EXPERT VIEW

Putting policymakers in the picture

Make your feelings known to employers and national policymakers through the annual NHS staff survey

Some nurses will soon receive an invitation to participate in this year’s NHS staff survey. This large scale test of the temperature of the NHS workforce helps give national policymakers a picture of staff motivation, and provides feedback on how their staff are feeling in comparison to those working for other NHS employers.

More than 741,000 directly employed NHS staff were invited to participate in last year’s survey, with responses gathered from 299,000 staff from 297 NHS organisations in England. This was an overall response rate of 41%, but the rate was as low as 19% in one trust.

The 2015 survey showed that staff ‘engagement’ had increased in recent years. This indicator is based on staff perceptions about their ability to contribute to improvements at work, their willingness to recommend the organisation as a place to work or receive treatment, and the extent to which they feel motivated and engaged at work.

More than half of all staff (58%) reported they often or always looked forward to going to work, but not all results of the 2015 survey were so positive. Only 38% of respondents agreed that communication between senior management and staff was effective, with even fewer (32%) feeling senior management try to involve staff in important decisions. Just 30% reported that senior managers acted on staff feedback.

Make your feelings known

Key findings of the survey are published annually, but a less reported factor is the more or less continuous drop in the national response rate since the survey began. In 2004 it was 60%, falling to 54% in 2010 and to 42% in 2014. Last year, it was 41%.

So if you are asked to participate, make your feelings known, and help push the participation rate back up again.

NURSE LEADER

Ensuring better births for women in England

In July I was delighted to take part in an event highlighting the exciting developments in maternity care following the publication of the report of the National Maternity Review: Better Births.

It was an opportunity to celebrate the significant contribution midwives make to the quality and safety of maternal and child health.

Implementing the report’s recommendations will improve care from midwives and should help reduce perinatal mortality, not to mention reducing inequality of outcomes from maternity services and improving pregnancy and childbirth experiences.

Key themes in Better Births, including the importance of ‘continuity of care’ – ensuring safe care based on a relationship of mutual trust and respect – align with those in the framework for nursing, midwifery and care staff in England: Leading Change, Adding Value.

I called for people to become ‘early adopters’ and road test these new ways of thinking. Early adopters’ experiences will pave the way for the national roll-out of initiatives that deliver safer, more personalised care for all women and babies.

This is a great opportunity to work together to bring about real change.

For more information on the Maternity Transformation Programme go to: england.nhs.uk/ourwork/futurenhs/mat-transformation

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