# Engaging Health Staff



**An Introduction**

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## FOREWARD

Our aim in developing Engaging Health Staff: An Introduction is to create a better and wider understanding of the importance and meaning of staff engagement and to enable good engagement practices to be shared widely across our health system. We have purposely kept the document concise while building on the rich body of evidence as we make the business case for unleashing the full potential of our workforce thereby increasing staff well-being and encouraging greater staff recognition.

Throughout we provide tips and suggestions on how to take action to improve staff engagement across health sector organisations. The desire is to create collective agency where groups and teams of people work together to improve workplace experience and outcomes for patients.

This document was developed in consultation with:

- Community of Practice Group encompassing: Quality Improvement Division, National HR, Communications, Workplace Health & Wellbeing, HBS, Strategic Planning and Transformation
- The National Staff Engagement Forum
- The National HR Division Staff Engagement Forum
- Other interested individuals and groups

Engaging Health Staff: An Introduction may be read in conjunction with the Staff Engagement Toolkit which is currently being developed by the National Staff Engagement Forum

# What is Staff Engagement?

*Staff Engagement happens in a workplace when the right conditions exist where all members of the organisation can give of their best.*

*The Essential Guide to Employee Engagement-How to raise employee engagement to improve organisational outcomes Ireland (2013) referring to the international research identify three essential dimensions/elements that need to be present to achieve strong staff engagement. These relate to how staff think, feel and act towards their organisation , its values and goals.*

According to David MacLeod (*Engaging for Success: enhancing performance through employee engagement report to government (2009*) 'This is about how we create the conditions in which employees offer more of their capability and potential.

The National Staff Engagement Forum established in June 2016 defines Staff Engagement as

**Definition of Staff Engagement**

**Developed by National Staff Engagement Forum 2016**

"Staff are engaged when they feel valued, are emotionally connected, fully involved, enthusiastic and committed to providing a good service… when each person knows that what they do and say matters…. and makes a difference."

**Staff Engagement**

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**Health Policy Context**

Helen Bevan writing the forward for *Engagement Radicals: An Innovative Approach to Change in Health Care 2018* states "History has shown that, on its own, structured interventions cannot deliver change at the depth, speed and breath that is needed in healthcare environments. Most current healthcare transformation efforts globally are now built on a premise of increased agency for patients and families. It's that belief and conviction that everybody can make a difference". This framework for engagement is underpinned by the following policies and strategies:

*HSE Corporate Plan 2015-2018*

Goal 4 – Engage, develop and value our workforce to deliver best possible care and service to patients/service users.

*People Strategy 2015-2018*

*Priority 2 – staff have strong sense of connection to the service, take personal responsibility for achieving better outcomes and support team colleagues to deliver results.*

**National Service Plan 2018**

Our commitment is to engage, develop and value our workforce to deliver best possible care and service to the people who depend on them. Priorities in 2018 include.. Embed an approach to staff engagement through our Staff Engagement Forum.

*Health Service Change Framework 2018*

People and culture focus

*Quality Framework 2016*

An engaged workforce is one where staff are valued, listened to and provided with the tools, resources and skills to do meaningful work. The culture of an engaged organisation will facilitate and encourage participation and front line ownership by staff in the creative design, delivery and improvement of services and says thank you for a job well done.

*Healthy Ireland 2015-2017*

**Creating a Positive Work Environment in our Health Services A Useful Guide for Staff, HR Practitioners and Line Managers - October 2015**

*Safer Better Healthcare 2012*

**Establishment of the National Engagement Forum**

The 2014 Health Services Staff Survey highlighted the need to raise staff engagement levels across Irish Health Sector Organisations. In June 2016 the National Staff Engagement Forum was launched with membership from across the entire health sector based on a proportionate representation model and two members of the National Leadership team act as co-sponsors of the Forum.

