



The National QI Team believe passionately in the knowledge, creativity and commitment of staff. We also believe that because staff have a unique insight into the challenges of their services, they are often best placed to develop practical and sustainable solutions with people using our services.

## Why is staff engagement for quality important?

Staff Engagement is the greatest indicator of organisational performance. As well as being the ethos we want to create for our staff... where staff engagement is higher or services support staff wellbeing the results are:



(Dixon-Woods et al., 2014; Lowe, 2012; Lown & Manning, 2010; Macleod & Clarke, 2009; West & Dawson, 2012)

If you are interested in the welfare and experience of service users and staff, in improving clinical outcomes or productivity and cost management, then staff engagement is critical. International research tells us that staff engagement is an essential part of improving quality. It is a key driver on the Framework for Improving Quality in our Health Service and is intrinsically linked to the other drivers.

## Impact of engaging staff on leadership

Today, successful leaders encourage members of the team to work together to identify strategic goals and act on ideas to improve quality. However, as leaders begin to delegate autonomy of decision-making, their role changes. Conversations with staff about how they work together are essential and the leader becomes a central figure to help staff navigate and negotiate change. In this role, they guide the team as they learn new skills, emotionally connect with the purpose of their work and help staff realise their potential to take action and create a workplace where joy and meaning are central to how we work. It can be exciting and challenging, however, leaders may need support during this transition. When the day to day leadership style includes a focus on engaging staff in QI, we have the power to change culture.



Healthcare leaders, face unprecedented demands to provide a quality and safe service while providing value for money and still managing to engage and retain staff in a time of immense strategic and cultural change. To help them in this work, the National QI Team, in collaboration with the National Staff Engagement Forum launched 'A practical toolkit - Leadership Skills for Engaging Staff in Improving Quality' available on [www.staffengagement.ie](http://www.staffengagement.ie).

## How can this toolkit help?

At its simplest, engagement is meaningful conversation. This toolkit is designed to give you ideas on how to start the conversation. You will find out more about engagement, some ideas on how to engage staff on organisational priorities and things that are important to them and guidance on where you can get more information. We hope it will support you in your work.

## If you are visiting staff in their work place, some prompt questions for insight...

1. Do you feel you have an opportunity to share your ideas for improvement?
2. Are these ideas acted on and are you part of that?
3. If you could change anything here to improve the service, what would it be?
4. If you wanted me to experience one aspect of your work, what would it be?
5. Is there something else you'd like me to hear today?

### For more information

See [www.staffengagement.ie](http://www.staffengagement.ie) | follow #engaginghealthstaff or #QIreland on twitter | contact Juanita Guidera, QI Facilitator Staff Engagement for Quality [juanita.guidera@hse.ie](mailto:juanita.guidera@hse.ie) | 087 0642308 | @juanitaguidera

**Creating an organisation where together we have the potential and power to make a positive difference**

If you're interested in creating a culture where staff feel valued and have joy and meaning at work, we hope you'll find these insights on staff engagement helpful. We've included some simple but effective things you can do to improve your own engagement and that of your team.

## What is staff engagement?

**“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 makes a difference.”**

Definition of Staff Engagement National Staff Engagement Forum 2016

### What can you do to...

In addition to contributing to the broader conversation and through local projects, these are simple but helpful tips which improve engagement on a personal level. Often simple things work best! Our top tips for an engaged workforce!

1. Act with integrity
2. Encourage your team to get to know each other - meet in person where possible
3. Communicate - tell each other what's happening
4. Ask, listen, hear & respond - know what's important to colleagues
5. Trust each other - include people in decisions that affect them
6. Encourage each other to act on your ideas & be there to help each other
7. Take your breaks and look after your own wellbeing
8. Say thank you!!!



### Motivating for excellence

I am treated with dignity and respect

I am given tools to do work that adds meaning to my life

Someone notices and says thank you

*(adapted from Don Berwick, IHI)*

#### Get to know each other

Take time to get to know your colleague particularly times of transition. Don't underestimate the power of a cup of tea! Be social! Say hi, nod and smile as you pass someone in the corridor. Have fun! Join the social club or set one up.

#### Reconnect with the difference you make to people's lives

Do you know why your service is important to those who use it? Ask one patient or service user a week does it help and how and how would they make the service better.

#### Be kind to yourself...

Take your breaks! So many staff give up their breaks. Do you know you'll be more effective after a short break than working through?

#### Communication

Take 10 minutes some day and ask colleagues how together you could improve communication between professionals on your team to share knowledge, raise concerns, celebrate success and make improvements.



### Why does staff engagement matter?

Where staff engagement is higher or services are seen to be supporting staff wellbeing the results are:

- lower patient mortality
- reductions in the number of incidents
- improved clinical care
- improved patient experience
- improved staff wellbeing
- lower absenteeism rates, and
- improved staff retention.

It's for these reasons that staff engagement is a key driver of the Framework for Improving Quality in Our Health Service and the People Strategy.

### Key Components for Staff Engagement Prompt Questions for Action

#### Listening

What are we doing to value staff ideas  
*(asking, listening to and hearing what's important to staff)?*

#### Action using creative problem solving

How do we encourage staff to act on their ideas  
*(create space for creativity and innovation)?*

#### Teamwork in a culture of respect and integrity

How do we encourage teamwork and say thank you to build trust?

#### Health and wellbeing

How do we help ourselves and our staff manage the emotional impact of care?

#### Continuous learning and development

What training do we personally need to engage staff for quality improvement?

#### Coaching and mentoring

How do you prepare yourself to encourage staff to act on their ideas and share decision making? How do you share ownership?

*Adapted from the Framework for Improving Quality in Our Health Service*

### People Caring with People - Engage Listen Inspire Act Share

For more information search [www.staffengagement.ie](http://www.staffengagement.ie) or follow our work on twitter using #engaginghealthstaff and #QIreland

For more information about the National Staff Engagement Forum click: <https://www.hse.ie/eng/staff/staff-engagement/>