



Evidence, evaluation and steps to success

This guidance aims to help you create a local approach to staff engagement in the context of the wider workforce strategy for your organisation and its overall approach to staff experience.

Evidence based approach

NHS Employers has drawn on a statistical analysis of NHS Staff Survey data undertaken by Rob Fordham of East Kent Hospitals Trust to develop these recommendations. This looked at the strength of links between staff experience questions in the NHS Staff Survey and staff engagement improvements. Existing available research evidence has also been drawn on.

In addition, NHS Employers reviewed the experience at the most improved and the most successful trusts on staff engagement measures. By taking a comprehensive approach which focusses on the areas of staff experience with most impact organisations should be able to develop effective interventions. More information on the evidence base is available on request.

Local evaluation

Organisations should regularly evaluate and review their approaches using locally collected data on staff views as well the results of the NHS Staff Survey.

It should be taken into account that interventions may take time to have an impact. Some individual questions such as those on involvement or line manager support can be expected to respond to interventions in shorter time period. Whereas, overall theme

scores are likely to take year to 18 months. In addition, in the medium-term it should be possible see an impact on measures such as absence levels and outcomes such as retention.

Steps to success

The experience of those trusts that have managed to improve staff engagement over the past year suggests the following elements are key:

- Consistent and visible support for a focus on staff experience from the board and the senior leadership of the organisation. Improved staff experience needs to be seen and supported as fostering overall improved patient experience and organisational effectiveness. Staff experience needs to be a focus for managerial action across the organisation not just an issue for people teams. Staff experience data should be analysed and integrated with other performance data.
- Persistent commitment to improved staff experience. Shifts in organisational culture take time and major improvements in the overall score are unlikely in one year. Organisations need to allow time for changed behaviour to have an impact and not abandon initiatives before they have had time to have an impact.
- Statistics in themselves do not shift sentiment. A convincing narrative or story needs to be communicated about why change is needed and how it can be achieved.
- Partnership working is needed with staff side organisations both on overall aims and how they are implemented.
- Visible leadership from senior managers is necessary but will only be effective if staff are fully involved in change and also become advocates for it.

For more information on approaches to staff engagement across the NHS please contact NHS Employers via staffengagement@nhsemployers.org