

Meeting title:	Public Board Trust Board public paper L					
Date of the meeting:	11 September 2026					
Title:	NHS Staff Survey 2026					
Report presented by:	Clare Teeney, Chief People Officer					
Report written by:	Daniel Del Greco, People Lead, Experience and Engagement					
Action – this paper is for:	Decision/Approval		Assurance	X	Update	X
Where this report has been discussed previously	N/A					

To your knowledge, does the report provide assurance or mitigate any significant risks? If yes, please detail which
BAF - 09 – People, Culture and Capability

Acronyms used: UHL – University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust NOF – NHS Oversight Framework
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Purpose of the Report

This paper provides an update on the delivery plan in response to the 2025 staff survey, along with plans for the 2026 NHS Staff Survey. It gives an outline of work that is both underway and planned, in relation to how we maximise response rates in 2026.

Recommendation

- Trust Board are asked to receive the information.
- Note the target % response rate for 2026. Currently set to 60%.
- Note the Staff standards and staff survey metrics reporting via the National Oversight Framework (NOF)

Main report detail

The NHS Staff Survey remains one of the most important ways that colleagues can shape the culture and experience of working at UHL. In 2025, 11,544 colleagues completed the survey, representing a response rate of 58.7%, significantly above the national average and providing a strong evidence base to understand colleague experiences and identify priorities for improvement.

Whilst UHL saw a reduction in scores across all seven survey themes in 2025 compared to the previous year, this followed a period of sustained improvement, and the Trust continues to perform above benchmark comparator organisations across all themes. The results reflect the pressures experienced both locally and nationally and provide a clear reminder that continued focus is required to improve culture, wellbeing, and the overall experience of our workforce.

NHS Staff Standards

The NHS Staff Standards, published on 6 July 2026, establish nationally defined minimum expectations for staff experience across six key areas: line management, health and wellbeing, violence prevention and reduction, sexual safety, tackling racism, and flexible working. Developed jointly by DHSC and NHS England, the standards aim to improve consistency of staff experience and strengthen accountability for workforce culture. Performance against the standards will be measured primarily through 27 identified NHS Staff Survey questions and incorporated into the NHS Oversight Framework (NOF), ensuring that staff experience forms part of the annual assessment of organisational performance.

Response to the 2025 staff survey

Feedback from recent surveys has directly informed action through the Trust's RISE (Recognised, Included, Supported and Equipped) framework. For 2025/26 this has been based on the following areas:

RECOGNISED - Good working conditions and having needs met – including parking, travel, and food provision – helps colleagues feel valued

INCLUDED - Strengthening our culture through leadership visibility, development and listening (leading well at UHL), and addressing unacceptable behaviours like discrimination helps create a sense of belonging

SUPPORTED - Safe staffing, workload sustainability, and clear recruitment processes help colleagues feel supported and empowered to deliver high-quality patient care

EQUIPPED - Effective and up-to-date digital systems and equipment better support colleagues to work efficiently and safely

UHL has taken a number of actions to strengthen inclusion, leadership, development, and workplace experience. This has included the introduction of reasonable adjustment clinics to help reduce barriers for colleagues, the launch of an anti-discrimination statement and staff pledge, the appointment of Inclusion Ambassadors, and continued investment in staff networks, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion education, and Active Bystander training. In addition, a revised appraisal approach has been introduced to support more meaningful conversations focused on individual achievements, wellbeing, development, and career aspirations.

The Trust has continued to invest in leadership capability at all levels, with more than 1,300 colleagues participating in leadership development opportunities since the last survey. These programmes include leadership bundles, Developing Diverse Leaders initiatives and reverse mentoring, helping to strengthen inclusive leadership and improve understanding of the experiences of colleagues across the organisation.

There is also evidence of positive progress in areas that support colleague experience and engagement. A record 900 nominations were received for the 2026 UHL Recognition Awards, demonstrating improving levels of appreciation and recognition across the organisation.

In August 2026, UHL welcomed more than 400 resident doctors through its induction programme and reaffirmed its commitment to delivering the resident doctor 10-point plan.

The Trust's digital transformation programme has also continued, with more than 10,000 Nerve centre training modules completed since April 2026 and 1,948 new digital devices issued to colleagues, helping ensure staff are equipped with the tools and skills required to deliver safe and effective care.

While these actions do not diminish the challenges highlighted through the staff survey, they provide assurance that colleague feedback is being listened to and translated into tangible improvements. The Trust remains committed to building on this progress and continuing to improve the experience of colleagues across UHL.

Local ownership and assurance

We recognise that improvement requires action at both an organisational and local level. Over recent years, increasing emphasis has been placed on supporting leaders to understand and act on their staff survey results, ensuring that feedback translates into meaningful engagement and improvements within teams and services. This has been supported through data dashboards, leadership development, guidance, and communications to help leaders engage colleagues in conversations about their experiences and identify priorities for local action.

Encouragingly, there is growing evidence that managers are using staff survey findings to shape local improvements. In the 2025 NHS Staff Survey, around 26% of colleagues reported that they had seen their team results and the actions being taken in response. While this highlights that there is still significant opportunity to strengthen visibility and engagement, it provides a baseline from which to improve. The Trust will continue to support leaders to increase local ownership of the survey and will monitor progress through future surveys to ensure more colleagues can see how their feedback is influencing change.

Plans for 2026 Staff Survey engagement

Planning is underway for the 2026 NHS Staff Survey, which will run between 21 September and 27 November 2026. Activities will focus on increasing participation, particularly within staff groups and services that have historically recorded lower response rates, while continuing to demonstrate the actions taken as a result of colleague feedback. Communications, targeted engagement activity, leadership support, staff survey champions, and local accountability for response rates will all contribute to strengthening participation and ensuring every colleague has the opportunity to share their views. The Trust has set an initial response rate ambition of 60% for 2026.

While there remains more to do, the Trust is committed to a continuous cycle of listening, learning, and improvement. The NHS Staff Survey continues to provide an essential source of insight and

assurance, helping to ensure that actions to improve staff experience, inclusion, wellbeing, and culture are informed by the voices of colleagues and translated into meaningful change across UHL.