The survey

In July 2018 we carried out our fifth annual membership survey. We received 498 responses to our online survey from chairs, chief executives and executive and non-executive directors across 202 member trusts providing acute, ambulance, specialist, community and mental health services. This represents 89% of our membership. In addition, Ipsos MORI carried out 21 in-depth telephone interviews with a sample of member chairs and chief executives to provide a deeper understanding of what we are doing well, where we can improve, and how our performance has changed over the past year. In the vast majority of areas, our members told us we have further improved our membership offer with even higher levels of satisfaction compared to last year.

Key findings

95% of respondents were ‘very’ or ‘fairly satisfied’ with the work of NHS Providers, with 57% indicating they are ‘very satisfied’ – the highest ever figure from our five surveys.

97% felt it was ‘very’ or ‘fairly important’ for their organisation to be a member of NHS Providers. Overall 92% felt it was ‘very’ or ‘fairly important’ for them individually, rising to 97% for chairs and chief executives.

96% would speak positively about NHS Providers, with only one respondent indicating they would speak negatively and a small proportion saying they were unsure.

Interviewees told Ipsos MORI that we represent the collective voice of the provider sector. Members said we are trustworthy and reliable. They also said we play a key role in lobbying government and are influential in shaping the agenda for the NHS. Members see us as a conduit between the provider sector, health and other public sector stakeholders and the government. One of the main benefits of membership identified was the access to high-quality information and analysis. Members also told us they value networking opportunities, as well as our support offer including training and inductions.
What NHS Providers does well

RESPECTED VOICE OF THE PROVIDER SECTOR
Members were very positive about how we represent them and reflected on our role as the credible voice of the provider sector.

“They are the association or body which brings us all together and takes a horizontal view across all hospitals, and of course social care, mental health, and other parts of the provider system... it’s good to have a voice which collectively represents us.”

INFLUENTIAL IN SHAPING POLICY
Members reflected on our core strength in influencing stakeholders and shaping national policy on their behalf.

“It’s the influence and lobbying side of things... that sense of credibility and voice with those people in areas of influence... that’s where it’s been most prominent.”

STRONG MEDIA PROFILE
Members value the impact and timeliness of our communications activities, particularly the way in which we work with the media to convey key messages for a wider audience.

“They’ve always appeared to be speaking with a relatively unified and representative voice of NHS providers when they’re on the breakfast couch. Their media exposure and messages have been very consistent and very well done.”

SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER
Members said that they felt NHS Providers is honest and candid about the issues facing the provider sector in its influencing work.

“Members said that we speak truth to power and that senior staff have impressive political nuance.”

NETWORKING AND EVENTS
Members value the range of different opportunities to share learning and hear from national policy makers, through network meetings, roundtables, events and training.

“You get to network much more widely across the country and get perspectives you otherwise wouldn’t. It’s a vehicle for getting issues raised and fed back in a more neutral way. It’s the easiest way of keeping abreast of a wide range of issues.”

HIGH-QUALITY PRODUCTS
Members really value the range of outputs we produce, including briefings, newsletters, reports, networks and events, indicating that they are timely, useful, and of a high quality.

“The publications, the reports, the lobbying, the conferences, the training sessions they organise. I wouldn’t say one is more important than the other, it’s all so useful.”

SUPPORTING PROVIDERS
Members value the formal and informal support we provide through our membership offer and in terms of the ‘air cover’ we can provide nationally for the challenges trusts face locally.

