

NHS Staff Survey – Basic guide for 2023 results

NHS STAFF SURVEY COORDINATION CENTRE

Version 1

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1 Introduction

The NHS Staff Survey provides an opportunity for organisations to survey their staff in a consistent and systematic manner. This makes it possible to build up a picture of staff experience, compare and monitor change over time, and to identify variations between different staff groups. Obtaining feedback from staff, and taking account of their views and priorities, is vital for driving improvements in the NHS.

In spring 2024, the Survey Coordination Centre publish the results for the 2023 NHS Staff Survey. The results are primarily intended to be used by organisations to help review and improve staff experience. 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 and Social Care to Parliament for delivery of the NHS Constitution.

This guide, *NHS Staff Survey – Basic guide for 2023 results*, outlines some fundamental information about the survey results published by the Survey Coordination Centre: whose responses are included in the data, what types of results are presented and how, an explanation of benchmarking groups and weighting, and an overview of the different outputs. The basic guide also includes a brief overview of reporting changes for 2023.

If you require further information, you can review the [Technical Guides](#). There are two Technical Guides for the 2023 NHS Staff Survey: the [NHS Staff Survey Technical Guide](#) provides technical information about the results of the NHS Staff Survey as they apply to staff on substantive contracts (the “main” version of the survey). Additionally, this year, the [NHS Staff Survey Bank Technical Guide](#) provides technical information about the NHS Staff Survey for bank only workers. These documents contain more detailed technical information about the survey results such as how scores are calculated, how weighting is applied and a summary of the historical comparability of questions.

2 Overview of changes to reporting for 2023

The 2023 NHS Staff Survey has undergone a small number of changes since 2022. This includes the mandatory¹ inclusion of bank only workers, following their voluntary inclusion in 2022, as well as some minor changes to the content of the questionnaire.

For 2023, reporting of results for bank only workers has been extended to include benchmark reports for each participating organisation and a national summary report.

The interactive dashboard for the main version of the survey has been updated. The new dashboard provides the same data as the previous dashboards and allows users to apply up to two breakdowns to the data at a national, regional and ICS level. Information about using the dashboard is available on the [How to use the dashboard](#) page of the interactive dashboard site.

Data from previous years published as part of the 2023 survey have been re-calculated where necessary to enable fair historical comparisons.

Two specific changes have been made to the survey reporting for 2023:

1. In previous years, reporting was formatted to present results (percentages and scores) to one decimal place. This year results are shown to two decimal places as standard. This can be helpful in understanding the relationships between question and score results and identifying levels of change.
2. As in previous years, to ensure the robustness of published results and to protect staff confidentiality, results for very small groups of staff are not reported. In line with NHS England guidance, the threshold for the suppression of results has changed this year from 11 to 10 (i.e. when less than 10 responses feed into a result, that particular value will not be shown). This applies to all reporting outputs and any historical results reported this year.

For more information on changes to the 2023 NHS Staff Survey, a summary is available to download from the [Survey Documents section](#) of the NHS Staff Survey [website](#).

3 Who is included?

The 2023 NHS Staff Survey was conducted between September and November 2023. Each organisation had a mandatory fieldwork period of at least two months.

The survey is compulsory for all NHS trusts and voluntary for other NHS organisations such as Integrated Care Boards and Social Enterprises.

Each participating organisation drew a list of eligible staff based on their records on 1 September 2023. The full eligibility criteria for the main version of the survey, including staff who are not eligible, is outlined in Appendix A of the [NSS Technical Document](#), however the key criterion was

¹ The inclusion of bank only workers in 2023 was mandatory for organisations with 200 or more in-house bank only workers. For further information please refer to the [NSSB Technical Document](#).

that staff had to be substantively employed and paid by the organisation at the time (on a full- or part-time contract) to count as eligible.

The inclusion of bank only workers in 2023 was mandatory for organisations with 200 or more in-house bank only workers. The key criterion for eligibility for the bank only version of the survey was that bank workers should work solely on the bank, with no substantive contract at the organisation. External bank workers (e.g. NHS Professionals) were not eligible to take part. The full eligibility criteria for the bank only version of the survey is outlined in Appendix A of the [NSSB Technical Document](#).

4 What type of results are presented?

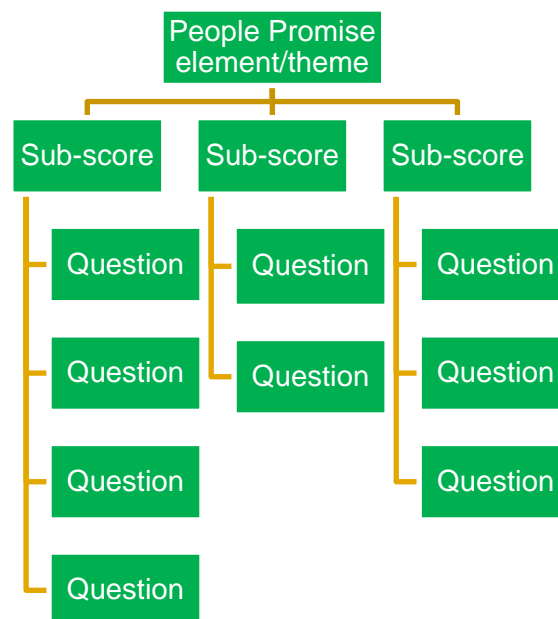
The 2023 Staff Survey outputs report two types of measures: summary indicators (People Promise element/theme scores and sub-scores), and question level data.

