

News release

National NHS and social care staff survey launched: *“to build a culture of workforce resilience that is organisational-based - not just reliant on the individual.”*



Over the last twelve months, NHS and social care organisations across the UK have undergone enormous change, mobilising effective workforce innovations and flexibilities at pace, to adapt and respond to unparalleled demand. The remarkable resilience and dedication of healthcare staff to deliver care for patients and service users in the midst of such adversity is incredible but has been tested to the limits. As staff continue to face ongoing challenges due to the impact of COVID-19 as well as from pre-pandemic operating conditions, how can this resolve be strengthened and working life improved to reduce the risk of burnout, both now and in the future?

Since 2010, Skills for Health, the Sector Skills Council for Health and leading not-for-profit, have funded a national biennial research project, assessing the current skills and competency needs of employers and employees across the entire health and care system. Launched this week, the [‘Developing a Resilient Workforce Survey’](#) aims to identify the critical development shortages at an individual, organisational and systemic level, to support the UK government, NHS and social care leaders implement measures that will not only protect staff from pressures that pre-date the pandemic but, crucially, address the new challenges they will continue to face as a result of it.

“For over 10 years’ our research has helped shape the delivery of workforce initiatives and people strategies, supporting employers to make evidence-based decisions and to target effective resources in their efforts to improve the workplace,” says Jon Parry, Head of Research at Skills for Health. *“This year’s review focuses on improving workforce resilience and wellbeing, particularly in light of the immense trials we have all*

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experienced in the last 12 months and will help sector leaders to better understand the complex skills issues that they will need to address, in order to equip the workforce to meet future challenges.”

This vital research looks to capture cross-sector skills gaps, the impact on learning due to Covid-19, ongoing training needs, flexible and remote working, equality, diversity, and inclusion at work, as well as the organisational and people development requirements to support an ever-increasing complex workforce. The findings will form a comprehensive report providing an invaluable overview of the current shape of the health and care system nationwide.

“As the nation emerges from the pandemic there has never been a greater need to address the challenges of NHS and social care workforce development,” says John Rogers, Chief Executive at Skills for Health.

“Workforce issues remain the biggest concern facing the sector and now is the time to ensure long-term plans are based on an accurate evidence-based understanding of the needs of the workforce. The upcoming NHS Bill offers an opportunity to create a truly integrated workforce and this research can help inform policy to both improve the workplace for our people and build a workforce which is better able to meet the needs of patients in the future.”

Much of the change brought about by Covid-19 was forced to happen overnight. That so many staff risked their personal mental and physical health is testimony to the commitment and dedication of the workforce. Yet, while PPE, ventilators, hospital beds and equipment are vital, the NHS and social care sectors are nothing without their people. *“Personal resilience is a wonderful characteristic, but it should not be the default requirement,”* adds Jon.

“We need to build a culture of workforce resilience that is organisational-based and not just reliant on the individual,” says John. *“Having a health and care system that is able to look back at the incredible transformation that has already taken place over the last year or so, learn from it, and translate that learning into what it means practically for future workforce resilience, is key.*

“By participating in this survey, employers and employees can play their part in informing decisive action for the NHS and social care sector to overcome the obstacles it faces in recovering services after COVID-19.” He emphasises: *“Basing long-term workforce strategies on the best available data will not only make the system more resilient but help it retain the incredible people it has and make it a more attractive place for others to join.”*

[Have your say and complete the survey now](#)

The survey will be live until June 30, 2021 and for every completed survey response, Skills for Health are donating 10p to MenCap, the leading charity for people with a learning disability.

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