



# The view from within

## NHS staff views on the reforms



## Background

The way the NHS works in England is changing. The Government's Health and Social Care Act became law in March 2012. New bodies are currently being set up and a substantial amount of new policy, regulation and guidance is being developed.

The main aims of the reforms are to:

- put patients at the centre of the NHS
- shift responsibility for public health to local authorities
- put emphasis on local decision making
- strengthen clinical leadership, particularly of commissioning
- create a shift from NHS provided to NHS-funded care
- focus on quality and improving outcomes
- provide greater plurality of provision and competitive market place
- focus on improving accountability of the NHS

Strategic health authorities and primary care trusts will be abolished and responsibility for budget will fall to local authorities through the creation of local health and wellbeing boards made up of GPs and other clinicians.

## Report summary

NHS staff are negative about the reforms and have many concerns over cost, quality of care, a fragmented NHS, job losses and training and the general disorganisation of the change.

**Cost:** The reforms will not bring the desired financial savings

**Quality of care:** Cost savings will lead to shortcuts. The most vulnerable will suffer and quality of care received will be dependent on where you live

**Fragmentation:** Splits in commissioning will lead to confusion over responsibility and commissioning will be less cohesive meaning that it will be harder to monitor practices

**Job losses and training:** The number of trainees will reduce, putting added pressure on those left working for the NHS. Due to cuts, staff left will be under more pressure which will affect the quality of their work

**Disorganisation:** The changes are complex and many NHS staff do not fully understand them, meaning that the public will find them even harder to understand. Communication has been poor and the future of the reforms is unclear

...much less is said about the impact on those involved with health service delivery and how they feel about changes

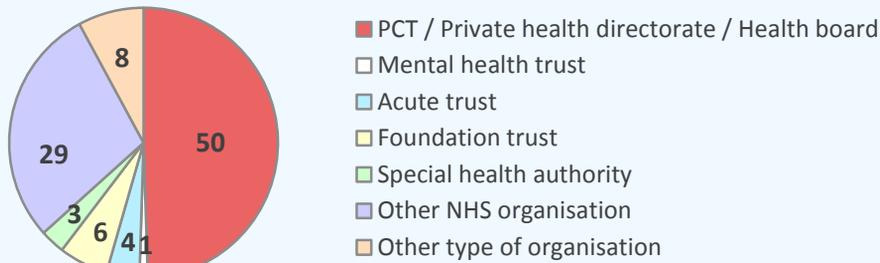


## Objectives and demographics

Looking at media coverage, it seems that most of the current focus on the NHS reforms is around the impact on patients and service users, but much less is said about the impact on those involved with health service delivery and how they feel about changes

**mrug** research conducted a short survey among NHS staff with regard to the NHS reforms and their impact on health service provision at an individual and organisational level

111 NHS Staff responded from a range of NHS organisations



Source: 5: Which of the following best describes the organisation you work for?  
Base: All respondents 111