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The purpose of the Forum is:

   •  To create a space for conversations about what matters to staff in terms
      of engagement and gather suggestions on how to improve it by building on
      existing approaches and continually looking for new ways to engage staff
   •  To give a sense of ownership and personal responsibility for engagement,
      building positive and effective communication between all people
      regardless of their position
   •  To share good examples of staff engagement
   •  To provide feedback and advice to the health sector on improving staff
      engagement in the design and implementation of organisation wide
      initiatives and policies
   •  To promote staff engagement throughout the health sector to create a
      positive working environment for staff and service users
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Since then several local areas have developed their own staff engagement forums, for more information see **www.hse.ie/eng/staff/staff-engagement**

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*If we truly believe that staff are our greatest asset, and if we accept that how well our workforce performs directly impacts the quality of our health services, then whether or not the workforce is positively encouraged to perform at its best should be a prime consideration for every leader and manager and placed at the heart of healthcare business plans and strategies.* (David MacLeod, Nita Clerk- A Report to Government (UK .2009))

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## Why is Staff Engagement Important?

### Benefits to Staff

The National Patient Experience Survey found that patients who had confidence and trust in the staff treating them well were likely to give a positive overall rating of their experience.

Staff:

- Feeling happier, healthier and more fulfilled
- Have greater motivation and morale therefore productivity
- Showing more commitment to the organisation's goals and therefore sense of purpose

### Healthcare Benefits

*Recent evidence from a number of Kings Fund publications (employee engagement and NHS performance West and Dawson) have highlighted the importance of staff engagement in a health sector context,*

*Where staff engagement is higher or servicers are seen to be supporting staff wellbeing the results are*

- *lower patient mortality*
- *reductions in the number of incidents*
- *improved clinical care*
- *improved patient experience*
- *improved staff wellbeing*
- *lower absenteeism rates*

### Financial Benefits

*Employee engagement task force "Nailing the Evidence" (UK Workgroup 2012) clearly outlines the financial benefits to any organisation of improved staff engagement:*

*Organisations with higher staff engagement levels have*

- *higher income growth*
- *overall greater productivity and performance*
- *better customer satisfaction*
- *higher levels of innovation*
- *less absenteeism*
- *higher levels of staff wellbeing*
- *better retention rates*
- *better health and safety records*

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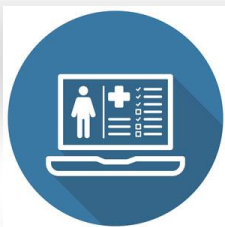
# Summary of Staff Survey Results 2016

The health sector staff survey is a key measure of assessing staff engagement across services. A summary of the 2016 Survey results follows:

