

## Listening to your NHS Staff Survey feedback

### A message from Oonagh Fitzgerald, Director of Human Resources

It's not just the light nights that signify the beginning of spring, but also the arrival of the NHS Staff Survey results.

Reading your feedback into what it's like to work here is something I always look forward to and this year has been no exception, particularly because the last 12 months have been so eventful for us all.



On top of ever-increasing demand and rising patient numbers, we've also had to contend with the pressure that comes from a national shortage of healthcare staff and also the uncertainty of last summer's EU referendum result.

It's been a bit of a rollercoaster but I'm grateful that so many of you - 603 to be exact - were able to take the time to complete this latest survey and make our response rate significantly better than the national average.

Although the results are only a glimpse into working life here, they do provide us with a valuable insight into the things that matter to you and, most importantly, help shape what we can do to make your time at work better.

### The 2016 results

We all know the NHS doesn't take days off – it's there for patients whenever they need it - regardless of if it's a Monday, a Saturday, in the middle of the night, in the

school holidays or even Christmas Day.

It can often mean working long shifts around the clock but I was delighted to see on the very first page of results that, despite this, nearly two thirds of staff (62 per cent) look forward to coming to work each day.

This was followed by more good news immediately below when the next question, which asked if staff feel enthusiastic about their work, was met with an equally positive response (77 per cent).

Both scores were well above the national average (58 and 73 per cent, respectively) and show the level of dedication and commitment that you bring to your roles.

I know this sort of positive attitude is appreciated by our patients, as it's so often mentioned in the countless letters, emails and thank you cards we receive each and every day.

A career in the NHS can be demanding - the last few months have shown us this in spades - but you've told us you're handling the pressure well with 67 per cent saying they haven't felt ill because of work-related stress in 2016.

This is a really pleasing score but it still means that around a third of our staff find it difficult to cope from time to time.

The [support services](#) available from the Trust are second-to-none and I would encourage anyone feeling the pressure to take advantage of what's on offer.

Not only are the team experts in providing counselling, stress-management and financial advice, their services are available completely free for the first six sessions.

As well as telling us how you've been feeling over the last 12 months, the results also come with the scores of previous years' questions, which makes it easy for us to measure progress.

I'm particularly pleased to see that for the last two years, fewer and fewer of you are experiencing discrimination from patients and other members of the public - six per cent said they did in 2015, compared to just three per cent in 2016.

The national average for both years was seven per cent which shows our zero tolerance approach to staff abuse, as outlined in our hard-hitting Never OK campaign, is already making a difference.

Elsewhere, we're outperforming the national average in many important areas, such as:

- Knowing how to report unsafe clinical practice (98 per cent compared to an average of 95 per cent)
- Feeling confident about raising concerns (76 per cent compared to an average of 70 per cent)
- Receiving career progression opportunities (89 per cent compared to an average of 82 per cent)

While all these results paint an encouraging picture of working life in the Trust, there are, of course, some things you've told us which could be better.

### **Improvements you'd like to see**

It came as no surprise to me that nearly three quarters of you (74 per cent) said you were concerned about staffing levels in the Trust.

I am too.

It impacts on us all, not least you and your teams with the results showing that more than 60 per cent of you are working additional unpaid hours to bridge the gaps.

We are, however, not alone in this struggle as it's an issue affecting all NHS Trusts, which, in turn, makes the whole recruitment process more challenging as

organisations compete against one another for a cut of the already-limited resource.

Our new recruitment campaign, which promotes the Trust as a great place for local people to start and continue their career, will be launching in the next few weeks and we're also going full steam ahead with our search for permanent staff overseas.

We spent much of last year in India and have already made a number of job offers to people keen to further their nursing career in the UK.

But while this is a promising start, the process of actually getting the nurses from the other side of the world to Swindon is a complicated and slow one.

To put it into context, we made our first offers in May last year and so far have only had one international nurse arrive at GWH.

Nevertheless, it's something we're keen to pursue and will re-examine as we go to reduce the time it takes to bring new staff to the organisation.

The next 12 months will also see us focus on improving the appraisal process, after the majority of staff who completed the survey (81 per cent) said its current format was not beneficial for helping them to do their job better.

Appraisals are there to help you, so if you have an idea of how it can be improved, please get in touch and help us change the way we do things.

I was also concerned to read that nearly one third of staff (31 per cent) admitted to experiencing bullying, harassment and abuse from members of the public last year.

This is above the national average (27 per cent) and, in my eyes, completely unacceptable.

Some people view the NHS as a soft touch but in the last year we have taken multiple people to court for the way they treated staff and have also successfully had injunctions and exclusion orders placed on people whose behaviour was not

welcome in our place of work.

This zero-tolerance approach will continue for as long as people see it acceptable to treat healthcare staff in such a degrading and undignified manner.

### **Read the results**

This year's results are publicly available and can be read online by [clicking here](#).

As mentioned before, what you have told us will play a big part in shaping our improvement plans for the coming year.

Details of what we'll be doing and when will be shared in due course but if you'd like to have your say on what it's like to work here, don't wait until the next Staff Survey to do so.

Whether it's positive feedback or constructive criticism, staff can say what's on their mind at any time by emailing [askHR@gwh.nhs.uk](mailto:askHR@gwh.nhs.uk).

Alternatively, feel free to contact me directly if you have an issue which you think I should know about.

### **Thank you**

Your views matter and will always be listened to, so please continue to speak up.

**Oonagh Fitzgerald,**  
**Director of Human Resources**

### **Help spread the news**



Please pass this message on to your colleagues.

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