Evidence based research is an essential tool for NHS Employers, to shape the products and resources that support you to develop, implement and communicate your reward strategy.

The Institute for Employment Studies (IES) reviewed the evidence on the links between total reward and engagement and the findings and implications for employers in the NHS. Here are four key themes from the review.

**Take a broader view on total reward**
Make sure you include more than just pay and benefits in your reward strategy. This will strengthen the impact on engaging with employees.

Promote the less obvious or non-financial benefits of working for your organisation. Staff value a great working environment, opportunities for career development, support from their managers and the culture of your organisation.

**Communicate your reward offering**
If your employees understand the benefits available to them, they will place a higher value on their overall reward package and will be able to make informed decisions on any optional or flexible benefits provided.

Total reward statements (TRS) provide a useful way to communicate to staff about the total value of their reward package. You can tailor your TRS to include any local benefits that are unique to you as an employer that help you differentiate your reward strategy from other employers.

**There is no one size fits all approach to reward**
It’s important to be aware of the specific aims and workforce priorities for your organisation and to know your employees and the issues that impact their engagement. The NHS staff survey is a great starting point. However, you may want to carry out further detailed investigations. Workforces are becoming increasingly diverse and your reward strategy will need to meet a variety of different needs.

**Be innovative, but evidence based**
Before a change to your reward strategy happens, it’s useful to test the changes with an established focus group or with your employee representatives. Actively involving and consulting with your employees on the design of your reward strategy will build trust and transparency and increase its effectiveness.