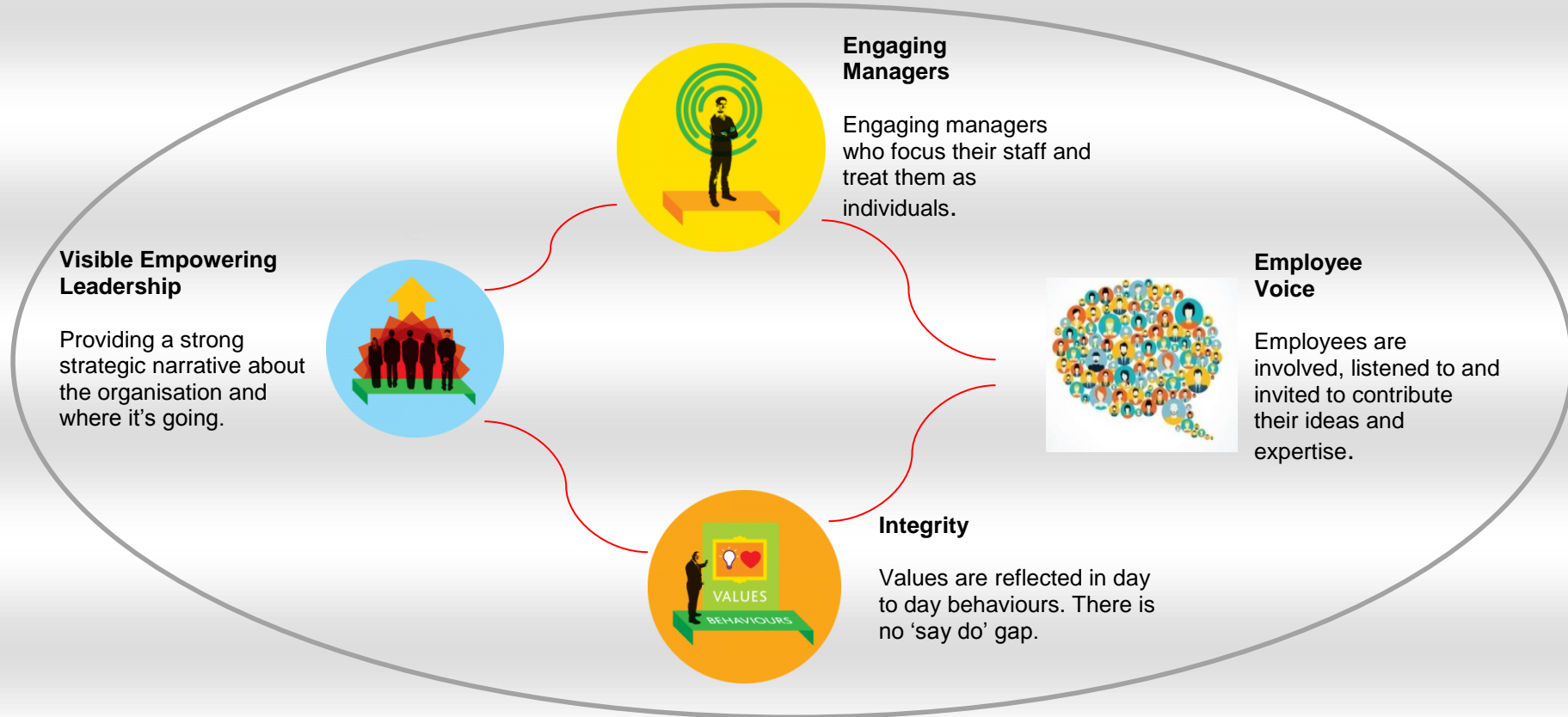| Some are Dissatisfied & Lacking Motivation | • Although satisfaction has improved to 56%, **3 in 10 are dissatisfied** in their job.<br>• Just under 2 in 10 are **not motivated** at work.<br>• **Under half would recommend their organisation as an employer.** |
| --- | --- |
| **Not All Feel Valued & Recognised** | • Not all feel **valued and recognised**, or that **organisation gets the best out of them.**<br>• Many do not receive **feedback from or have meetings with their line manager.** |
| **Internal Comms, Uncertainty Around Overall Strategy** | • **Quality of internal communications** needs to improve.<br>• Over two in five believe **service level in their organisation is deteriorating**.<br>• There is uncertainty regarding overall strategy, visibility of leadership could improve. |
| **Levels of Pay/ Working Conditions** | • Over half are dissatisfied **with level of pay,** while workload concerns are evident.<br>• Satisfaction with **working conditions** has declined since 2014.<br>• Evidence of **workplace stress** and some dissatisfaction with **health & well-being.** |
| **Lack of Training/ Career Progression** | • Although **access to training has improved**, further work is required.<br>• Almost half are dissatisfied with **career progression.** |
| **Dignity at Work** | • One in five say they have experienced **discrimination** from a manager/team leader or other colleagues in the past 12 months.<br>• One in three have experienced **bullying or harassment** in their organisation in the past two years. |

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# What are 'Enablers of Staff Engagement'?

The evidence shows that there are four common factors that if present contribute to higher staff engagement in organisations

**Engaging Managers**

Engaging managers who focus their staff and treat them as individuals.

**Visible Empowering Leadership**

Providing a strong strategic narrative about the organisation and where it's going.

**Employee Voice**

Employees are involved, listened to and invited to contribute their ideas and expertise.

