

Trust representatives from the Staff Survey Advisory Group were asked for their **top tips on running the NHS Staff Survey** in organisations across the NHS. The following tips were recommended by these representatives for running a successful NHS Staff Survey.

- “Build a really good relationship with your survey contractor – maintain regular contact and meet with them if you can.”
- “Prepare any additional questions well in advance but remember that this will cost additional money, so really think about whether you do need the questions and if so, if you have sufficient budget for them. Any additional questions will need to be signed off at Executive Level, so remember to build in time for that.”
- “Start having the discussions with your internal stakeholders (departments and divisions/directorates) early (now!) to agree how you are going to deliver the staff survey for them. For example, we offer a mixed mode approach and so during June I am talking to them about how they want to receive their questionnaires and making plans with departmental managers for when the survey lands.”
- “Work with your managers to ensure that your reporting categories will provide results in a format that will be useful for them. Find out how they would like their staff groups broken down. In large complex organisations, you may have to use a range of approaches i.e. in some areas you may break staff down into occupational groups or into departments and/or sites.”
- “If you receive heat maps from your survey contractor – think about how you want these presented, as this needs to be included in the data upload.”
- “Encourage staff to check their email addresses in ESR ahead of the survey – this will cut down on the work that is required to correct any wrong or blank addresses.”
- “Spend time working on your staff list – once you think it is completed – check it, check it and re-check it! I usually get another member of the team to look over it for me as well.”
- “From early September, design and agree your internal comms plan – we do this between OD and Comms, gaining HRD/CEO backing. Make sure the plan has a heartfelt CEO message in there which emphasises the importance of the survey and what we have done and/or planning to do, as a result of the findings. Don’t be scared to change your plan as needed as events unfold throughout the fieldwork period. Emphasise confidentiality.”
- “Start communicating about the survey before the questionnaires land on people’s desks or in their in-box. Have a robust comms plan for duration of the eight week survey fieldwork period. For example, get all your HR colleagues to put something on their email signature during the survey period, put it on screen savers, provide items for the weekly staff bulletin on what the response rate is to date, send reminders to managers, use all available social media channels and ensure that executive directors are sighted on it, prepare a video message from the Director of HR or the CEO and the Chair of staff side. This year, I started a staff survey story plan where, starting this month, I link one of the 10 themes to something going on in the Trust, so for example, in June to coincide with our appraisal period, I talked about the quality of appraisal, used the staff survey data and drew the links for staff.”

- “Involve staff governors and staff side partnerships. We have gained the support of our staff governors and staff sides colleagues in the last few years to encourage staff to complete the survey at every available opportunity, again reinforcing confidentially of their responses. When the results are published in February, we intend to hold staff governor workshops with staff where we will discuss the findings. This will support the role of the governors and draw out staff voice and encourage suggestions to help shape the action plans.”
- “Promote that the survey is coming as often as you can in the run up to go live. Do this via a range of different communication methods to suit different groups, for example at team meetings, comms bulletins, briefings. The more times and the more varied the ways you can communicate, the more likely you will be to reach as many members of staff as you can.”
- “Encourage friendly competitive fun! We have previously used divisional leader boards to show the response rates for each area. We make this visual using infographics, which works really well for communicating the response rates and keeping staff interested throughout the survey window. This year we intend to present the winning area with a small, low/nil cost winners prize (the real reward is to win but for publicity purposes a certificate or trophy always helps in photos!)”
- “Show staff what impact the survey has had both Trust wide and locally, ahead of go live. If staff can see how the survey has changed things in the Trust and in their department, then they will be more likely to complete the survey this year.”
- “You said, we did! It sounds obvious but you really need to demonstrate what you’ve done as a result of the survey, otherwise staff will fail to see the purpose in filling it in. This needs to be included in the comms planning.”
- “Make sure staff are made aware of when the staff survey email is coming and the email address it will be coming from (so they don’t delete by accident).”
- “Have a dedicated staff survey mailbox for staff queries (we check this every day during the live period).”
- “Promotion is best done at a local level so encourage your managers to do so.”
- “When the survey questionnaires goes out to manager/departments I usually send a one page document with them to explain more about the survey and help managers deal with queries from their staff – please see the example below from 2017.”

The 2017 NHS National Staff Survey is LIVE

Your staff survey questionnaires have arrived what do I do now?

- Make sure you distribute the surveys to staff within your department as soon as possible after receipt.
- The survey will run between **9 October and 1 December** and all completed surveys must be **posted back to <contractor name> in the reply paid envelopes by 29 November to arrive by 1 December.**
- All staff should be given the time to complete the survey in working hours – managers are kindly asked to roster this time.

Why is the staff survey important?

The annual staff survey is an important measure of how engaged and satisfied all who work at the Trust are. The feedback we receive from the staff survey helps us to focus on the things that are most important to staff and help generate our organisational priorities. We share this information with divisional staff survey leads so they can work with managers and staff locally to celebrate success; share areas of good practice and identify areas that may need to be improved. The more people who take part in the survey the stronger the staff voice and the more reliable and robust the data will be.

How can I be assured of confidentiality?

Confidentiality can be completely guaranteed no matter what your role is in the Trust. This is because:

- All of your responses are sent off site and gathered by <contractor name>.
- NHS England does not allow <contractor name> to report back data to any organisation where there are fewer than 11 respondents in a department.
- <Contractor name> collate the results for us and produce a report that shows the key findings and the questions at an organisational level, divisional level or department level. No report is ever provided by them that shows the results or answers to the questionnaire at an individual level.
- Please watch a great little video explaining how <contractor name> ensures your response remains confidential and anonymous and what happens to your survey questionnaire after you complete it. Please follow the link: [< link to contractor's video >](#)

Do I have to complete the questionnaire – is it compulsory?

No, it is not compulsory to complete the staff survey, however, we want to hear from every member of staff. Staff feedback is important to us.

NB: If you really don't want to participate – please don't ignore the paperwork instead send the blank survey form back in the reply paid envelope so that our survey partner knows not to send you two further reminders.

Those who have left the Trust or retired between 1 Sept - 29 Nov 2017

If you've received a questionnaire for someone who's not in your department or ward or who you know has left the Trust or recently retired please send this to <trust Staff Survey lead's name and work address> – we can pass this information on to <contractor name> and any reminders can be stopped and the individual removed from the survey.

Who do I contact for more information about the staff survey?

You can contact your divisional staff survey lead, your divisional HR Business Partner or <trust Staff Survey lead's email> Alternatively, you can call our survey partner on <contractor helpline number>