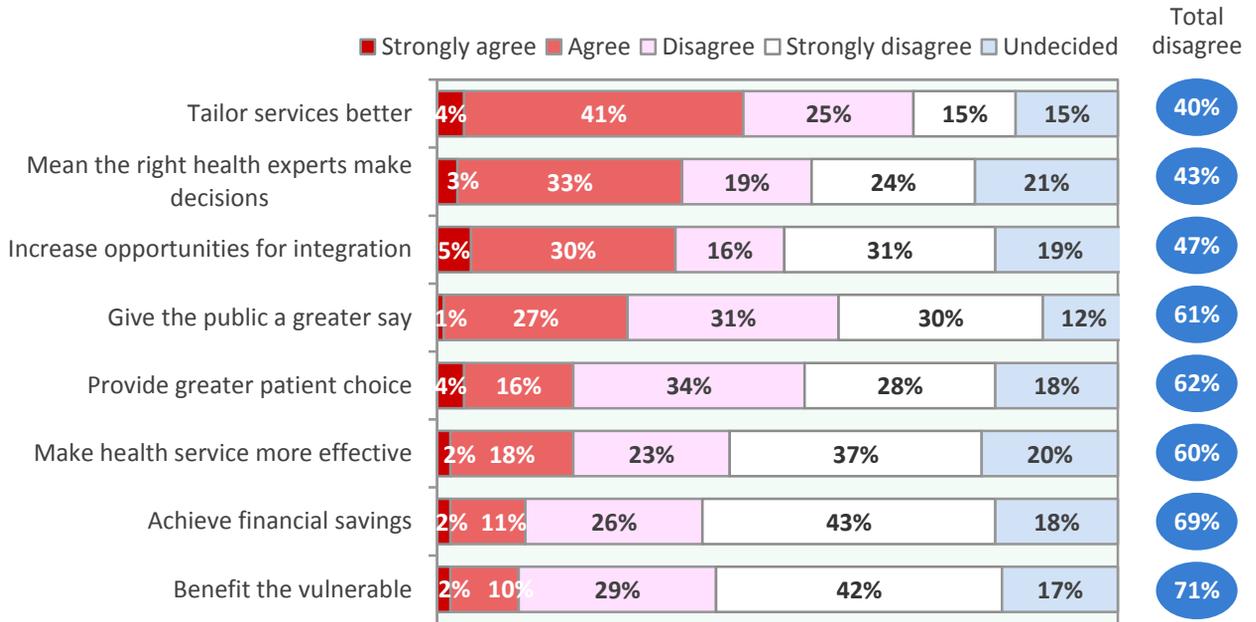
## Questions asked of NHS staff

1. To what extent do you agree with the following statements. NHS reforms will ...?
2. Which of the following concern you with regard to the reforms?  
And which represents your single biggest concern?
3. To what extent do you feel you clearly understand how the NHS reforms will impact on ...
  - a) Your job role?
  - b) Your organisation?
4. Do you have any further comments that you would like to make about the NHS reforms?
5. Which of the following best describes the organisation you work for.....?



## NHS reforms will....

Overwhelmingly, there is disagreement that the reforms will have any sort of positive impact with nearly 70% disagreeing that the NHS reforms will achieve the desired financial savings and more than 70% believing that they will not benefit the vulnerable. However, most agreement comes in believing that the reforms will provide an opportunity to tailor services better to each local community

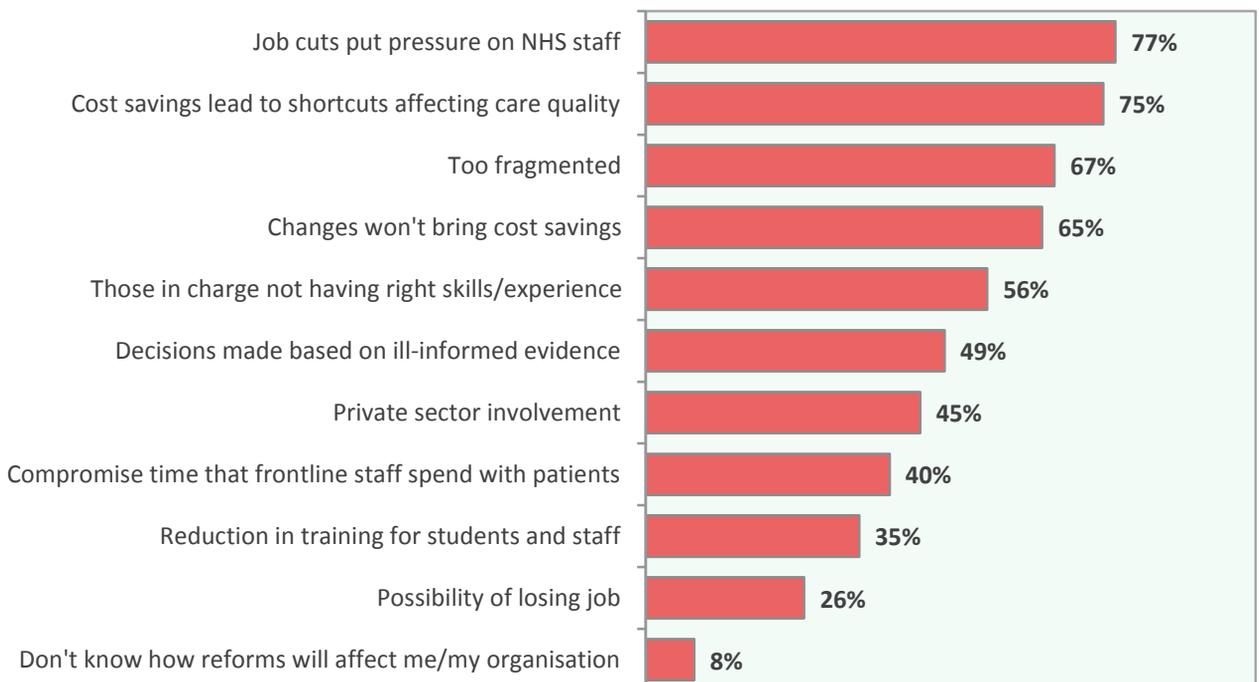


Source: 1: To what extent do you agree with the following statements. NHS reforms will....?

