

NHS Staff Survey results 2022

Introduction

On 9 March 2023, NHS England published the annual [NHS staff survey results](#). The survey ran from September to December 2022, amid winter demand, all-time high vacancy rates, a cost of living crisis and widespread industrial action. The survey was aligned to the overarching categories of the [NHS People Promise](#) and included new questions related to patient safety. 636,348 staff responded (2% down from 2021), with responses from 264 NHS organisations, including all 215 trusts. This briefing gives a summary of the national level findings, and NHS Providers' view.

Key findings

- Only 25.6% of staff are satisfied with their level of pay. This is a 7% decrease from 2021 and the lowest result for five years. Satisfaction with pay remains lowest amongst nursing and healthcare assistants (13.3%) and ambulance staff (15.8%)
- Just over one in four (26.4%) staff think there are enough staff in their organisation for them to do their job properly, and only 23.4% of staff said they never or rarely have unrealistic time pressures
- All measures relating to burnout have remained persistently high. Just under half of staff (46.3%) often or always feel worn out at the end of their shift and 34% of staff feel burnt out because of their work. Around half of ambulance staff in particular have felt burnt out because of their work this year (49.3%)
- 32.3% of staff reported often thinking about leaving their organisation, an increase of 1.1% from 2021 and a five year high. This feeling was highest among staff in ambulance trusts (42.9%). 57.4% of staff would recommend their organisation as a place to work, a 2% reduction compared to 2021 and the lowest number since 2018
- 69% of staff reported that their immediate manager takes a positive interest in their health and wellbeing and 71% of respondents agreed that their immediate manager values their work (a 0.8% increase from 2021)
- While progress has been made, ethnic minority staff are still less likely to report that their organisation acts fairly on career progression and promotions (46.4%) compared to their white peers (59.1%), a difference of 12.7% which has narrowed compared to 14.4% in 2021
- Only 34.7% of disabled staff feel valued for their work compared to 44.6% of non-disabled staff. This measure has seen a downward trend for all staff in recent years

- 62.9% of staff reported being happy with the standard of care provided by their organisation. This is compared to 67.8% in 2021. Further, 69.1% of staff agree that their organisation acts on concerns raised by patients, the lowest percentage since 2018
- 71.9% of staff feel secure in raising concerns about unsafe clinical practice (a 3.1% decrease from 2021), but only 56.7% were confident that their organisation would address their concern (a 2.8% drop from 2021)
- Most measures related to team working remain unchanged compared to last year, but overall demonstrate a strong sense of team working, with 81.6% of staff reporting that they enjoy working with their colleagues

Burnout, health, and wellbeing

Workload and staffing pressures

Given the context of a challenging economic environment, severe staff shortages, ongoing and increasing pressures to tackle care backlogs and widespread industrial action, it is worrying, but unsurprising, that staff morale and wellbeing are low. It is concerning that there has been a decrease in the number of staff who report their organisation takes positive action on health and wellbeing (56.5%, down from 57% in 2021). The survey also found that:

- Only 26.4% of staff think there are enough staff in their organisation for them to do their job properly. This is a 0.7% drop from 2021
- Only 23.4% of staff say they never or rarely have unrealistic time pressures (23.3% in 2021)
- 42.9% feel able to meet the conflicting demands on their time. This is a marginal decrease from 2021 (0.1%), however this is now the lowest for six years
- Just over half (55.6%) of staff said they have adequate materials, supplies and equipment to do their work. This is a 1.7% drop from 2021

Physical and mental wellbeing

It is concerning that staff have experienced increased incidents of physical violence in the last 12 months, with 14.7% experiencing violence from patients, their relatives, or the public (14.4% in 2021); 0.8% from managers (0.7% in 2021); and 1.8% from other colleagues (1.6% in 2021). 72.4% of those who experienced violence said that they or a colleague reported the incident, a 1% increase from 2021.

Incidents of violence have a higher reporting rate than incidents of harassment, bullying or abuse (just 49.7% of staff experiencing this treatment reported such incidents). This is particularly concerning

given the prevalence of harassment, bullying and abuse, with 57.6% of staff experiencing this at least once in the previous 12 months: 27.8% of staff experienced this from patients, their relatives, or the public (0.1% increase from 2021); 11.1% from managers (0.4% decrease from 2021); and 18.7% from other colleagues (static since 2021).

