

## BOARD MEETING

<b>Title</b>	Annual Staff Survey		
<b>Paper Date:</b>	29 August 2025	<b>Board Meeting Date:</b>	09 September 2025
<b>Purpose:</b>	Decision	<b>Agenda Item:</b>	11
<b>Author:</b>	<i>Joe Smart</i>	<b>Exec Lead/ Senior Responsible Officer:</b>	<i>Sandra Grant</i>

### Executive Summary

The BOB Executive Management Team, NHS Frimley Executive Management Team and Joint Transition Executives (JTE), have agreed that the national annual staff survey should not be run in 2025. This agreement was made after thoughtful consideration of the ICB's current priorities and resources. Both organisations remain committed to hearing from our staff and will continue to explore other ways to gather valuable feedback and insights throughout the year.

For ICBs, CSUs and other arm's length bodies such as NHS England, participation in the staff survey is voluntary but encouraged. It is thus proposed that BOB ICB should not run the Staff Survey this year based on the rationale and implications of this approach below:

- The staff survey is run in quarter three of each financial year, which is when we may, to be confirmed, be consulting on the future structure of the Thames Valley (TV) ICB. This context will mean that the experience captured in the survey will reflect the transition over wider sentiment.
- The change programme is due to conclude in 25/26 with a new ICB organisation set up from April 2026. This means that the Staff Survey outcome report will land in March 2026, meaning there will not be a reasonable timeline for either ICB to respond and action feedback. The survey will also not be able to be segmented by those who are joining the new ICB and those who have left either organisation.
- There is limited HR & OD capacity to be able to run the Staff Survey at present, their attention and focus will be helping to run the change programme.

The Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) and Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) form a key part of our statutory workforce reporting obligations and directly support the workforce equality, diversity, and inclusion elements of the National Performance Assurance Framework (NPAF). While the national staff survey will not run in 2025, BOB ICB will continue to collect and monitor workforce engagement metrics.

### Proposed Approach to Capture Staff Experience

To ensure the ICB continues gathering meaningful staff experience insights during 2025, the proposal is a dual approach: leveraging existing workforce data and introducing a new and locally managed survey (based on the national staff survey). This will allow the ICBs to maintain continuity with previous years and prepare for the formal NHS Staff Survey cycle restarting in 2026. The questionnaire will launch around the same time as the national survey and will run for 4 weeks.

### New Light Touch Survey

To complement existing data we will develop a shorter locally managed survey which will be conducted once in Q3. This questionnaire will be modelled on key questions from the NHS Staff

Survey ensuring alignment with the People Promise themes. This will allow us to maintain thematic consistency and enable comparison with previous years, while also acting as a bridge to the 2026 survey cycle.

The number of questions will be reduced from the 100+ questions to streamline the questionnaire while still maintaining the required level of detail needed to allow comparison with 2024 data and then into the future for 2026 data. The aim is that it should take 10-15 minutes to complete for staff.

The in-house survey will:

- Focus on core questions that reflect the People Promise themes.
- Utilise existing engagement technology i.e. Microsoft Forms but ensure robust standards for confidentiality are maintained.
- Use simplified response formats (e.g. positive/negative) to enable faster analysis.
- Be shorter and less burdensome for staff.
- Be deployed at strategic points during the ICB change programme to capture timely feedback.

This approach will give the OD team greater control over the timing and analysis of results, allowing insights to be fed directly into organisational design work continuing into Q4 of 2025/26.

It is important to note that this approach will not replicate the full depth of the national survey. We will lose the ability to break down responses by the full range of protected characteristics, job role, band and directorate. As a result, we will not be able to complete WRES or WDES reporting for 2025. However, by keeping the questions asked the same as the national survey then the analysis in 2026 and beyond will provide the Thames Valley ICB a clear picture of its staff engagement.

These shorter, more agile surveys will be designed to capture meaningful feedback on staff experience, perceptions, and inclusion, ensuring that we maintain visibility of key indicators, meet compliance requirements, and inform continuous improvement during the change programme.

Reporting – has this paper been discussed at other meetings		
Committee Name	Date discussed	Outcome
Joint Team Executive	2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2025	The JTE were supportive of a lighter touch approach involving targeted pulse surveys designed to fulfil compliance and statutory reporting obligations
BOB Executive Team	21 <sup>st</sup> July 2025	The Executive Management Team noted the paper recognising that the potential risk of not conducting a staff survey in 2025 would be mitigated through targeted pulse surveys.
NHS Frimley Executive Team	21 <sup>st</sup> July 2025	The Executive Team noted the commitment to staff engagement during the change programme and proposed that consideration be given to run a staff experience of

		change survey as a baseline in April 2026.
BOB People Committee	23 <sup>rd</sup> July 2025	The People Committee acknowledged the paper and approved its submission to the Board for decision.
NHS Frimley Board	19 August 2025	NHS Frimley Board endorsed the proposal not to run the annual staff survey.

### Risk and Assurance

Not having the national survey will mean that the highly valued intersectionality data will not be available for 2025. However, the short form survey that has been developed will mitigate some of the risk as the same questions will be used to allow comparison with 2024 data and with key metrics around bullying and perceptions of fairness.

Completion of the Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES and Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) relies primarily on two key data sources Electronic Staff Record (ESR) metrics and the annual staff survey. The ESR elements can still be completed which will provide some insight and resulting improvement planning.

To further mitigate the risk the ICB will include targeted engagement initiatives and a tailored pulse survey focused on WRES and WDES themes, ensuring continued visibility of staff experiences and data trends.

### Financial Impact and Legal implications

None noted.

### Action Required

The Board is asked to approve the recommendations made by the Joint Transition Executive (JTE) and BOB Executive Management Team which is to endorse the alternative staff engagement approach, acknowledging the mitigation measure in place to meet the Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES), Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) reporting requirements and National Performance Assurance Framework (NPAF).

<b>Conflicts of Interest:</b>	No conflict identified
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<b>Date/Name of Committee/ Meeting, Where Last Reviewed:</b>	See list within Executive summary
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