions on lifestyle and health risk factors (e.g. smoking, alcohol consumption).
- One question should measure one concept. If you wanted to know whether staff have heard about an initiative and also whether they have used it, it is usually best to include two questions – one asking whether they are aware of the initiative, and the other asking if they have used it. Trying to measure more than one concept in a single question can often mean the data is not useful.
- Make sure to include answer options to cover all respondents (this may mean including an ‘other’ or ‘not applicable’ option).
- If response options may overlap (i.e. respondents could reasonably select more than one), specify whether they should select one answer only or select all that apply.

- Consider how you will use the data collected from your questions, to make sure the data will be useful and will help to answer your broader questions about staff health and wellbeing. Questions should not be included unless there is a clear purpose for collecting that data.
- Asking a few colleagues to test the questions you develop can be a good way to find out if your questions make sense, are interpreted consistently and are considered appropriate.

## Example questions

A few example questions are listed below. These questions were tested on NHS staff and were found to work well, so you can use these as a guide to what such questions may look like. However please note that for these questions to be useful, you will probably want to add extra questions that are more specific to your organisation, such as questions on whether staff are aware of or have used particular initiatives, or whether they would want particular initiatives to be run.

### Sedentary behaviour

On average, how many hours do you spend at work each day?

- 1  2 hours or fewer    2  3 to 4 hours    3  5 to 6 hours    4  7 to 8 hours    5  9 to 10 hours    6  11 hours or more

On a normal working day, how much of your time at work do you spend sitting down?

- 1  2 hours or fewer    2  3 to 4 hours    3  5 to 6 hours    4  7 to 8 hours    5  9 to 10 hours    6  11 hours or more

### Physical Exercise

Thinking about the past **week**, on how many days have you done at least 30 minutes of moderate or intensive physical activity?

*Moderate or intensive physical activity is that which increases your breathing or heart rate, and causes you to sweat. This activity could be inside or outside of working hours.*

- 1  0 Days    2  1-2 Days    3  3-4 Days    4  5-7 Days

### Active Travel

How do you normally get to and from work?

*Please tick all that apply.*

- 1  Walk    2  Cycle    3  Car or Motorcycle    4  Public Transport    5  Other

### Healthy eating

If there is a restaurant or cafeteria where you work, does it offer healthy food choices?

- 1  Yes, always    2  Yes, some of the time    3  No    4  There is no restaurant or cafeteria where I usually work