Engaging Health Staff – An Action Plan 2019-2021

In Response to the Staff Survey 2018

Staff Engagement
#engaginghealthstaff

Human Resources
Leaders in People Services

Seirbhís Sláinte Níos Fearr á Forbairt | Building a Better Health Service

Contents

This document is a great resource for staff and managers in helping them to identify areas for improvement.

Acknowledgements

Message from Paul Reid, Director General of HSE

I'm very grateful to you and all colleagues across our health service for taking the time to share your insights and feedback in the recent staff survey. Staff engagement is of paramount importance, and the results of the survey will inform us on important areas for improving engagement and communications. The positive ripple effect achieved from an engaged and informed workforce can ultimately improve outcomes for patients and service users, building trust and confidence in the service.

Thank you for helping pave the way to a better health service for all.

Foreword

Employee engagement is and will continue to be an organisational priority as we progress to implement Sláintecare and Public Service reforms. Our refreshed People Strategy 2019 – 2024 focuses on our collective leadership responsibility to enhance the impact of our employee voice on critical workplace issues. Redefining engagement as a continuous approach embedded in services and teams and, fostering an environment that is conducive to purposeful engagement is central to our approach. I am committed, with my Leadership colleagues, to support staff engagement forums, community of practice, other appropriate communication and engagement methodologies to ensure greater connectivity, partnership working and alignment with service improvements across the system.

The Staff Survey clearly identified areas for improvement at a number of levels – delivering these improvements will require a collaborative response and I am fully committed to ensure that the data is used to its full potential to influence these changes.

This document is a great resource for staff and managers in helping them to identify areas for improvement. The actions outlined are not an exhaustive list of areas that need improvement as identified in the Staff Survey, but rather a robust starting point to initiate engagement to make a real difference to the experiences of our staff and ultimately to our service users/patients and families.

Rosarii Mannion,
National Director Human Resources, HSE

Background

In 2018, " Engaging Health Staff – An Introduction" was published with the aim of creating 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. As part of the monitoring and review process, a commitment was given that following publication of the Health Services Staff Survey 2018 the highlighted areas of improvement with regards to staff engagement requiring attention would be incorporated into an action plan.

This action plan sets out our staff engagement vision for the HSE for the coming years and pertains to all staff. It is planned that it will help move the HSE towards a workplace culture where staff engagement is embedded in every aspect of the work-life of Irish Health Service staff.
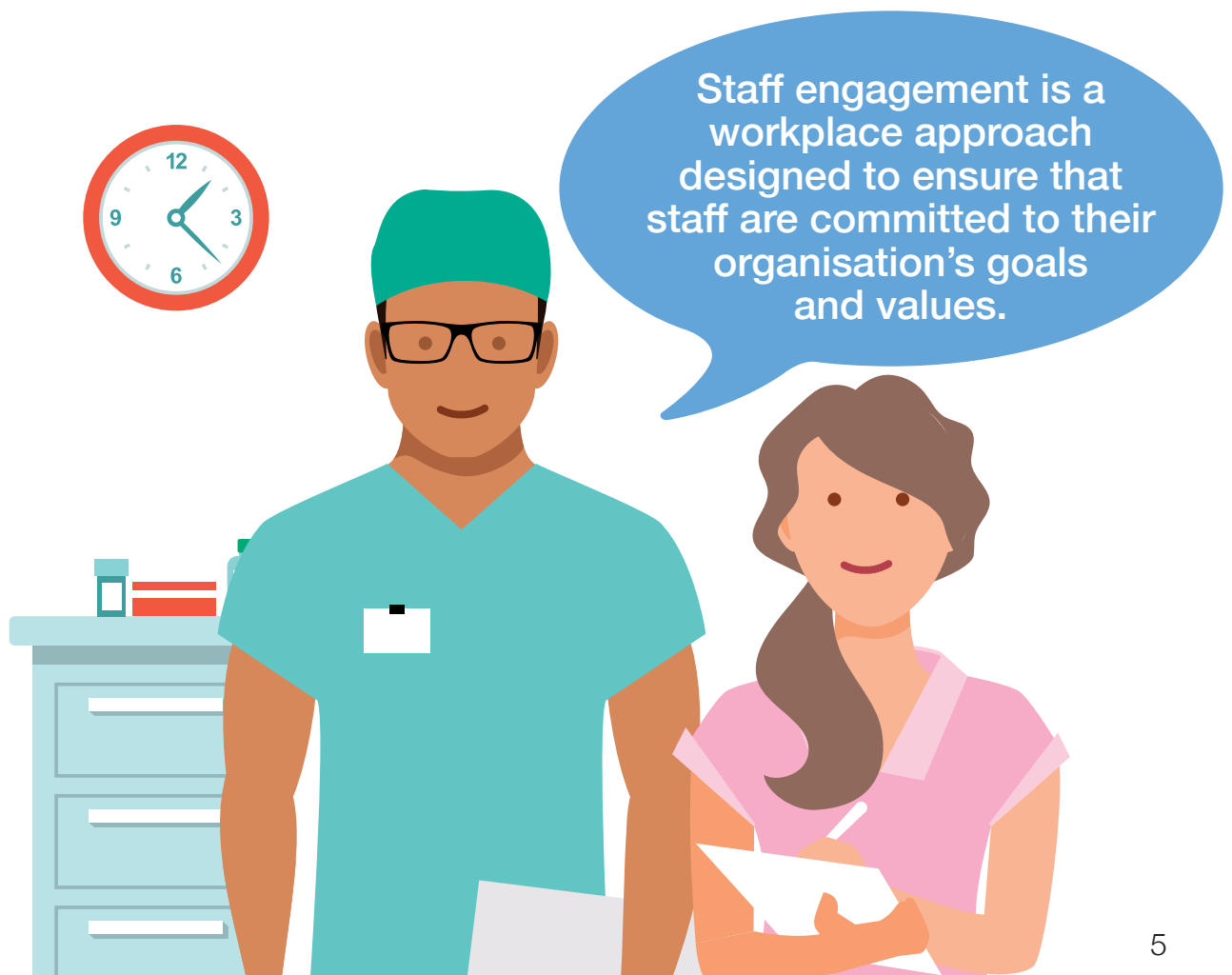
What is Staff Engagement?

