

# Ambulance trusts

## The views of staff

Key findings from the 2006  
survey of NHS staff



Fewer staff in ambulance trusts witnessed errors, near misses and incidents, but the findings from the fourth annual survey of NHS staff reveal that violence and abuse against staff remains unacceptably high.

In October 2006, a total of 240,580 staff in the NHS were asked about their views and experiences of working for the NHS in England. Almost 4,550 staff from 12\* ambulance trusts took part in the survey, representing a response rate of 49%. 2006 was an unusual year for ambulance trusts: nine of the 12 trusts were new organisations, formed from 28 smaller trusts that had participated in previous national surveys of staff.

This document reports the survey's key findings relating to ambulance trusts, including any changes from previous surveys. It reports the attitudes and experiences of staff in the NHS and can be used to improve working conditions and practices in healthcare services and therefore the quality of care provided to patients. Further detail, including the results of the survey for each trust, is available on the Healthcare Commission's website at: [www.healthcarecommission.org.uk](http://www.healthcarecommission.org.uk).

### Key findings for ambulance trusts

- 84% of staff regularly work more than their contracted hours in a week (slightly higher than in 2005), including 32% who regularly work unpaid extra hours (slightly lower than in 2005)
- only 46% of staff had received an appraisal in the previous 12 months
- 12% of staff had experienced some sort of discrimination at work, the same as in 2005
- the percentage of staff suffering from work-related injuries has not changed since 2005, but the percentage suffering from work-related stress has decreased
- 28% of staff experienced physical violence from patients or their relatives, and 2% experienced physical violence from other staff – similar levels to previous years
- 48% of staff experienced bullying, harassment or abuse from patients or their relatives (compared with 43% in 2005), while 19% experienced this treatment from other staff
- 41% of staff had witnessed at least one potentially harmful error, near miss or incident in the 12 months before the survey – this figure has decreased substantially since 2003

\* The Isle of Wight NHS PCT was not included in this survey

## Working hours and overtime

Eighty-four per cent of staff regularly worked more than their contracted hours compared with 82% in 2005, 83% in 2004 and 84% in 2003 – which shows a slight increase over the previous year, but is generally fairly stable over time. Three quarters (75%) were paid for working extra hours, compared with 70% in 2005 and 72% in 2004, and the number of people working unpaid extra hours decreased to 32% (from 35% in 2005).

Fifty-three per cent of staff had taken advantage of flexible working in the previous 12 months (down from 56% in 2005). The most common types of flexible working among staff in ambulance trusts were annualised hours (26%) and flexi-time (16%).

## Appraisals

Forty-six per cent of staff in ambulance trusts had received an appraisal or performance development review in the previous 12 months, compared with 49% in 2005, 39% in 2004 and 40% in 2003. However, only 18% said that their appraisal helped them to improve how they worked, set clear objectives and left them feeling that their work was valued. This compares with 19% in 2005, 17% in 2004 and 20% in 2003.

## Discrimination

Twelve per cent of staff in ambulance trusts said they had experienced some form of discrimination at work in the previous 12 months (the same as in 2005).

In particular:

- 2% of men and 1% of women said they experienced discrimination because of their gender (2% and 4% in 2005 respectively)
- 3% of staff aged 51 or over said they experienced discrimination on the basis of their age (compared with 5% in 2005)

Due to the relatively low number of respondents from ambulance trusts, and the small proportion of respondents with a disability or from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, it was not possible to provide a reliable estimate of how many people experienced discrimination on the basis of disability or ethnicity.

## Injuries and stress

Thirty-six per cent of staff said they suffered work-related injury or illness during the previous 12 months. This figure had not changed since 2005.

The percentage of staff who said they suffered from work-related stress in the previous 12 months decreased again in 2006 to 33%. This is substantially lower than previous years, continuing the downward trend from 37% in 2004 and 2005, and 42% in 2003.

Work-related stress and moving and handling were the most common causes of injury or illness in the workplace. Other causes include injuries from needlesticks and sharps, slips, trips and falls, or exposure to dangerous substances.

## Job satisfaction

Fifty-six per cent of staff reported that they were generally satisfied with their jobs, compared with 58% in 2005, 59% in 2004 and 57% in 2003, a slight downward trend since 2004. This figure is based on the level of satisfaction that staff have with various aspects of their job, such as the recognition they receive for good work and the extent to which their work is valued by the trust.

## Violence and bullying

Twenty-eight per cent of staff in ambulance trusts experienced physical violence from patients or their relatives in the previous 12 months, compared with 27% in 2005, 30% in 2004 and 31% in 2003. Two per cent of staff experienced physical violence from other staff – this figure has not changed since 2003.

Forty-eight per cent of staff had experienced bullying, harassment or abuse from patients or their relatives in the previous 12 months - a substantial increase compared with 43% in 2005, and higher than the 46% seen in 2004 and 2003. The number of staff who said they experienced this kind of treatment from other staff also increased to 19%, in line with the findings of the 2003 survey (this figure had decreased to 17% in 2005 and 2004).

Eighty-seven per cent of staff said they knew how to report an incident of violence, bullying, harassment or abuse. However, only 60% of staff who had experienced physical violence, and only 44% of staff who had experienced bullying, harassment or abuse, reported it. These represent substantial decreases from 67% and 51% respectively seen in 2005.