Base: All respondents 111

## Concerns with regard to the reforms

Everyone in the sample has a concern of some sort. The main ones being that job cuts will put pressure on NHS staff, that cost savings will affect quality of care and that the NHS will become too fragmented



Source: 2: Which of the following concern you with regard to the reforms?

Base: All respondents 111

## Other concerns that staff have over the reforms

- The other concerns that staff have are very varied
- There is concern over fragmentation within the NHS with public and private services becoming even more divided which will disadvantage those who cannot afford private health care
- With care being delivered on a more local level the quality of care that people receive will depend on where they live. People will not have equal access to the best services
- Changes within the NHS are common and it is felt that these changes are not given sufficient time to become transformational
- There is concern over the role of the GP; that they might become overworked and that too much money will be going into GP practices at the loss of other care providers
- Staff might become overworked and with job losses people are taking any job going meaning that their enthusiasm for their job might not be at the level that it was before the reform



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*“Through constant change and restructuring, **knowledge and skills are lost** and the new organisations are taking too long to be delivering the transformational change required to really make a difference”*

*“**Private -public divide will further fragment services.** Vocal middle class will negotiate services, frail (silent) elderly will be disadvantaged further. This is already happening - I can provide examples”*

*“I strongly feel that NHS **changes are not allowed to run for long enough to fully develop.** PCT's were beginning to achieve real health gains which will now be disrupted. **Public health runs the real risk of being watered down** to being no longer effective in a local authority setting”*

*“We are going back to issues surrounding **post code lotteries** and smaller hospitals will not have the resources to survive which will result in them being down sized”*

*“Work is moving to GPs as cheaper than secondary care. This is acceptable, however care by GPs isn't free, so relevant funding must move from secondary care to GPs. Currently **work is moving into primary care, without adequate funding, this leads to stressed and overworked GPs** who are beginning to think of early retirement/another career!”*

*“**They waste money changing things** all the time. Things are changed just so someone can sit at a desk and get paid lots of money to think up new things to get the staff to do that does not involve the patients care”*

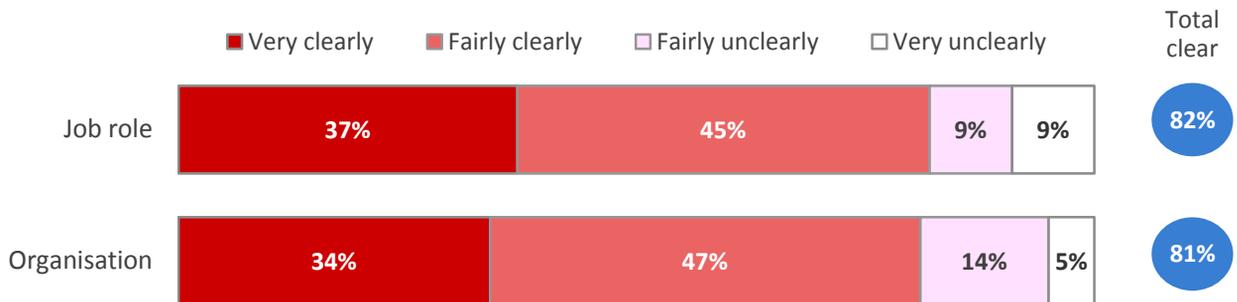
*“The pressure on clinical and non clinical staff are at critical levels and it feels as if **the whole system will fall apart without extra staff funding**”*

*“GPs will **lose the trust** that they have previously had”*

*“Staff are taking any job going, meaning more **staff in positions that they don't truly value**”*

# Extent to which staff understand how the NHS reforms will impact on them and their organisation

Generally staff feel that they do understand how the reforms will impact on them and their organisation



Source: 3: To what extent do you feel you clearly understand how the NHS reforms will impact on.....  
 Base: All respondents 111

## Further comments

Staff were asked whether they had any further comments to make about the NHS reforms.  
 62/111 made a comment