**Integrity**

Values are reflected in day to day behaviours. There is no 'say do' gap.

The sheer weight of evidence should convince even the most sceptical that staff engagement is not light and fluffy but a bottom line issue impacting on organisational performance and service outcomes. *In other words it is a must do- not a nice to have. (Employee Engagement Task Force "Nailing the evidence" workgroup David Macleod and Nita Clarke (2012))*

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# In terms of the 4 enablers how are we doing?  What the 2016 Survey said

### 1. Visible Empowering Leadership

The 2016 Staff survey feedback demonstrated that perceptions of senior managers require improvement. More than 60% of staff either didn't know the overall strategy well enough or thought it was going in the wrong direction. Only 29% of staff was satisfied with opportunities for upward communication.

### 2. Engaging Managers

Only a third of staff felt that its organisation was good at developing staff to its full potential and two thirds were unhappy with the opportunities for career progression being provided. Only 30% were satisfied with the quality of internal communication.

### 3. Employee Voice

While many staff (61%) reported that their line manager was fair and equitable, less than 50% of staff agreed that their manager regularly asked for their input into decision making, has one to one meetings to discuss development, motivates them and gives clear feedback.

### 4.  Integrity – Culture – Value

Three out of five staff were proud to work for their organisation, but not all (42%) value the culture. 30% of staff feel valued and recognised by the organisation. 29% agree that the organisation is genuinely interested in the wellbeing of its staff. 33% of staff were happy to the extent that the organisation values its work.

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**What you can do as an individual**

Use the following top tips to improve engagement in your area:

1. Act with integrity
2. Encourage your team to get to know each other – meet in person where possible
3. Communicate –tell each other what's happening
4. Ask, listen hear and respond – know what is important to colleagues
5. Trust each other – include people in decisions that affect them
6. Encourage each other to act on ideas and be there to help each other
7. Take your breaks and look after your wellbeing
8. Say thank you



# 10 Things FAB TEAMS DO! They...

1. Create a shared VISION of the future, and move towards it together.

2. Challenge the status quo together, so noone has to face scary change alone

3. Sign up to... OUR COMMON GOALS
(Change is built on a commitment to a different future, not performance management)

4. Value and embrace difference and healthy conflict.

5. Help everyone in the team to feel safe and innovate.
New Thing!
Ne a Thing
(And we don't punish people if they fail).
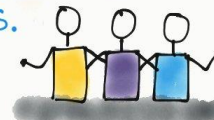
6. Communicate → TALK! (Don't rely on email)

7. Are KIND to each other. Get to know each other as people - care about the little things → (like tea + cake!)

8. Think the best of each other - so when something goes wrong you don't blame other people's incompetence.

9. Achieve Win-Win for all team members
3 1 2
No 'winners and losers'!

10. Are Highly productive- the sum is greater than its parts.

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# What can senior managers, leaders and organisations do?

"So it has become even clearer that engagement is not as it is often implied, something that managers or organisations 'do' to their people; rather it is a mental, emotional and physical state and something that employees *give*. In terms of developing staff and maintaining staff engagement the way senior managers and leaders behave, the work environment they create, the way they support and encourage their teams and how they engender trust are all critical factors" (*Peter Cheese The Future of Engagement: Thought Piece Collection Employee Engagement How is it changing and what drives it (2014)*

Actions for senior managers and leaders

1. Ensuring that staff engagement forms part of the leadership strategy for the organisation
2. Promote and develop leadership practices that emphasises clarity of purpose
   All staff know how their jobs and work impacts on the organisational goals
3. Promote greater autonomy for staff by providing them with more flexibility and responsibility at work
4. Develop and nurture teams with a mix of capabilities, autonomy and freedom to make decisions
5. Promote diversity inclusion & equality across the system valuing different perspectives, strengths experiences and potential
6. Develop more engaging managers who make staff feel respected, supported, empowered, inspired and valued
   Who treat staff as individuals and who coach focus and stretch staff and give them scope to take responsibility for their own actions
7. Encourage and support staff to act as advocates for service users enabling their participating in decision making planning their care and the services they receive
8. Actively supporting and helping staff develop and improve, encouraging health and wellbeing and reducing stress in the workplace.
9. Encouraging behaviours that are true to the values of the organisation and focus on what matters to people
10. Act with integrity… doing what you say you will do