“Induction programmes for newly appointed board members are important.”
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<th>YOU SAID…</th>
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<td><strong>1</strong> Support us through the evolving health and care landscape</td>
<td>We have invested additional resource into helping shape the development of national policy around system working and continue to develop our thought leadership role in this space. <strong>Collaborative working: Tackling governance challenges in practice</strong> is the first in a series of briefings aimed at sharing system-level best practice. The next in the series will focus on the development of commissioning in an STP/ICS context. We have also published an edition of <em>Provider Voices</em> that captures different perspectives on the development of STPs and have launched the first edition of a new member bulletin <em>Providers Integrate</em> which brings together news on STPs, ICSs and collaborative working from trusts’ perspectives. We are also working with a number of partners including the Local Government Association to offer a peer support package to help trusts and their partners build robust relationships in support of system working.</td>
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<td>Members asked for more support in relation to sustainability and transformation partnerships (STPs) and integrated care systems (ICs) and the wider integration agenda. You specifically said, “<strong>Picking up on areas of good practice or where things have gone wrong in this country would be helpful. So more sharing of evidence up and down the country.</strong>”</td>
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<td><strong>2</strong> Continue to develop more support for all types of trusts – mental health, community and ambulance services as well as hospitals</td>
<td>Our core priority remains to ensure we fully represent the different sectors within our membership, both as a coherent whole, and in terms of how policy making impacts on different types of provider. Building on the recent edition of our flagship report, <em>The state of the NHS provider sector</em>, which focused on community services, alongside the new community network which we co-host with NHS Confederation, we will continue to help raise the profile, voice and unique challenges of the broad range of community providers. We will also continue to champion the need for equity between mental health and physical health services through our work with the community network and in our representation at the highest levels, with a dedicated focus from our senior team. Our research programme captures the specific challenges faced by mental health providers, and we will continue to publicly highlight the pressures on children and adolescent services and adult mental health services, and fight for additional funding to reach providers on the frontline. We will continue to work with the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE) to develop our understanding and messaging in support of the ambulance sector. We will highlight the key role ambulances play in the health and care system, the pressures they are under over winter and we will promote better understanding of operational performance in light of the new quality standards.</td>
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<td>There was an acknowledgment from some members that they had begun to notice more outputs on community services and mental health. However, other members felt that we still need to do more for the different sectors which we represent. “<strong>Start working harder to represent the out of hospital offer rather than the in-hospital offer.</strong>”</td>
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3. **Balance events in London with a presence regionally and across the country**

Members have asked for more regional events, and note that they are finding it increasingly difficult to justify the time and cost of being out of the office.

“I think we would be more engaged, in a physical way, if we were able to access conferences north of Birmingham and this is not an uncommon view.”

We will continue to explore different options to make sure our events are accessible to as many members as possible, whilst maintaining the networking opportunities that we know are highly valued by members.

Notably this year we hosted NHS@70 events in both Liverpool and London. Our board development, bespoke training and NED network also move around the country. We are also hosting our first ever member dinner outside of London and if this works well for members, will look to do more in the future.

We deliberately hold our flagship annual conference outside of London and have rotated between Liverpool, Birmingham and now Manchester.

We are also exploring opportunities where webinars may be another option to reach more of our members.

4. **Strengthen our influencing position on policy issues including workforce and quality**

Members felt there was more room for us to expand our presence in influencing issues affecting the NHS workforce and quality of care.

“Given some of the issues that are likely to impact it going forward – level of training, people’s engagement in training, overseas recruitment, impact of Brexit, feels less well developed in terms of workforce discussions than I might have expected.”

Addressing the challenges which face the NHS workforce remains a core policy priority. We will ensure our voice is heard on members’ behalf both with influential stakeholders and in the media – and that we ensure members are kept informed of our influencing work in this space.

We are particularly keen to influence the national bodies to address the short-term recruitment and retention challenges facing the service, as well as developing long term solutions via the national workforce strategy.

Our programme of work around quality of care will focus on the board’s role in assurance, the links between staff engagement and quality of care, and the integration agenda. We will host our biannual Quality conference this year and explore a new focus on supporting our membership to share the benefits of different quality improvement methodologies.
The full survey results have been discussed by our board, senior management team and the wider organisation. We will use these insights to develop our upcoming organisational strategy and across all our policy, engagement and support work.

We will continue to report on our in-year performance via our six-monthly performance reports.

We will repeat our member research in autumn 2019 but welcome your feedback at any time, so please do not hesitate to contact a member of our team.

Chris Hopson, NHS Providers chief executive, said:

“Our members’ survey provides invaluable information for us on what we are doing well and where we need to improve. Collecting, carefully considering and then reacting to member feedback is central to delivering our vision of being an outstanding membership organisation. These findings show levels of satisfaction rising from what was already a very high base. It is really heartening to see such emphatic approval for our work from all sectors of our membership. But there are also some helpful pointers here for how we should adapt our approach to remain effective in a complex, challenging and fast-changing environment. We know, for example, that we must adapt to reflect the new emphasis on local system working. The fact that we now have 100% of trusts in membership is a tremendous vindication of our approach, and we will work hard to maintain that support.”

Find out more

The full results of our quantitative and qualitative surveys will be available to members on our website.
NHS Providers is the membership organisation and trade association for the NHS hospital, mental health, community and ambulance services that treat patients and service users in the NHS. We help those NHS foundation trusts and trusts to deliver high-quality, patient-focused care by enabling them to learn from each other, acting as their public voice and helping shape the system in which they operate.

NHS Providers has all trusts in membership, collectively accounting for £84bn of annual expenditure and employing more than one million staff.