

HOW ARE WE DOING? MEMBER RESEARCH REPORT 2021-2022

In November 2021 we carried out our eighth annual membership survey. We received 205 responses to our online survey, from chairs, chief executives, and executive and non-executive directors across 122 member trusts providing acute, ambulance, specialist, community and mental health services. This represents 55% of our membership which is lower than in previous years given sustained pressures created by the pandemic. In addition, Ipsos MORI carried out 20 in-depth phone interviews with a sample of chairs and chief executives to provide a deeper understanding of whether trusts felt supported by NHS Providers over the past year, what we have been doing well, where we can improve, and how our performance has changed.

As in previous years, the results from our annual membership survey are extremely positive. You told us you are happy with our work, and with how we have flexed our approach and prioritised our offer of influence, voice and support during the pandemic. You also praised the way we have represented your views with stakeholders and in the media.

Key findings

96% of all respondents were 'very' or 'fairly' satisfied with the work of NHS Providers.

96% of respondents felt it was 'very' or 'fairly important' for their organisation to be a member of NHS Providers.

95% of respondents agreed that NHS Providers understands the context within which trusts are working.

94% of respondents said they would speak positively about NHS Providers.

Key findings

credible influential expert communicators

This year you told Ipsos MORI you see us as the representative body for the provider sector. You highlighted our **influence on policy makers** as well as our **media presence** and **support for members**. Many of you perceived us as an increasingly important **channel of communication** between trusts and the government.

You described us as a **credible voice** for the sector, presenting issues in a **compelling and balanced** way, highlighting a **clear link between our advocacy and recent policy developments** and **representing your views** accurately.

You valued the **pace of our work** and our **flexibility** throughout the pandemic and highlighted our **growing media presence**. You see us as **expert communicators** making use of a variety of channels to conduct our work, particularly **influencing the narrative** and **raising awareness** within the public about the pressures facing the NHS.

This year you also identified a range of benefits from membership which you valued, such as **networking opportunities**, the ability to **share best practice** and **learn from others**, our **clear and concise reports** offering oversight of the policy and legislative landscape, as well as our **training and development programme**.

What NHS Providers does well

CREDIBLE VOICE OF THE PROVIDER SECTOR

You referred to our compelling and balanced voice, advocating on your behalf, as the respected voice of the provider sector throughout the pandemic, representing your views faithfully.



“ *It boils down to credibility. When they speak, people listen. They listen because they're not loud, they're not forceful. They have an agenda, but it's clearly linked to the ultimate goals we're all trying to achieve.*

CHAIR, MENTAL HEALTH AND LEARNING DISABILITY TRUST

FLEXING OUR APPROACH

97% of respondents were satisfied with the way we flexed our approach and prioritised specific topics to highlight and address key challenges facing the NHS over the course of the pandemic. You told us you value our responsiveness and focus.



“ *Always on top of the issues and responsive as these have rapidly changed.*

ACUTE TRUST, MIDLANDS

“ *Very impressed with your continued high profile.*

CHAIR, COMBINED MENTAL HEALTH, LEARNING DISABILITY AND COMMUNITY TRUST



INFLUENTIAL LOBBYISTS

You saw a clear link between our advocacy and recent policy developments such as elements in the Health and Care Bill, as well as recent funding settlements. You felt that we are an increasingly important channel of communication between trusts and the government.

“ *The profile of NHS Providers has never been higher and has made huge contributions to raising the issues of trusts and getting politicians to respond. Team did phenomenally well during COVID waves and in recovery.*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE, AMBULANCE TRUST, LONDON

“ *The extent to which we will actually see their influence in the [Health and Social Care Bill], we'll have to see, but clearly there has been relevant contribution, comment and suggestion.*

CHAIR, ACUTE TRUST

EXPERT COMMUNICATORS

You felt our media profile had grown in the last year and perceived us as expert communicators with a strong presence and growing authority in the public sphere. You highlighted our use of a variety of channels and our strong relationship with the media.



“ *They're good at getting in the media and representing issues in the provider sector. NHS Providers are very effective at doing that – much more effective than individual organisations doing it themselves.*

CHIEF EXECUTIVE, COMBINED ACUTE AND COMMUNITY TRUST



PRODUCING HIGH-QUALITY OUTPUTS

You valued our outputs, describing them as clear and concise summaries of the policy, political and legislative landscape. You highlighted the way we support trusts by providing them with a consistent interpretation of complex issues, anticipating changes on the horizon.