# Practical Measures to Assess Progress Towards Greater Staff Engagement

| Engagement Area | Action | Measure |
|---|---|---|
| **Alignment- Staff Relationship with management.**<br><br>**METRIC 1** | a) Increase visibility of senior management through Site Visits/Walk rounds<br>b) Staff Engagement on all senior management team meeting agendas<br>c) Clarity Vision & Direction for services & the organisation engagement sessions/events for staff<br>d) Monthly Staff/Team meeting | a) Number of site visits/walk rounds conducted by month<br>b) Number of senior management teams with staff engagement on their agenda<br>c) Number of information sessions/events held<br>d) Number of departments/ units/ services conducting monthly staff/team meetings |
| **Involvement -Staff relationship with their job.**<br><br>**METRIC 2** | a) Local Staff Engagement Forums established<br>b) Local Staff Engagement forum contributing to staff health and wellbeing initiatives<br>c) Local staff Engagement service improvement initiatives | a) Number of Forums established<br>b) Number of forums contributing to Staff Health& Well<br>c) Number of forums contributing to service<br>d) improvement initiatives |
| **Loyalty - Staff relationship to their Organisation**<br><br>**METRIC 3** | a) Enable and develop positive workplace initiatives<br>b) Create opportunities to recognise, celebrate and showcase the excellent contribution of staff | a) Catalogue number of positive workplace initiatives.<br>b) Conduct exit interviews with staff who are planning on leaving the organisation?<br>c) Examples of how staff contributions has been recognised, celebrated and replicated |
| **Increase Survey Uptake**<br><br>**METRIC 4** | Target for October 2018 Survey is 20% (Up from 15% 2016 Survey) | |
| **Cross Reference Staff Survey**<br><br>**METRIC 5** | Cross reference findings of Staff Survey with National Patient Experience Survey Data 2017 | |

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![Staff Engagement logo]

# Engagement Outcomes

## Staff

- Feeling happier, healthier and more fulfilled
- Greater motivation and morale and therefore productivity
- More commitment to the organisation's goals and therefore sense of purpose
- Less sick leave, less accidents

## Organisational Outcomes

- Conflicts are less
- Productivity Increased
- Helps provide a sense of loyalty to the organisation
- Staff being an advocate for the organisation,
- Putting forward ideas and increased decision making

## Monitoring and Review

It is envisaged that this Framework document will be reviewed following publication of relevant Health Service Surveys including the 2018 Staff Survey results and recommendations.

This will ensure that the information contained in this framework document is dynamic and relevant to the changing context as we continue to enhance and maintain a culture of staff engagement across our health services.

## Feedback

We welcome feedback from all stakeholders on the impact, application and usefulness of this Framework document on an on-going basis.

Please forward your feedback to **Info.OD&Dhsewest@hse.ie**

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## References and online resources

Engaging for success: enhancing performance through employee engagement – A report to Government David Macleod, Nita Clerk (2009)

IBEC – Essential Guide to Employee Engagement (2013)

Engagement Radicals: An Innovative Approach to Change in Health Care (2018)

Engaging for Success: enhancing performance through employee engagement report to government (2009)

Employee Engagement NHS Performance West MA , Dawson JF Kings Fund 2012

Kings Fund West MA March 2018  Its not about the Money & Staff Engagement comes first

West MA Collaborative & Compassionate Leadership Kings Fund May 2017

Organisation & Design Staff Engagement Website - https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/staff-engagement/

Quality Improvement Division **-** https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/qid/

Workplace Health & Wellbeing - https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/workplace-health-and-wellbeing-unit/

https://www.workwell.ie

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