4.1 Summary indicators: People Promise elements/theme scores and sub-scores

At the uppermost level of the scoring hierarchy are the seven People Promise elements and two retained themes, which are overall scores derived from the sub-scores that feed into them, with each sub-score pertaining to responses from several questions. The People Promise elements and two themes, therefore, function as singular summary measures for groups of questions that taken together give more information about each area of interest. They are formed by assigning values to responses (on a scale from 0 to 10) and calculating their average. All values reported relate to an average (mean) score, where a higher score indicates a more favourable outcome to the given indicator. A higher score indicates a more favourable outcome, even in cases where questions are included for which a higher proportion is a worse outcome.

At the second level of the hierarchy, the sub-scores provide a more granular level to the results, within a particular area of interest. Again, these are taken as an average score of the questions that feed into them. And finally, at the lowest level of the hierarchy are the responses to each individual question. More detail about these calculations can be found in the [Technical Documents](#).

The diagram below is for illustrative purposes to demonstrate the hierarchy and the relationship between scores, sub-scores and questions.



This year the People Promise elements, Themes, and sub-scores will be reported with up to three years of trend data.

In some cases the questions that feed into each sub-score and the sub-scores that feed into each score vary between the main version of the survey and the survey for bank only workers.

4.2. Question-level results

Beside the summary indicators, question level results are also included in most reporting outputs. Question results are always presented as percentages. In each instance where question level results are presented, the exact meaning of a given percentage is indicated. For example, a graph's axis may specify that the values presented relate to the "% of staff selecting 'Satisfied'/'Very Satisfied'". It is worth noting that for certain questions a higher percentage is a worse result than a lower percentage: for example, when looking at the "% of staff experiencing violence", the lower the percentage, the better the result.

Note: to protect staff confidentiality and to ensure the robustness of results the Coordination Centre does not report results for groups of less than 10. When less than 10 responses feed into a result, that particular value will be suppressed, regardless of what type of measure it is. However, the base size will still be shown where appropriate.

5 Benchmarking groups

NHS organisations vary in the services they provide and relatedly, the challenges they face. Organisations are assigned to a benchmarking group based on the services they offer. This means that comparisons are only made between organisations of a similar type and ensures comparisons are fair. In the benchmark reports organisations' results are presented in the context of their benchmarking group's best, average and worst results.

Trusts participating in the survey are assigned to one of the below benchmarking groups depending on the services they provide:

- Acute and Acute & Community Trusts
- Acute Specialist Trusts
- Mental Health & Learning Disability and Mental Health, Learning Disability & Community Trusts
- Community Trusts
- Ambulance Trusts

Benchmarking groups for organisations that participate voluntarily are detailed in the [Technical Documents](#).

5.1 Data weighting

Despite grouping organisations together based on service provision and occupational group profile, NHS organisations of the same type are still likely to have some differences in the numbers of respondents in each occupational group.

These differences can occur for a number of reasons. One example is that some organisations may sub-contract services such as catering and cleaning, while other organisations supply them in-house. These differences between trusts can have a notable effect on organisation results, as it is known that different occupational groups tend to answer some questions in different ways. For instance, managers are known to respond more positively than other groups to some questions and an organisation that has a particularly large number of responses from managers may have more positive results simply because of this imbalance. For this reason, the data collected through the main version of the survey are weighted to account for occupational group differences at organisations within benchmarking groups. The weighting procedure limits the impact of occupational group differences on results and works to create a 'level playing field'.

In order to make one NHS trust's scores comparable with other trusts of the same type, individuals' scores within each trust are weighted so that the occupational group profile of the organisation reflects that of a typical trust of its type. For organisations taking part voluntarily (i.e. non-trust organisations) results are not typically weighted.

Note that occupation group weighting is not applied to the results for bank only workers.

At the national level, all results are weighted by trust size to ensure to the national results reflect the relative number of eligible staff working at each trust. Trust size weighting is applied to the results of the main and bank versions of the survey.

Note that the data for questions where a higher or lower value does not relate to a better or worse result are never weighted.

Where appropriate, the occupation group weight and trust size weight are combined when presenting national results which also contain the results for benchmarking groups.

The data weighting process is detailed in the [Technical Documents](#).

6 Summary of key outputs for the NHS Staff Survey

This section provides a summary of key outputs for the main version of the NHS Staff Survey. Please see the next section for a summary of key outputs for the NHS Staff Survey for bank only workers.