- Quality of care**
  - Public will be affected by the changes
  - Affect size will depend on where you live
- Role of the GP**
  - GP's should be involved but the risk is that they will become overworked
- Costs**
  - Costs are already tight
  - Concern over how the reforms will save costs
- Fragmentation**
  - Difficulties in coordinating and integrating services
- Staff**
  - Job cuts putting pressure on the NHS
  - Loss of commitment to the new NHS
  - Lack of training
- Disorganisation**
  - Poor communication
  - Lack of understanding



Source: 4: Do you have any further comments that you would like to make about the NHS reforms?  
 Base: All respondents 111

## Further comments – Quality of care

- Quality of care will depend on the area that you live in and the size of your GP practice
- There is a concern that the NHS will be taken over by private investors which will leave those who cannot afford private care in a very vulnerable position
- GPs and pharmacists may disengage meaning that their jobs will have to be replaced by less able health care providers
- The changes have been, and continue to be, stressful and confusing for the staff who may let it affect their ability to do their job effectively



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*“The new proposed NHS reforms I feel will be the demise of the NHS as we all know it. Giving GP's more power in controlling budgets is not the answer to provide any cost savings. What will happen is we will revert to a post code lottery and depending on how big and successful your GP practice is will depend on the care you receive. GP's need to provide more resources for their own patients instead of relying on referring them straight to acute services which are already at breaking point!”*

*“The NHS Commissioning Board is not a fit for purpose organisation - very top heavy, and the loss of the knowledge of experienced staff at lower grades will negatively impact on patient care and system continuity”*

*“I am counting the years until I retire - we are blindly heading for a UK version of the US ‘for profit’. I fear for anyone who won't be able to afford the inevitable top ups”*

*“Fragmentation of public health services and concern over potential lower payments for services by LAs may mean GPs and pharmacists disengage and other less skilled providers will provide with poorer care”*

*“The road to these changes has already led to detriments in patient care and increased stress for staff this will only make it worse and introduce a 2 tier system into the NHS”*

*“All the other changes for the reforms are likely to further fragment the NHS, create confusion and leave the NHS open to private investors to step in and profit, and ultimately those whom are poorest and most vulnerable will be the greatest losers”*

*“I am worried that from April 2013, progress will simply halt whilst people try and work out what their new jobs/ organisations do. This is unfair on patients and could have been avoided through better planning about how organisations transition into new structures”*

## Further comments – The role of the GP

- GP's are being put under ever increasing pressure to provide care for people. They may become overloaded with work and therefore will be unable to give the time and attention to the people that really need it
- However there is also agreement that GP's should be more involved in patient care and should be able to make more decisions however there is a belief that this change could have been achieved without a complete upheaval of the NHS



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*“The pressure that is already being put on GP surgeries is ENORMOUS and patients have absolutely no idea – they don't know what the reforms are and they don't know how it will/is impact services”*

*“GP commissioning leads are already struggling with the demands of their responsibilities. The expectation that clinicians will be involved in every stage of commissioning will over load”*

*“The spirit of the reforms is correct - to engage GPs as gatekeepers and decision makers in people's care and the public in shaping the direction of travel for health services”*

*“The involvement of clinicians is appropriate but this could have been achieved more easily without a complete upheaval”*

Source: 4: Do you have any further comments that you would like to make about the NHS reforms?

Base: All respondents 111

## Further comments – Costs

- There is concern that there will be a lack of investment in local area teams meaning that local area care providers will struggle to provide optimum care
- Some feel that the NHS is being completely ruined in order to make a few cost savings
- Local authorities are already short of money so by having to take on the responsibility of providing care they will struggle even more to allocate funding appropriately



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*“Lack of investment in clinical advisers in the LAT will mean LPNs will struggle and other contractors (pharmacists, dentists and optometrists) will be disadvantaged”*

*“Motivation is low, time pressure is enormous, funding is falling. We have a world class health service, yes it needs to be made more affordable & efficient, but lets not crucify it at the alter of cost saving!”*

*“The basic principle behind the current changes is good, but not the way they are being implemented. All local authorities are short of money yet are being expected to take on public health departments which do not immediately marry”*

*“The reforms are fundamentally sound from the premise of giving the decision making to the clinicians, but the emphasis being placed on saving money means that they will not be able to make the appropriate decisions to provide excellent and, more importantly, safe health care”*

*“With the new structure under experienced people move to higher bands and make unviable decisions. They spend more money in management than before by cutting cost on front line staff”*

Source: 4: Do you have any further comments that you would like to make about the NHS reforms?