## Errors, near misses and incidents

The percentage of staff who said that they had seen an error, near miss or incident in the previous 12 months continued to decrease. Forty-one per cent of staff said that they had seen at least one error, near miss or incident in 2006 that could have hurt staff or patients, compared with 47% in 2005, 49% in 2004 and 53% in 2003.

Eighty-three per cent said that the most recent error, near miss or incident they had seen had been reported (down slightly from 85% in 2005, but higher than 80% in 2004). Two-thirds (66%) also felt that their trust encouraged errors, near misses or incidents to be reported (compared with 68% in 2005), but only 37% felt that action was taken by their trust to prevent such events from happening again (compared with 39% in 2005).

## Hygiene and the control of infection

Just over half (52%) of staff said that hot water, soap, paper towels or alcohol rubs were always available when they needed them and 37% said they were always available to patients, suggesting a slight improvement in the availability of these items for staff (50% in 2005) but no change for patients (37%).

Sixty-seven per cent of staff had received training from their trust in the control of infection, the same as in 2005. However, only 36% had received this training in the previous 12 months, down from 40% in 2005.

## Next steps

All trusts have received their own results for this survey, along with detailed information about how their results compared with other trusts.

These findings will be used as part of our annual health check for 2006/2007, which assesses whether healthcare organisations are meeting the standards and targets set by Government.

The next national survey of NHS staff will be carried out in autumn 2007. We want to continue to capture the views and experiences of staff working in the NHS and we urge trusts to feed back the results of the survey to staff, along with details of the action being taken to address specific issues raised. Staff need to be assured that the results of the survey can lead to changes at a local level. You may like to consider presenting the results at team meetings or in newsletters for staff, placing your trust's feedback report on your intranet and regularly updating staff on the progress that has been made against specific actions.

Healthcare Commission  
Finsbury Tower  
103-105 Bunhill Row  
London EC1Y 8TG

Helpline 0845 601 3012  
Facsimile 020 7448 9222

Email [feedback@healthcarecommission.org.uk](mailto:feedback@healthcarecommission.org.uk)  
Website [www.healthcarecommission.org.uk](http://www.healthcarecommission.org.uk)

© 2007 Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection

This information is available in other formats and languages on request. Please telephone 0845 601 3012.

ENGLISH

આ માહિતી વિનંતી કરવાથી અન્ય રૂપે અને ભાષાઓમાં મળી શકે છે.  
મહેરબાની કરી ટેલિફોન નંબર 0845 601 3012 પર ફોન કરો.

GUJARATI

ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਬਿਨਤੀ ਕਰਨ 'ਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਰੂਪ 'ਚ ਅਤੇ ਜ਼ਬਾਨਾਂ 'ਚ ਮਿਲ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ।  
ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਟੈਲਿਫੋਨ ਨੰਬਰ 0845 601 3012 'ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

PUNJABI

यह जानकारी बिनती करने पर अन्य रूप में और भाषाओं में मिल सकती है।  
कृपया टैलिफोन नम्बर 0845 601 3012 पर फ़ोन करें।

HINDI

Akhbaartan waxaa lagu helaa iyadoo siyaabo iyo luqado kale ku qoran haddii la codsado. Fadlan soo wac lambarka telefoon ee ah 0845 601 3012.

SOMALI

Οι παρούσες πληροφορίες διατίθενται και σε άλλες μορφές ή γλώσσες εάν ζητηθεί.  
Τηλεφωνήστε στο 0845 601 3012

GREEK

المعلومات متاحة أيضاً لدى طلبها بعدد من الأشكال واللغات الأخرى.  
الرجاء الإتصال بهاتف رقم 0845 601 3012.

ARABIC

یہ معلومات درخواست کرنے پر دوسرے فارمیٹ یعنی شکلوں میں بھی دستیاب کی جاسکتی ہے۔  
برائے مہربانی فون کیجئے 0845 601 3012

URDU

如有需要，本信息还有其他格式和语言的版本。  
请致电 0845 601 3012。

CHINESE-SIMPLIFIED

如有需要，本信息還有其他格式和語言的版本。  
請致電 0845 601 3012。

CHINESE-TRADITIONAL

অনুরোধ করলে এই তথ্যগুলি অন্য ভাষা ও আকৃতিতে পাওয়া যাবে।  
অনুগ্রহ করে এই নাম্বারে ফোন করুন 0845 601 3012

BENGALI

Arzu edildiği takdirde bu bilgi değişik formatlarda ve dillerde verilebilir.  
Lütfen 0845 601 3012 numaralı telefonu arayınız.

TURKISH

Tin tức này có bằng những hình thức và ngôn ngữ khác theo yêu cầu.

Hãy gọi phôn số 0845 601 3012

VIETNAMESE

È possibile richiedere le presenti informazioni su altri supporti o in altre lingue. A tal fine, telefonare allo 0845 6013012.

ITALIAN

Informacje te są dostępne na życzenie w innych formatach i językach.  
Prosimy zadzwonić pod numer 0845 601 3012

POLISH

THIS DOCUMENT  
HAS BEEN DOWNLOADED  
FROM THE  
LONDON AMBULANCE SERVICE



BRANCH WEBSITE

VISIT

[WWW.LASUNISON.COM](http://WWW.LASUNISON.COM)

TO DOWNLOAD MORE

your friend at work

UNISON