Within a day you're going to have a 25-page synopsis of the key points from NHS Providers, which to me, is more than useful.

CHAIR, MENTAL HEALTH AND LEARNING DISABILITY TRUST



SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

92% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed we stand up for and defend the reputation of NHS providers. You said we effectively campaigned for appropriate responses to the issues facing trusts and that we were also effective at highlighting the pressures facing the NHS while setting out the need for support for recovery efforts.



They've really been on the front foot in terms of commenting on things that affect trusts... They've been very proactive about continuing the debate and championing the issues that they know are of concern for providers.

CHAIR, MENTAL HEALTH AND LEARNING DISABILITY TRUST

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

You valued the benefits of membership, particularly the ability to learn from others, share best practice and the opportunity for networking opportunities. You also valued our training and development opportunities, particularly the NED and Exec induction programmes.



All these programmes are valuable tools of high quality and value for money.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
ACUTE SPECIALIST TRUST.

Areas we can improve

	YOU SAID...	WE WILL...
1	<p>Support providers to implement system working and continue to argue for a fully funded, multi-year, national workforce plan.</p> <p>You asked that we continue to support trusts to become leaders and co leaders within local, collaborative systems and at place, including sharing more case studies of good practice. You also flagged the importance of working with government, the department and the national NHS bodies to improve the national workforce planning function for health and social care.</p>	<p>We will continue to follow our organisational strategy to move from the voice of NHS providers to the voice of providers within local systems, offering constructive feedback and support for system working from a provider perspective.</p> <p>Addressing the lack of coherent, national level workforce planning remains a core influencing priority. We will redouble our efforts to argue the case for a multi-year, funded workforce plan with government, parliamentarians, the Department of Health and Social Care and the national bodies in the year ahead.</p>
2	<p>Ensure we influence issues impacting on sectors within our membership.</p> <p>You recognised the emphasis we place on supporting sectoral needs as well as those issues which impact our broader membership. You were keen that we sustained our influence on behalf of mental health leaders and the ambulance sector, and asked us to ensure due profile was given to community providers, and to learning disability services.</p>	<p>We will ensure we sustain our commitment and impact in highlighting and addressing issues which disproportionately impact particular sectors of our membership. We will sustain our influence and support for mental health trust leaders and continue working closely with the Association for Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE) to support the ambulance sector effectively. In addition, we will regroup our efforts to work with NHS Confederation via the Community Network to improve the public profile of community services – and we will ensure we focus sufficiently on the issues impacting learning disability services in the year ahead.</p>

	YOU SAID...	WE WILL...
3	<p>Expand our training and development programme. Retain offers for remote access to different events and training as we move to face-to-face interactions.</p> <p>You also acknowledged that our training and development programme is valuable and continues to be of high quality, but have suggested we expand it by offering more advanced training and ensuring the membership is up to speed on the breadth of our offer, including new programmes.</p>	<p>We will be publishing an integrated plan setting out the full breadth of our development and support offer shortly which we hope will improve the visibility of our offer to members. We welcome your feedback on areas in which we could expand our support to meet your needs and will consider this seriously in the year ahead.</p> <p>We will ensure we continue to operate a mixed model of virtual and face-to-face events, and that our face to face events are planned as accessibly as possible as opportunities to meet open up in the year ahead.</p>
4	<p>Sustain our presence and activity in the media but review our communications approach with members.</p> <p>You highlighted how our media profile had grown successfully, describing us as expert communicators on your behalf. You would like us to sustain this profile going forward. However, you also acknowledged we could improve the level and frequency of the communications we send out to you, streamlining where we can.</p>	<p>We will be reviewing our member communications function, and our website in coming months with the aim to ensure we are communicating with you in the most effective and timely way. We will share further information on the next steps arising from this review over the year.</p>

What happens next?

The full survey results have been discussed by our board, senior management team and the wider organisation. We will use these insights as we plan and deliver our activities across all our work in influence, voice and support.

We will continue to report on our in-year performance via our six-monthly performance reports. We will repeat our member research in autumn 2022 but we welcome your feedback at any time, so please do not hesitate to contact a member of the team.

Find out more

The full results of our quantitative and qualitative surveys will be available to members on our website.

Who we are

NHS Providers is the membership organisation 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 England in voluntary membership, collectively accounting for £104bn of annual expenditure and employing 1.2 million staff.



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