According to the HSE National Staff Engagement Forum "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 make a difference." The definition created by the forum echoes the values and ethos of the Health Service Executive in Ireland and its commitment to prioritising its staff.

Staff engagement is a workplace approach designed to ensure that staff are committed to their organisation's goals and values, motivated to contribute to organisational success and are able, at the same time, to enhance their own sense of wellbeing. Engagement is therefore a tool for organisational success.

High levels of engagement result from a combination of experiences at work which includes involvement in decision making, personal development and training, good management and leadership and a healthy, safe, work environment, where every role counts. David McLeod, Engaging for Success Report said that staff engagement *"is about how we create the conditions in which employees offer more of their capability and potential"*.

Evidence is mounting in health services internationally highlighting the positive relationship between an engaged health workforce and patient experience (National Patient Experience Survey, 2018). This relationship has been recognised by the HSE through analysis of common themes between the recent staff and patient surveys. (V.Kelly & S.Woods, 2019).

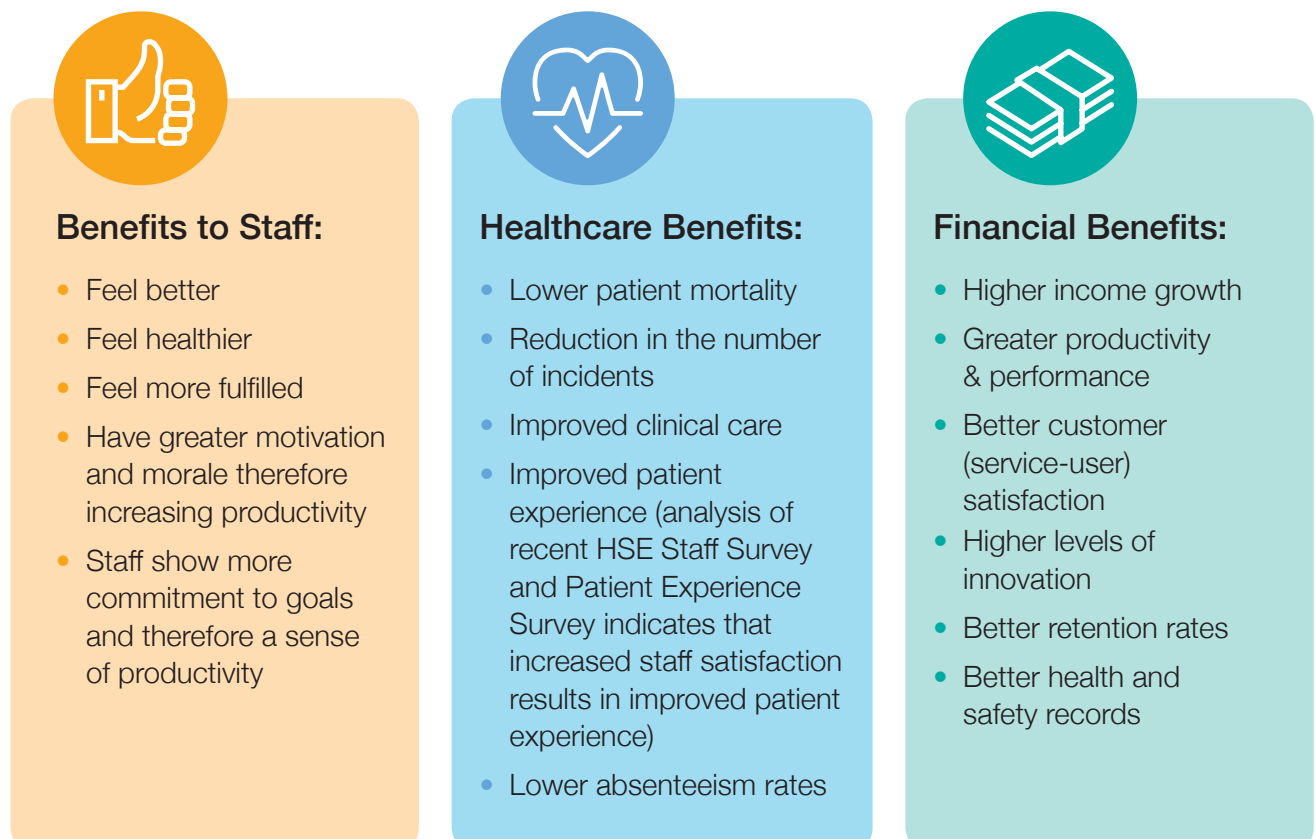Staff engagement is a workplace approach designed to ensure that staff are committed to their organisation's goals and values.

Enablers of Staff Engagement

According to international evidence, there are four common factors that contribute to higher workplace staff engagement:

Engaging Managers
Focus on their staff and treat them as individuals

Employee Voice
Employees are involved, listened to and invited to contribute ideas and expertise