Base: All respondents 111

## Further comments – Fragmentation

- Coordination and integration of services will be more difficult after the reform. There will be splits in commissioning between all of the health care bodies which will lead to confusion over responsibility
- There is confusion over how replacing PCTs with fragmented bodies will lead to cost savings
- Commissioning will be less cohesive meaning that it will be harder to monitor GP's



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*“Given that they are taking away PCTs and health Authorities to apparently reduce the amount of bureaucracy and cost etc., they have replaced them with even more organisations who are more fragmented and I cannot see how these organisations will cost less to run than the old ones. The same people are doing the same jobs just organised differently”*

*“Fragmentation of the system is going to make the coordination and integration of services that much harder. Splits in commissioning between CCGs, NCB LATs, LAs with the involvement of CSS's, DMICs, PHE and Clinical Senates will inevitably lead to confusion of responsibility”*

*“Services will become increasingly fragmented; changes instigated to improve care pathways will be difficult to implement as commissioning becomes less cohesive. GP's were previously difficult to challenge in terms of improving practice; the new structures make this worse, not better”*

## Further comments – Staff cuts, jobs and training

- Good managers have been lost due to the reforms
- There is upset over having to make job cuts to good and dedicated employees
- The number of trainees has reduced which will put added pressure on those who are still working for the NHS
- Previously dedicated staff are losing commitment and motivation since the reform. Some have quit their jobs and taken their services elsewhere which will cost the NHS in terms of the quality of care that it can provide
- Some staff feel that they are having to undertake unnecessary and time consuming training



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*“Health inequalities will get worse, the NHS was addressing quality and efficiency already, this reform has cost not saved. Staff are devastated at the cuts they are having to make undoing years of good work. Staff are traumatised having to make ill-moral actions, it is not about staff pay but the destruction of something that was largely working and getting better with a dedicated workforce”*

*“The reforms have cost the experience, commitment and motivation of dedicated staff - who in many cases have taken their knowledge elsewhere. This is loss of vital resources and capabilities, and has been overlooked”*

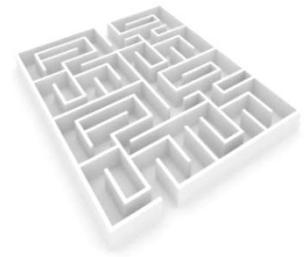
*“The risk to front line services is already evident. There are not enough new clinical trainees i.e. nurses, allied health professionals, pathologists, radiologist etc. coming into the service. Diagnostics are still well below standard and delay patient pathways”*

*“The bill should not have been passed, good managers have been lost and continue to be lost to the NHS reforms and the commissioners in the CCGs have little or no experience of commissioning health services for their localities nor the experience in managing the finances to achieve this. A complete debacle”*

*“The staff are expected to complete mountains of unnecessary and irrelevant training that does not help the patient but is there to merely tick a box so that managers get paid more money”*

## Further comments – Disorganisation

- The general consensus is that the changes have come about too quickly and have therefore been very disorganised
- However others feel that the process is being drawn out for too long and that the actual implementation of the restructure should be more swift
- The changes are very complex, some NHS staff do not fully understand them so it will seem even more complex to the general public
- Communication has been poor and projects are started without being finished. The future of the reforms is unclear and staff would like more guidance and direction



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*“I have worked for the NHS for in excess of 15 years, so to date have been through 4 re-organisations (you get used to it, it's par for the course, I'm not against reform or change full stop) and this is by far the most disorganised and chaotic so far. To call it a pigs ear would be doing pigs ears a great disservice”*

*“We have a fragmented system , communication is poor across the patch. Projects are started then loose pace . we need honesty and direction. The future is unclear as we are not investing in staff just paper work and targets that will never be achieved What a mess!”*

*“It's taking a long time for the new restructure to come out. I appreciate being part of the process but would like it to move more quickly. It's like a slow death”*

*“Employee's don't fully understand all the changes, so I think the public will not understand them until the changes are fully in place. I think this lack of understanding is a result of the complexity of the organisational structures being introduced. More money will be spent than saved eventually. Being told you are being consulted but never actually being listened to is extremely frustrating”*

*“Extensive reforms are needed but need a little more time to introduce; there is a danger that the speed of the reforms will "trip up" the process and then be 'accused' of failing. "Less haste more speed!”*

*“Lots of organisational restructuring pain with no obvious advantage from doing it! I'm not affected in any way shape or form nor politically influenced”*



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