Despite varying upward and downward trends among questions relating to physical and mental health, burnout markers have remained persistently high, and it is worrying that just over half (52.5%) of staff said they have a good work/life balance. Further results showed:

- 44.8% of staff have felt unwell due to work-related stress in the last 12 months (2.1% decrease from 2021)
- 56.6% of staff attended work despite not feeling well enough on at least one occasion in the past three months of the survey period. Following a significant 10.2% decline in this measure between 2019 and 2020, it has now increased by 2.1%
- 39.9% of staff said their work often or always frustrates them (0.4% increase from 2021), 31.8% do not have enough time for family and friends during leisure time (0.3% increase from 2021), 21.4% of staff feel that every working hour is tiring for them (0.2% increase from 2021)
- 46.3% of staff often or always feel worn out at the end of their shift (0.4% decrease from 2021), 34.0% of staff feel burnt out because of their work (0.5% decrease from 2021), and 30.8% feel exhausted at the thought of another day/shift at work (0.4% decrease from 2021). Around half of ambulance staff have felt burnt out because of their work this year (49.3%)
- 30.2% of staff experienced musculoskeletal (MSK) issues due to work in the last 12 months (0.6% decrease from 2021). It is positive to see a slight decrease in this metric following a consecutive increase for five years but, the experience of musculoskeletal problems remains higher among ambulance technicians (56.0%), paramedics (54.4%) and nursing assistants/healthcare assistants (39.3%)

Inequalities

Racial inequalities and racism

- 56.0% of all staff report that their organisation acts fairly regarding promotions and career progression, compared to 55.6% in 2021, however this remains lower than in 2018 (56.4%)
 - Ethnic minority staff are less likely to report their organisation acts fairly on career progression and promotions (46.4%) compared to their white peers (59.1%), a difference of 12.7% which has narrowed compared to 14.4% in 2021
- Instances of discrimination from patients, their families and the public for all staff have increased to 8.3% from 7.9% in 2021 and are at their highest level since 2018

- Ethnic minority staff remain more likely to report discrimination from patients (19.9%) compared to their white peers (5.0%). This is an increase on 2021 for all staff, and the differential gap remains large at 14.9% compared to 14.4% in 2021
- Discrimination by a manager or colleague remains unchanged for all staff at 9.0%, however this is an increase on 8.0% in 2018
 - Ethnic minority staff report higher instances of discrimination compared to their white peers (16.6% compared to 6.7% respectively)
- NHS England published the latest Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) data on 22 February; our briefing on the results is available [here](#). The WRES report contains granular data to give a greater understanding of where targeted support and interventions might be best directed

Disabled staff

- The number of disabled staff reporting experiences of harassment, bullying or abuse from a manager has reduced to 16.4%, down from 17.2% in 2021. Experiences of these behaviours from other members of staff are also marginally down to 25.0% in 2022, compared to 25.3% in 2021
- Incidents of harassment, bullying or abuse by members of the public, their families and patients have slightly increased to 33.1% compared to 33.0% in 2021
- A smaller percentage of disabled staff report feeling pressure from a manager to come to work when unwell (28.0% compared to 30.2% in 2021)
- In 2022, disabled staff were slightly more likely to report that their organisation acts fairly with regard to promotion opportunities and career progression (51.7% compared to 51.0%), and 51.0% of disabled staff reported incidents of harassment, bullying or abuse compared to 49.7% in 2021
- While unchanged compared to 2021, only 34.7% of disabled staff feel valued for their work compared to 44.6% of non-disabled staff. This measure has seen a downward trend for all staff in recent years
- The NHS staff survey includes some Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) data for 2022, with further data expected to be published in the WDES national report shortly

Quality of care and working environment

While the percentage of staff reporting that they feel their role makes a difference to patients has marginally decreased to 86.9%, compared to 87.4% in 2021, this remains a significant majority of staff. The report does, however, show increasing staff concern at the quality of care provided at their organisation:

- 74.0% reported that care of patients is their organisation's top priority, compared to 75.6% in 2021

- 69.1% agree that their organisation acts on concerns raised by patients, a reduction on 72.1% in 2021 and the lowest percentage since 2018
- When asked about the standard of care provided by their organisation, 62.9% of staff reported being happy compared to 67.8% in 2021. This measure has decreased from 71.0% in 2018, an 8.1% decrease
- This measure is also reported by trust type, showing an 18% decrease in staff satisfaction with the quality of care provided at ambulance trusts (75.0% in 2020 and 56.7% in 2022)

With regard to speaking up about their concerns, the report shows that the number of staff who feel safe to speak up about any concern has slightly reduced to 61.5% from 62.1% in 2021. The report further shows:

- A concerning decrease across other measures relating to clinical safety with a reduced percentage of staff feeling secure in raising these concerns (71.9% compared to 75.0% in 2021) and 56.7% of staff reporting feeling confident their organisation would address their concern in this area (59.5% in 2021)
- Staff across all trust types feel less secure reporting clinical concerns, with the lowest percentage of staff feeling confident to do this at ambulance trusts

This year's report contains new questions on patient safety. While this means we are unable to see year-on-year comparators, these are a welcome addition and will provide useful longitudinal data in the future. The report shows:

- 33.5% of staff reported seeing errors, near misses or incidents in the last month (at the time of completing the survey)
- The percentage of staff reporting these incidents is highest at ambulance trusts (40.6%) and lowest at community trusts (23.2%)
- The majority (86.1%) of staff say their organisation encourages staff to report errors but only 58.1% believe their organisation treats staff involved in incidents fairly
- This varies by trust type – in ambulance trusts only 47.4% of respondents believe staff involved in an incident are treated fairly, compared to 66.8% in community trusts
- Only 67.3% of respondents agreed that their organisation takes action to ensure that incidents, errors or near misses do not happen again. The lowest proportion was in ambulance trusts where only 52.9% of respondents agreed

The staff survey asks a number of questions about flexible working, and it is positive to see that 68.5% of staff reported being able to approach their line manager to talk about flexible working, an increase from 66.9% in 2021. When considered by role, we can see some improvement compared to 2021, but

there has been a slight reduction for medical and dental staff from 54.4% in 2021 to 54.1% in 2022. 54.4% of staff report being satisfied with the opportunities available to them for flexible working, with staff at most trust types sitting between 52.2% and 65.4%. Staff at ambulance trusts are less likely to report satisfaction in this area, with only 37.0% agreeing they are satisfied with the opportunities they have for flexible working.

An increased percentage of staff also report their organisation is committed to helping them improve their work/life balance (45.7% compared to 44.4% in 2021). Staff at community trusts are more likely to report agreement on this question, while the lowest level of agreement is among staff at ambulance trusts. Only half of NHS staff report achieving a good work/life balance (52.5%, compared to 52.1% in 2021).

When asked about team working, 72.4% of staff said their team has a set of shared objectives, while 81.6% reported enjoying working with their colleagues. Most results in this section of the survey were unchanged compared to last year, but overall, there is a strong sense of team working. Areas for improvement include:

- Working well together to achieve objectives, as only 51.4% of staff agreed this currently occurs, a reduction on 52.4% in 2021
- The constructive handling of disagreements, as 56.0% currently agree they are dealt with constructively
- Increased freedom to decide how work is done, as 57.5% currently agree they have enough freedom, a minor improvement from 56.8% in 2021
- These three measures remain low compared to the other questions under this section of the survey

It is again positive to see that 90.3% of staff feel trusted to do their job (compared to 90.5% in 2021) and that 85.6% of staff report always knowing what their responsibilities are (compared to 85.7% in 2021). There is an increase in the number of staff reporting they feel involved in decision making (50.2% compared to 49.1% in 2021), while 54.3% say they feel they are able to make improvement happen in their area of work.

Measures looking at respect and civility, as well as staff perception of feeling part of a team have seen small improvements compared to 2021, yet the overall inclusion sub-score remains unchanged at 6.9:

- When asked if they feel a valued member of their team, 69.4% of staff agreed compared to 68.7% last year and 63.8% of staff report feeling a strong personal attachment to their team

- 71.1% of staff report they work with colleagues who are understanding and kind, while 72.4% agree their colleagues are polite and treat each other with respect

There are a number of factors that influence whether staff would recommend their organisation as a place to work. This measure has, however, decreased again to 57.4% in 2022, compared to 59.4% in 2021. This is the lowest number since 2018.

Pandemic effects

These questions were introduced to the survey in 2020 as the NHS responded to the Covid-19 pandemic. The results show:

- A large reduction in the number of staff being redeployed (10.0%) compared to 2021 (19.0%)
- Similarly, the number of staff reporting working on a Covid-19 specific ward or area reduced to 32.9% compared to 37.1% in 2021 and 34.2% in 2020
- Staff working at acute, and acute and community trusts were more likely to report working on specific Covid-19 wards or being redeployed
- Nursing and healthcare assistants were most likely to report working on a Covid-19 specific ward or area (55.5%), followed by registered nurses and midwives (42.6%). Medical and dental staff saw a reduction of 13.9% on this measure between 2021 and 2022
- 32.1% of staff report being required to work from home due to Covid-19 compared to 39.4% in 2021, however the report notes this now likely includes staff who work from home as a result of changes to working practices during the pandemic

Pay, recognition, and management

Development

It is positive to see overall increases in findings related to access to opportunities for learning and development:

- 57.3% of staff report they are able to access the right learning and development opportunities (2.2% increase from 2021), and 54.6% said there are opportunities for them to develop within their organisation (1.6% increase from 2021)
- 68.8% of staff report that they have opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills (1.5% increase from 2021), with 54.7% feeling supported to develop their potential (2.1% increase from 2021)
- As above, there is a consideration of inequalities regarding development opportunities – see section entitled ‘racial inequalities and racism’

There have been slight increases in the proportion of staff who see value in their appraisal, however confidence in the constructiveness of appraisals remains low:

- Only 21.9% of staff report appraisals have improved how they do their job (1.5% increase from 2021)
- 32% found them helpful in agreeing clear objectives (1.1% increase from 2021)
- 31% left their appraisal feeling that their work was valued by their organisation (1.2% increase from 2021)

Relationship with managers

Results relating to immediate line managers remain overall positive and it is welcome to see 69.0% of staff reporting that their immediate manager takes a positive interest in their health and wellbeing (an 0.9% increase from 2021). Further, 71% of respondents agreed that their immediate manager values their work (0.8% increase from 2021), 71% said that their manager encourages them at work (1% increase from 2021); and 58.2% said their immediate manager asks for their opinion before making decisions that affect their work (1.1% increase from 2021). The question relating to staff receiving the respect they deserve from their colleagues also yielded a positive response, with 71.2% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that this happens.

Pay and recognition

Staff satisfaction with pay is at an all-time low, with only 25.6% of staff satisfied (7% decrease from 2021 and the lowest for five years). The percentage of staff feeling their work is recognised, valued and appreciated improved very slightly from 2021:

- 52.4% of staff were satisfied with the recognition they receive for good work (0.5% increase from 2021)
- 42.1% were satisfied with the extent to which their organisation values their work (static since 2021)
- 68% said the people they work with show appreciation to one another (0.5% increase from 2021)

Engagement and motivation

It is disappointing to see a lack of progress related to staff engagement and morale, with results broadly static. This year's results show that:

- 52.6% of staff report looking forward to going to work, which represents a 0.1% increase compared to 2021

- 66.9% of staff reported being enthusiastic about their job, a decrease of 0.5% compared to 2021. While enthusiasm amongst staff in many occupation groups has remained fairly constant this year, there was a 3.3% decrease in the number of medical and dental staff who are enthusiastic about their job (64.9%), resulting in this year being the third consecutive decline, and the number now 12.4% lower than before the pandemic

Staff do, however, feel that they have opportunities to show initiative in their roles (72.9%) and there has been a 1.1% increase in the number of staff who feel that they are able to make improvements in their area of work (54.3%). Further still, it is positive to see there has been a slight increase in the number of staff who feel they are able to make suggestions to improve the work of their team/department (70.9%, up from 70.4% in 2021).

Given severe staff shortages, a cost of living crisis, ongoing Covid-19 pressures and winter demand, it is no surprise to see measures of staff morale show downward trends:

- 32.3% of staff reported often thinking about leaving their organisation, an increase of 1.1% from 2021 and a five year high. This feeling was highest amongst staff in ambulance trusts (42.9%) and lowest in community trusts (27.1%)
- 23.7% of respondents stated that they would likely look for a job at a new organisation in the coming 12 months, an increase of 0.7% from 2021 and the highest rate in five years
- 17.3% said that they will leave their organisation as soon as they find an alternative role, an increase of 0.7% and, again, the highest rate in five years

NHS Providers' view

Responding to the findings of the annual NHS staff survey, the chief executive of NHS Providers Sir Julian Hartley said:

"The past year has been hugely challenging for NHS staff and unsurprisingly, this is laid bare in the results of the staff survey.

"Staff satisfaction with pay is at an all-time low and has been compounded by worries over the soaring cost of living. These frustrations have understandably spilled over with widespread industrial action by several staff groups across the health service in recent months.

"Trust leaders will also be concerned that nearly half of staff do not feel they have a good work life balance, with more people thinking about leaving their organisation and burnout remaining persistently high.

"Given severe staff shortages and over 124,000 vacancies across the NHS in England alone, it comes as no surprise that there are more staff reporting unhappiness with the standard of care provided by their organisation and concerns over the impact this is having on patient safety.

"The stubborn lack of progress on equality, diversity and inclusion across the health service is similarly frustrating.

"But there are some grounds for optimism.

"Health service leaders will welcome findings that more staff are reporting compassionate leadership and being able to work as part of a team. The increase in the number of staff who said their immediate manager takes a positive interest in their health and wellbeing is similarly welcome.

"Leaders across the health service know they've got a mountain to climb to restore morale and staff satisfaction across their frontline teams. They are ready for the challenge, but they cannot do it alone.

"In the short-term, we need the government to set out a fully costed and funded long-term workforce plan, which sets out how many staff will be needed to keep pace with demand. And we need constructive talks between the government and all unions about pay if we are to avert further strike action."