Integrity
Values are reflected in everyday behaviour

Visible Empowering Leadership
Provide a strong strategic narrative about the organisation

Source: Engage for success (2009)

Organisational Outcomes

Where the right conditions exist, staff that are engaged have been found to have increased levels of motivation, are committed to the organisation and show an increase in their overall health and wellbeing; all of which results in beneficial organisational outcomes listed below.

Benefits to Staff:

- Feel better
- Feel healthier
- Feel more fulfilled
- Have greater motivation and morale therefore increasing productivity
- Staff show more commitment to goals and therefore a sense of productivity

Healthcare Benefits:

- Lower patient mortality
- Reduction in the number of incidents
- Improved clinical care
- Improved patient experience (analysis of recent HSE Staff Survey and Patient Experience Survey indicates that increased staff satisfaction results in improved patient experience)
- Lower absenteeism rates

Financial Benefits:

- Higher income growth
- Greater productivity & performance
- Better customer (service-user) satisfaction
- Higher levels of innovation
- Better retention rates
- Better health and safety records

"when we care for staff,
they can fulfil their calling
of providing outstanding
professional care for patients"
(West and Dawson, 2012)

Staff Engagement in Health Services

Private sector companies and organisations have long acknowledged the huge benefits of having an engaged workforce. Research and action into staff engagement in the health sector has lagged in comparison, despite the benefits of an engaged workforce being intuitively known. Mounting evidence is emerging in more recent times highlighting the organisational and personal benefits of engaging with health service staff.

Health service staff tend to be multi-generational with various skill sets. The vocational aspect of healthcare professions has been found to be a driver of motivation and possibly retention levels in adverse workplace environments in the past, however recognition of the impact of workplace environments and culture has created a much needed shift. There is now increased awareness that the attitudes of healthcare staff can affect the service quality offered to patients and the impact working life can have on employee health and wellbeing. If we want staff to be advocates for the quality of care provided by the Health Service in Ireland, they must be provided with the appropriate resources and supports necessary to allow them excel in their work and to be proud to work for this organisation.

"when we care for staff, they can fulfil their calling of providing outstanding professional care for patients" (West and Dawson, 2012)

Whilst being underpinned by the policies and strategies outlined in the original Staff Engagement "An Introduction" document, a more engaged workforce has the potential to contribute significantly to reaching the aims and objectives of several current HSE policies, strategies and initiatives as outlined in the table on page 8.

HSE Policies and Strategies & Staff Engagement

Some key policies and strategies have influenced the Staff Engagement agenda in Irish health services, including:

Policies, Initiatives & Strategies	Goals related to Staff Engagement	Actions Related to Staff Engagement
Sláintecare Implementation Strategy 2018-2028	Goal 1: Deep and sustained engagement with stakeholders: Reforming the system requires constructive engagement between the workforce, representative bodies and other stakeholders across the system, on an ongoing basis. Goal 4: Enable the System to Deliver its goals	Action 9: Build a sustainable resilient workforce that is supported and enabled to deliver the Sláintecare Vision.
People Strategy 2019-2024	Priority 2: Staff have a strong sense of connection to the service, take personal responsibility for achieving better outcomes and support team colleagues to deliver results.	Action 2.9: To redefine engagement as a continuous approach embedded in services and teams and to foster an environment that is conducive to employee engagement. Action 2.7: Create, measure and monitor purposeful engagement at individual, team and organisational level.
National Service Plan 2019	Section 9: Workforce - We will work with services to take action on the findings from the staff survey 2018. In addition Staff Engagement Forums provide valuable feedback from those working in frontline services, create a space for conversations about what matters to staff, giving a sense of ownership and personal responsibility for engagement, promoting staff engagement. (NSP,2019).	Staff Engagement: We will map all existing staff engagement programmes of work to ensure one coherent and measurable staff engagement work stream is in place to support Sláintecare implementation.
Healthy Ireland in the Health Services 2016-2017	Action 55: Ensure the People Strategy contains a commitment to staff engagement and staff health & wellbeing.	Action 57: All delivery organisations will put in place specific consultation mechanisms with their staff to generate bottom up ideas and to support and demonstrate commitment to improving staff health & wellbeing.
Framework For Quality Improvement	Positive Staff Engagement is critical to achieving high quality care. There is a need to ensure that similar to patients, staff voices are heard across organisations and used to inform improvements.	Action: Listening and acknowledging staff, encouraging staff to be involved in decision making and problem solving, supporting teamwork, promoting health and wellbeing.
HSE Corporate Plan 2015-2017	Goal 4: Engage, develop and value our workforce to deliver best possible care and service to patient / service users.	Build a sustainable and responsible workforce that has the capacity, ability, and adaptability to meet the changing needs of patients and service users. Build management and leadership skills Support and develop education & training Promote a culture of respect for each other's knowledge & skills.

Measuring Staff Engagement

Staff surveys are a commonly used method in healthcare settings to measure staff engagement. Staff surveys offer a valuable and unique insight into the working life of staff and the challenges they face on a day-to-day basis.

"Your Opinion Counts" Staff Survey

In 2014, the HSE conducted their first Staff Survey and the aim of the survey was "to access current staff opinions in order to identify opportunities for improvement, which will help build a better health service for all". The staff survey was designed as a vehicle to allow the first accurate measurement of staff engagement levels among Irish health service staff.

The staff survey has been conducted on a bi-annual basis since 2014 and response rates have been increasing each year. 19,606 staff completed the survey in 2018 which equates to a response rate of 15%. Paper-based and online surveys were made available to Health Sector staff between September and mid-October 2018. The HSE is committed to addressing the findings of the Staff Survey in order to build on and develop the working conditions for HSE staff.

IPSOS Engagement Model

The IPSOS Engagement Model was used to analyse the results of the 2018 Staff Survey. Three components have been identified by IPSOS that can help overall understanding and improve the experience of employees at work. These 3 indicators reflect the employee relationship to:

1. **Their jobs (Involvement)**
2. **Their organisation (Loyalty)**
3. **Management (Alignment)**

Results of these indicators have been calculated via 12 specific questions included in the survey, illustrated in the diagram. The 12 questions have been used to calculate the level of staff engagement in the HSE.

Using a sample of 500 employees from large organisations across Ireland surveyed in 2018, IPSOS created normative data. These norms have been compared with the results of the 2018 Staff Survey to determine how the levels of HSE Staff Engagement compare to other large Irish businesses/organisations. This comparison has been illustrated in the table on page 10.

IPSOS Staff Engagement category	Related Staff Survey staff engagement indicator	Health Service Result 2016	Health Service Result 2018	IPSOS Norms 2018	Health Service Variants 2018 with IPSOS Norm
Involvement	report being satisfied in their job	56%	64%	55%	+9
	motivated in my current job	71%	77%	60%	+17
	report their job gives them a sense of fulfilment	65%	68%	61%	+7
	report that the organisation is good at developing staff to their full potential	30%	38%	47%	-9
Loyalty	report intending to be working for organisation in 2 years	67%	70%	59%	+11
	optimistic about their future in the organisation	42%	51%	53%	-2
	would recommend organisation as an employer to a friend or family member	49%	57%	57%	=
	proud to work for company	61%	67%	67%	=
Alignment	understand the relationship between my individual objectives and my organisation's objectives	63%	56%	61%	-5
	value organisation's culture	42%	48%	50%	-2
	confidence in decisions made by senior management	25%	34%	47%	-13
	endorse organisation's overall strategy and direction	44%	47%	64%	-17

As per the table, it is clear that the HSE 2018 results are higher than IPSOS normative data for four staff engagement indictors. HSE staff are more motivated and satisfied in their jobs and slightly more fulfilled than staff in a sample of staff from large Irish organisations. However, HSE staff report to have less confidence in decisions made by Senior Management and are less likely to endorse the overall strategy and direction of the organisation. This table also illustrates the progress that has been made in the HSE with regards staff engagement between 2016 and 2018 as all but one of the indicators have increased.

While the table *(left)* links the results with the IPSOS Staff Engagement model, there are further indicators in the Staff Survey 2018 that would also need consideration for focus in order to improve overall engagement:

Training & Development

All staff training opportunities related questions have improved since 2016. While there have been improvements in perceived opportunities for progression in the organisation since 2016, only 1 in 3 staff are satisfied with the opportunities. Despite these findings, the HSE remains ahead of the IPSOS norms in relation to the training and opportunities available. Many staff believe that they are not being developed to their full potential putting the HSE behind IPSOS norms in this regard.

Dignity at Work

There is a high awareness of the Dignity at Work policy, however 2 in 5 staff have not been briefed or trained on the policy, therefore a wider roll out and communication of this policy is required. 6% of staff have disability status but not all feel they have had this accommodated in the workplace.

Health & Wellbeing

While improvements have been seen in staff perception of organisational interest in staff health and wellbeing, 42% of staff are positive about action in this regard. These findings put the HSE behind IPSOS norms.

Work-life balance and workloads have also improved, placing the HSE ahead of norms. 8 in 10 are satisfied with level of respect they are shown both internally and externally.

Standard of Care & Services

Almost a third of staff believe that service levels are deteriorating. 68% of staff reporting they would recommend the organisation if a friend/family member needed treatment/a service.

89% of staff believe that their role makes a difference to others.

Perceptions of the processes for reporting errors, near misses and incidents have marginally improved but any changes as a result of these reports are not fed back to staff.

Using the 2018 Staff Survey findings and the IPSOS Model of Engagement a Staff Engagement Action Plan has been developed highlighting proposed actions that Management and Staff can utilise to promote and support ongoing engagement initiatives. This action plan has been endorsed by the Leadership Team and each area will be responsible for reporting progress through the normal reporting process.

Engaging Health Staff Action Plan 2019-2021

IPSOS Model of Engagement Component	Findings 2018 Survey	2021 Proposed Staff Engagement Actions
Involvement in my job	64% report being satisfied in their job 77% motivated in my current job 68% report their job gives them a sense of fulfilment 38% report that the organisation is good at developing staff to their full potential	1:1 meetings between line managers and staff to give opportunity for regular informal feedback, clarifying and aligning objectives and developing commitment and motivation Frequent team meetings with staff engagement on the agenda where staff are involved in decision making as it impacts on the team and the workplace Establish local staff engagement forums Increase visibility of Management through regular site visits/walk rounds
Loyalty to my organisation	70% report intending to be working for the organisation in 2 years 51% optimistic about their future in the organisation 57% would recommend organisation as an employer to a friend or family member 67% proud to work for company	1:1 meetings between line managers and staff i.e. regular informal feedback Increase awareness of the courses and continued training available to staff Establish local staff engagement forums Conduct exit interviews with staff planning on leaving the organisation Outline career progression routes for roles in welcoming pack Recognising staff contribution e.g. Promotion and involvement in Recognition Awards
Alignment with my Line Manager	56% understand the relationship between my individual objectives and the organisation's objectives 48% value the organisation's culture 34% have confidence in decisions made by senior management 47% endorse the organisation's overall strategy and direction	1:1 meetings between line managers and staff Leaders to be accessible, visible and approachable Invite participation from all staff through frequent team meetings with staff engagement on the agenda Increase awareness at local level of the Organisation Strategy Increase awareness at local level of Values in Action & Dignity at Work Policy Promote communication within and between teams HSE Induction plan to outline the relationship between staff and the organisation's objectives

Responsibility	Useful links and tools
Local Management Line Managers	People Strategy 2019-2024 Staff Engagement Website: www.hse.ie/staffengagement.
Local Management	A Guide to Performance Achievement in the HSE 2016 HSE Excellence Awards Local/divisional Recognition Awards programmes, e.g.: • Cork-Kerry CH Recognition Awards • Health and Social Care Professionals Awards • UL Hospital Group Awards • Saolta Group Awards (List not exhaustive, just a sample)
Line Managers	HSE Employee Resource Pack includes: Induction guidelines and checklists Employee Handbook www.hse.ie/employeeresourcepack HSELand Modules on Encouraging Team Communication and Collaboration – log in to www.hseland.ie

Engaging Health Staff Action Plan 2019-2021

IPSOS Model of Engagement Component	Findings 2018 Survey	2021 Proposed Staff Engagement Actions
Training & Development	53% reporting opportunities for training 37% reporting opportunities for career progression	Raise awareness of coaching and mentoring services available to all staff Work with LETD and the Leadership Academy Opportunity to shadowing/coaching/mentoring Outline career progressions
Health & Wellbeing	42% report that their organisation takes an interest in Staff Health and Wellbeing 52% report that the source of their stress is work-related 50% are satisfied with their workload	HSE Workplace Stress Campaign includes a work positive tool to measure employee wellbeing and help prevent work place related stress Workplace and Wellbeing Unit www.workwell.ie established to provide support and assistance to all staff on health and wellbeing Refer to HSE Policy for Preventative and Management of Stress in the Workplace (2018) Develop and expand health and wellbeing by having a wider reach and all staff are aware of what is available in this area
Dignity at Work	87% aware of Dignity at Work Policy 42 % report experiencing bullying/harassment in the workplace	Preventative measures must be supported to ensure that every employee has a duty to maintain a working environment in which the dignity of everyone is respected Managers and staff to use direct clear language and set boundaries about what is acceptable behaviour and what is not acceptable behaviour Managers must be vigilant for signs of bullying and harassment and intervene before a problem escalates Raise awareness of the Dignity at Work module available on HSELand Keep bullying/harassment on the agenda for teams Raise awareness of the various ways to report bullying/harassment if experienced/witnessed
Standard of care & services	31% report that the overall service level in the organisation is improving 68% report they would recommend the organisation if a friend/family member needed treatment/service	Continue researching the relationship between staff engagement and quality of care provided to patients Establish local staff engagement forums in acute services Provide staff with feedback when they report errors, near misses and incidents

Responsibility	Useful links and tools
Line Managers LETD	Workforce planning Training and Development for senior managers - https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/leadership-education-development/health-service-leadership-academy/ Personal and team improvement - https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/qid/improvement-knowledge-and-skillsguide/improvement-guide-completeoct11.pdf Coaching information - https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/leadership-education-development/hse-coaching.html
Staff and Line Managers	www.hseworkpositive.com www.workwell.ie Schwartz Rounds - https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/qid/staff-engagement/schwartzrounds/ The HSE Policy for Prevention and Management of Stress at Work

Staff and Line Managers	Dignity at Work Policy Contact Support Persons
	Anti-bullying Awareness Day Synposium video available:
	    – Log on to www.hseland.ie
	    – Select 'Hubs' from the homepage
	    – Enter the 'Share Centre'
	    – Select 'Anti-Bullying Awareness Day' from the list of Projects and Resources
	
	Employee Assistance & Counselling Service
	Dignity at Work Module HSELand – log in to www.hseland.ie
	StaffCare Helpline – 1800409388
	HR Helpdesk – 1850 444 925 Email: ask.hr@hse.ie
	Dignity At Work Training for Managers
	Mediation Service
	People Management – The Legal Framework 2009

Staff and Line Managers	Schwartz Rounds - https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/qid/staff-engagement/schwartzrounds/ National Healthcare Communication Programme

Monitoring and Review

It is envisaged that this action plan will be reviewed following publication of relevant Health Service Surveys in the future. This will ensure that the information contained within this 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 & Available Support

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

Should any area/region require support implementing this plan or customising it with the Staff Survey results from your area, please contact Info.OD&Dhsewest@hse.ie.

Conclusion

This document has outlined the narrative on Staff Engagement; the international evidence of the four enablers for staff engagement; the organisational outcomes of an engaged workforce; how the HSE as an organisation measures staff engagement and the results and indicators from the recent Health Sector Staff Survey 2018 including IPSOS comparisons. The guiding policies of the HSE form the basis for the Engaging Health Staff – Action Plan 2019-2021 ensuring that staff and Senior Managers can incorporate into their own service plans to enable the measurement of increased engagement on an annual basis.

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Appendices – Initiatives that have increased Staff Engagement since 2016 Staff Survey

Appendix 1:
Excellence Awards

Acknowledges the unique position front-line staff have at recognising areas for improvements within services.

The Excellence awards provide staff with an opportunity to showcase innovative projects to improve services therefore providing them with a voice.

Health Service Excellence Awards 2018

Appendix 2:

A Practical Toolkit for Leadership Skills for Engaging Staff in Improving Quality

This toolkit was developed in collaboration with the National Staff Engagement Forum and the National Quality Improvement Team.

The toolkit is designed to help leaders "start the conversation" of engagement and also provides ideas on how to engage staff on organisational priorities.

www.staffengagement.ie

Appendix 3:

Staff Engagement Website

The Staff Engagement website went live in 2018 and is a repository for Staff Engagement efforts that are happening throughout the HSE. This website aims to promote engagement, share experiences and act as a resource to staff.

Staff Engagement
#engaginghealthstaff

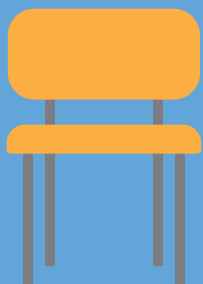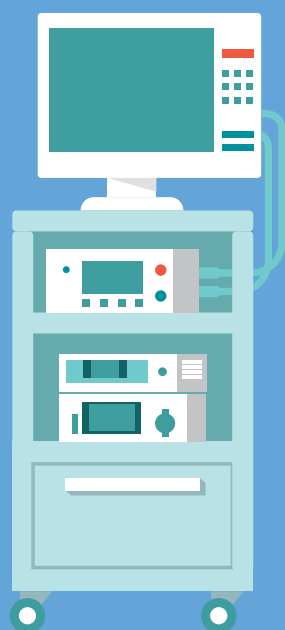## Appendix 4:

Change Guide

People's Needs
Defining Change
HEALTH SERVICES CHANGE GUIDE

Section 2 of the Change Guide – People's Needs Defining Change (pages 37-49) focuses in particular on engagement / co-production. It outlines an engagement process (page 40) and offers assistance in relation to engaging with service users, communities and staff. The Templates related to this Section on pages 102-108 are also helpful and aligned to the Engagement and Communication Plans being used in the project management office's etc.

This document has outlined the narrative on Staff Engagement; the international evidence of the four enablers for staff engagement; the organisational outcomes of an engaged workforce; how the HSE as an organisation measures staff engagement and the results and indicators from the recent health sector staff survey 2018 including IPSOS comparisons.

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