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## 12 top tips on staff engagement

1. The views of staff are at the heart of any successful staff engagement programme

A staff survey is a key method for finding these views out. As well as the NHS Staff Survey, most employers also have their own locally developed surveys to check the mood of employees. An example of this is [Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Foundation Trust](#), which has developed a survey tool called Go Engage allowing the trust to collate regular in-depth insights into staff views and attitudes.

2. Staff need to be able to give feedback on a regular basis

To enable staff to share their views, the process of giving feedback needs to be as easy and accessible as possible. [University Hospital Bristol NHS Foundation Trust](#) has implemented a mobile phone based application which asks staff how they are feeling. This gives the trust a snapshot of how staff are, as well as identifying hot spots for urgent action.

3. Empower staff to put forward ideas for improvement

Actively seeking out the views of staff can offer ideas that both enhance engagement and the quality of care. [Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust](#) has developed a process for quality improvement which is based around staff ideas. Senior leaders carry out regular site visits where issues are identified and then action is taken to address any concerns.

4. Staff involvement needs to be central to overall quality improvement work

By involving staff in quality improvement programmes from the earliest possible opportunity, NHS organisations can enable greater buy in and ensure that a number of voices are heard. The West Sussex University Hospital NHS Trust has increased staff involvement in quality improvement, using a range of tools such as improvement huddles, bringing staff together to discuss how they can make improvements.

## 5. Productivity can be improved with ideas from staff

By engaging with staff, trusts can identify areas where productivity can be improved and inefficiencies reduced. The Croydon Health Services NHS Trust has delivered a range of improvements to its productivity, including more effective use of theatres. This has been achieved thanks to views sourced through [Listening into Action](#), a change programme for organisations to empower frontline staff and improve outcomes.

## 6. Staff appraisal processes should enhance engagement

Overhauling appraisals to include personal development, not just performance, and linking to an organisation's values can help to sustain engagement. An example of this is the Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust which reviewed its appraisal process to see where improvements could be made, leading to positive results.

## 7. Staff engagement starts with effective teamwork

Most NHS organisations have some form of team development process, but the evidence from the NHS Staff Survey shows that there is considerable variation around this. The Leicester Partnership NHS Trust has developed a team leadership workbook, which provides managers with information and resources to help support them in their roles. The workbook includes tips on how to motivate and engage team members.

## 8. Staff engagement is also shaped by the work of line managers

Line managers need both skills and support to facilitate engagement with staff working in their teams. North East London NHS Foundation Trust is one of many organisations which has implemented new approaches to line manager development, which has resulted in overall improvements in its staff engagement.

## 9. Staff engagement will best be sustained in a positive organisational culture

The culture of an organisation can make a difference as to how staff perceive their workplace. The Northampton General Hospital NHS Trust has developed a positive workplace culture which led to the organisation being rated as good in the 'Well Led' category by the CQC. The culture has ensured that staff within the organisation feel engaged and empowered.

## 10. Ensure staff feel able to raise concerns

Enabling staff to call out things that are wrong is fundamental to ensuring safe, high-quality care. [Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust](#) has developed the concept of a just and open culture, where an emphasis is placed on learning and accountability, and speaking up. Work such as this can support and help to sustain greater staff engagement.

## 11. Staff need to feel that their efforts are appreciated and recognised

Most trusts have some form of award scheme to demonstrate appreciation towards staff, which helps to both engage and boost morale. An example of this is the Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust, which runs a scheme, Every Thank You Counts, based on nominations from both staff and the public which allows for the efforts of three individuals to be recognised on a monthly basis.

## 12. Engagement can be fostered and developed even in the most challenging circumstances

Alongside other interventions and efforts, staff engagement can often help organisations to overcome difficult situations. Three recent examples of this can be found in the improvements identified by the CQC at the London Ambulance Service NHS Trust, Barts Health NHS Trust, and Colchester Hospital University NHS Foundation Trust. Progress is not easy, change can take time to show up in surveys and can be hard to sustain, but efforts ultimately pay off. Our most [recent briefing](#) looks at lessons taken from the trusts identified as most improved by the CQC.

To find out more about staff engagement and for full details about any of these examples, please contact [steven.weeks@nhsemployers.org](mailto:steven.weeks@nhsemployers.org)

We are keen to regularly share information and ideas around staff engagement. If you have an idea or an example you would like to share please get in touch.