The outputs of the NHS Staff Survey reported by the Coordination Centre fall into three categories: national, local (i.e. organisational level), and regional/system level results. Documents are published on our [website](#)

A summary of each output type is included below, while full details can be found in the [NSS Technical Document](#).

6.1 National results

National outputs are based only on data from participating *trusts*. They exclude organisations that participate voluntarily.

National dashboards: Published online, these dashboards provide the national results for all participating trusts on all People Promise elements, themes, sub-scores, and questions, including trend data for 2019-2023 where available. Results are presented for all trusts combined (national average) as well as for each individual trust benchmarking group. Question results are typically presented both as single percentages (e.g. % of staff agreeing/strongly agreeing) as well as the proportions choosing each response option. Results are also presented broken down by various background variables (such as gender and ethnicity). Up to two of these breakdowns can be applied at a time.

National briefing: Published in PDF format, this output provides a summary of the key national results (based on results from NHS trusts only) from the survey with narrative.

National Workforce Equality Standards tables: Published in Excel format, these tables provide the national results (based on results from NHS trusts only) for the NHS Staff Survey indicators used in the Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) and Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES).

Detailed spreadsheets: Published in Excel format, these are a series of spreadsheets that contain question results broken down by individual response options (split by questionnaire section), People Promise element, theme and sub-score results. Results included in these spreadsheets are weighted to match those reported in the outputs detailed above. Information on the weighting used for a given result is also shown within the output itself.

6.2 Local results

Benchmark reports: A PDF report produced for every organisation, containing organisation results for People Promise elements/themes, sub-scores, and questions over the last 5 years (where possible). All results included are weighted and benchmarked where appropriate. An additional breakdown report, with up to two unique, organisation specific sets of breakdowns for theme scores, is optional for every organisation. The benchmark reports also contain data

required for the NHS Staff Survey indicators used in the Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) and Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES). Data from the benchmark reports is also available in Excel format.

Organisational dashboards: Published online, these dashboards provide the results for each participating organisation and benchmark data on all People Promise elements, themes, sub-scores, and questions, including trend data for 2019-2023 where available. Question results are presented both as single percentages (e.g. % of staff agreeing or strongly agreeing) as well as the proportions choosing each response option. Results are also presented broken down by various background variables (such as gender and ethnicity). One of these breakdowns can be applied at a time.

Detailed spreadsheets: Published in Excel format, these are a series of spreadsheets that contain question results broken down by individual response options (split by questionnaire section), People Promise element, theme and sub-score results. The sheets contain the results for each organisation, the results for each trust benchmarking group (the mean of all the constituent organisation results), and the results for all trusts (the mean of all trust responses). In addition, they also contain breakdowns by all of the demographic variables across organisations and within the five trust benchmarking groups. Results included in these spreadsheets are weighted to match those reported in the outputs detailed above. Information on the weighting used for a given result is also shown within the output itself.

WRES and WDES dashboards: Published online, these dashboards provide data for each organisation based on indicators used in the Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) and the Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES).

6.3 Regional results

Regional dashboards: Published online, these dashboards provide results aggregated for each NHS Region for all participating trusts. Trend data for 2020-2023 are presented where appropriate. Results are also presented broken down by various background variables (such as gender and ethnicity). Up to two of these breakdowns can be applied at a time. These dashboards also provide benchmarked results for each trust grouped within region on all People Promise elements, themes and sub-scores for 2023.

6.4 Integrated Care System results

ICS dashboards: Published online, these dashboards provide results aggregated for each Integrated Care System for all participating trusts (except ambulance trusts which cover more than one ICS). Trend data for 2020-2023 are presented where appropriate. Results are also presented broken down by various background variables (such as gender and ethnicity). Up to two of these breakdowns can be applied at a time. These dashboards also provide benchmarked results for each trust grouped within ICS on all People Promise elements, themes and sub-scores for 2023.

7 Summary of key outputs for the NHS Staff Survey for bank only workers

The outputs of the NHS Staff Survey for bank only workers reported by the Coordination Centre fall into two categories: national and local (i.e. organisational level). Documents are published on our [website](#).

A brief summary of each output type is included below, while full details can be found in the [NSSB Technical Document](#).

7.1 National results

National aggregate report: A national aggregate report for bank only workers, published in PDF format providing a summary of the key national results for 2023, based on results from participating NHS trusts only, with narrative.

National Workforce Equality Standards Tables: Published in Excel format, these tables provide the national results (based on results from NHS trusts only) for the NHS Staff Survey indicators used in the Bank Workforce Race Equality Standard (BWRES) and Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES).

7.2 Local results

Benchmark reports: A PDF report produced for every organisation, containing organisation results for People Promise elements/themes, sub-scores, and questions from 2023 and 2022 where comparable data is available. All results included are benchmarked where appropriate. The benchmark reports also contain data required for the NHS Staff Survey indicators used in the Bank Workforce Race Equality Standard (BWRES) and Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES).