The Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust

NHS Staff Survey 2026

Public Board
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Presented for:	Information and Assurance
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Previous Committees:	

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Exemption	☐ YES (restricted from the FOIA) ☒ NO (available to the public under the FOIA)

Link to Strategic Objective: Support and develop our people	Support and develop our people
Link to Provider Capability Assessment: People and culture	People and culture
Link to CQC Well-led Statement	Capable, compassionate and inclusive leaders
Regulatory Impact	Regulation 17: Good governance

Key points	Purpose
• The National Staff Survey is one way that LTHT uses to listen to colleague feedback, but it is not the only way. Throughout the year, colleagues can share their views and experiences through a range of other channels. • The Staff Survey provides nationally comparable evidence regarding colleague experience and supports local improvement. • The 2026 results will contribute to assessment against the NHS Staff Standards and the NHS Oversight Framework. • In 2025 LTHT achieved an overall engagement score of 6.7 (reduction from 6.9 in 2024) which was in line with the national	Information and Assurance

benchmark for acute and acute community trusts and a 47% response rate in 2025 against a 49% benchmark for acute and acute community trusts. • The minimum 2026 aim is to achieve the national engagement score and response rate benchmark, with a stretch target of the benchmark plus one • Delivery requires visible leadership, promotion of you said /we did activities, weekly progress update and departments sharing their good practice against a backdrop of a challenging winter operating environment.	

Risk Appetite Framework			
Level 1 Risk	Level 2 Risks	(Risk Appetite Scale)	Impact
Workforce Risk |	Workforce Retention Risk - We will deliver safe and effective patient care, through supporting the training, development, and H&WB of our staff to retain the appropriate level of resource to continue to meet the patient demand for our clinical services.	Cautious	Moving Towards

1. Summary

The National Staff Survey provides an important annual picture of colleague experience, but listening at LTHT happens throughout the year. We use a range of channels to understand what colleagues are experiencing, including pulse surveys, colleague networks, Freedom to Speak Up, staff-side representatives, team conversations, listening events, leadership visits, focus groups and local engagement activity.

The Trust collects this feedback and recognises what is working well and identify where change is needed.

The 2026 survey has increased strategic importance because Staff Survey measures support the six NHS Staff Standards and the NHS Staff Standards score within the NHS Oversight Framework. The results will inform both local improvement and national assessment of colleague experience. It provides nationally comparable evidence on leadership, culture and workforce experience.

In 2025 LTHT achieved an overall engagement score of 6.7 (reduction from 6.9 in 2024) which was in line with the national benchmark for acute and acute community trusts and a 47% response rate in 2025 against a 49% benchmark for acute and acute community trusts.

2. National Staff Survey

The survey gives colleagues a confidential route to share their experience of working at LTHT. It helps the Trust understand strengths, identify variation and focus improvement where it can make the greatest difference to colleague experience and patient care.

It provides insight across the seven NHS People Promise elements: We are compassionate and inclusive; We are recognised and rewarded; We each have a voice that counts; We are safe and healthy; We are always learning; We work flexibly; and We are a team. It also reports overall measures of engagement and morale.

The NHS Oversight Framework 2026/27 includes the NHS Staff Standards score within the People and Workforce domain. The score is initially based on 2025 Staff Survey data, with the 2026 results expected to be incorporated in quarter 4.

Engagement Score / Response Rate Target

Measure	Position
LTHT 2025 engagement score	6.7 (reduction of 0.2 points from 2024 engagement score)
2025 acute and acute community trusts benchmark	6.7
Minimum 2026 aim	National benchmark
Stretch target	National benchmark plus one percentage point
LTHT 2025 response rate	47% (reduction of 1% from 2024)
2025 acute and acute community trusts benchmark	49%
Minimum 2026 aim	National benchmark
Stretch target	National benchmark plus one percentage point

A strong response rate matters because broader participation provides a more representative picture across services, professions, sites and working patterns. The objective is credible insight that leads to visible action and better conditions for delivering patient care.

Expectations of Leaders and Managers

Expectation	What this means in practice
Lead visibly	Promote the survey consistently and explain why it matters.
Create the conditions	Provide practical time and access, including for colleagues less connected to digital channels or working varied patterns.
Use every conversation	Include clear, human survey messages in huddles, team meetings, briefings and local communications.
Know the local picture	Review the response rate for the local area and agree targeted action for the following week.

Expectation	What this means in practice
Share what works	Pass on effective local approaches so they can be used more widely.
Close the loop	Promote credible 'You Said, We Did' examples from local Staff Survey action plans.

Monitoring and Assurance

A response-rate leaderboard is produced every Monday during the survey period and shared with Executive and WEB colleagues on Wednesday. This will make variation visible, identify where additional support is required and enable focused action during the following week.

NHS Staff Standards

Specific Staff Survey questions are mapped to the six NHS Staff Standards. The survey therefore provides evidence of whether colleagues experience the nationally required standards in practice.

Standard	What it covers
Flexible working	Fair and workable access to flexibility.
Line management	Consistent support and leadership from managers.
Health and wellbeing	Support for colleagues to stay safe and well.
Violence prevention and reduction	Prevention and action on violence and aggression.
Tackling racism	Racism is challenged and action is taken.
Championing sexual safety	A safe workplace for colleagues.

Engagement Score and Organisational Transformation

The Trust is undertaking a significant programme of organisational transformation to respond to the challenges facing the NHS and to support the delivery of high quality, sustainable services.

Whilst the NHS Staff Survey engagement score will remain an important indicator of colleague experience, it is recognised that engagement measures can be slower to improve during periods of substantial organisational change.

We are cognisant that meaningful movement in engagement scores may take time to materialise as improvement initiatives are embedded and colleagues experience the impact of changes in practice, leadership and culture.

Continued focus will be placed on listening to colleagues, involving colleagues in change, strengthening line management and demonstrating tangible action in response to feedback, with the expectation that these measures will support sustainable improvements in engagement over the medium to longer term.

3 to 5 Year Journey to Improvement

Over the next three to five years, we will embed the Leeds Way values into every aspect of how we work, lead and deliver care. We will ensure that Kind, Open and Honest, Responsible and One Team are reflected in our behaviours, decisions and relationships, creating a consistent culture

across the Trust. The values will move beyond organisational statements and become a practical framework that shapes everyday experiences for colleagues, patients and partners.

We will develop compassionate and effective leadership at every level of the organisation, recognising that leadership is not determined by role or title alone. We will establish clear expectations for leadership, provide regular feedback on leadership performance and offer development, coaching and support to help leaders continuously improve. Inclusion and belonging will be fully integrated into leadership practice, with leadership teams and local champions working together to foster a genuine one team approach that values inclusion, listens to lived experience and acts on colleague feedback so that everyone feels they belong.

We will provide dedicated organisational development support to teams experiencing challenge, significant change or transformation. Through a strengthened OD Business Partnering model, we will support leaders to improve team effectiveness, build capability, navigate change and deliver sustainable improvements. This will ensure that services have access to the right expertise and support while maintaining local ownership and accountability for improvement.

We will strengthen psychological safety (listen, learn and improve) and create a workplace where colleagues feel confident to raise concerns, share ideas and challenge respectfully. Local workplace issues will be addressed and resolved as close as possible to where they arise. Freedom to Speak Up will have a clear and focused role in supporting concerns relating to patient safety, while local leaders will be supported to create healthy team cultures where concerns are addressed early and effectively.

We will also take a proactive and visible approach to tackling sexual misconduct, supported by education, awareness, clear reporting routes and decisive action when concerns are raised.

We will use both workforce data and colleague insight to drive improvement, combining evidence-based decision making with meaningful co production. Colleagues will help design, test and implement solutions, ensuring change is shaped by those closest to the work. We will use the Leeds Way Inclusion Calendar to create year-round opportunities for learning, reflection and connection, strengthening inclusion and belonging across the organisation. We will continue to support wellbeing through local teams and leaders, while creating clear career pathways, development opportunities and talent programmes that enable colleagues from all backgrounds to thrive and build long term careers at LTHT.

As a major employer and anchor organisation within Leeds and West Yorkshire, we will create accessible and transparent routes into employment and career progression. We will strengthen pathways into NHS careers through apprenticeships, work experience, volunteering, supported employment and inclusive recruitment practices.

We will position education, learning and development as a key organisational strength, ensuring colleagues have the opportunity to continually develop their skills, realise their potential and contribute to outstanding patient care.

3. Financial Implications

There is currently no direct financial penalty associated with NHS Staff Survey engagement scores. However, the introduction of the NHS Staff Standards Score within the NHS Oversight Framework

means colleague experience now contributes to organisational assessment alongside quality, operational and financial performance. Poor performance may increase regulatory scrutiny, require additional improvement activity and contribute to workforce costs associated with improving performance.

4. Key Risks and Mitigations

There is a workforce retention and morale risk (Cautious).

Risk	Mitigation
Participation below benchmark	Visible leadership, local monitoring and targeted weekly action.
Engagement score below benchmark	We are cognisant that meaningful movement in engagement scores may take time to materialise as improvement initiatives are embedded and colleagues experience the impact of changes in practice, leadership and culture. The trust expects sustainable improvements in engagement over the medium to longer term.
Unequal access for some colleague groups or working patterns	Practical access and additional support for less digitally connected colleagues.
Low confidence that feedback leads to change	Use credible local examples and maintain a visible 'You Said, We Did' approach.

5. Communication and Involvement

A comprehensive communication and engagement campaign has been developed to maximise awareness, participation and local ownership of the 2026 NHS Staff Survey.

The campaign will include visible support from the Chief Executive and Executive Team, regular organisation wide communications, targeted messaging for underrepresented colleague groups, local leadership briefings and promotional materials across digital and physical channels.

Managers and leaders will be asked to actively encourage participation, create opportunities for colleagues to complete the survey during working time where operationally feasible, and reinforce the importance of every response.

Colleague networks, trade union representatives, Freedom to Speak Up champions and local engagement leads will be involved in promoting the survey and encouraging participation within their communities.

Weekly monitoring of response rates will enable targeted support to areas with lower participation, helping to ensure the survey reflects the broadest possible range of colleague experiences.

Results and subsequent actions will be communicated transparently through a clear "You Said, We Did" approach, demonstrating how colleague feedback informs improvement and supports delivery of the NHS Staff Standards and the Trust's commitment to being a great place to work.

6. Impact on Equality and Health Inequalities

The survey is an important route for understanding whether colleague experience differs across colleague groups, professions, services, sites and working patterns. The delivery approach should promote equitable access, avoid reliance on digital communications alone and use local insight to address participation gaps. Analysis following the survey should identify variation and support targeted action to address inequality and health inequality.

7. Publication under Freedom of Information Act

This document is accessible in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

8. Recommendations

• Note the strategic importance of the 2026 NHS Staff Survey.

• Endorse the minimum response rate aim of the national benchmark, with a stretch target of the benchmark plus one percentage point.

8. Supporting documentation

Appendix 1 3 to 5 Year Improvement Journey

Author

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