

NHS Staff Survey 2020

National results briefing



2020 National results briefing

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- 3 The Covid-19 pandemic



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1. Introduction



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- The NHS Staff Survey is one of the largest workforce surveys in the world and has been conducted every year since 2003.
- It asks NHS staff in England about their experiences of working for their respective NHS organisations (the core questionnaire can be downloaded from the link below).
- The survey provides essential information to employers and national stakeholders about staff experience across the NHS in England.
- Participation is mandatory for trusts and voluntary for non-trust organisations (CCGs, CSUs, social enterprises). The survey does not cover primary care staff.
- This report provides a concise summary of key national results.
- Detailed national and local (organisation-level) results are also available through the links provided below.



[2020 Core
questionnaire](#)



[National results](#)



[Local results](#)

Participation



595,270

staff responded
(up from 569,440 in 2019)



543,105

online responses
(up from 470,288 in 2019)



52,165

paper responses
(down from 99,152 in 2019)

47%

response rate
(down from 48% in 2019)

Note: These are overall figures which include trusts and non-trust organisations.

- Over 1.2 million NHS employees in England were invited to participate in the survey between September and December 2020.
- 280 NHS organisations took part, including all 220 trusts in England.
- Staff were sent either an email containing a link to the online survey or a paper questionnaire.
- Despite the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the survey used the same methodology and timings as in previous years with the majority of questions asked in the same way in order to maintain comparability of the trend data and thus provide an indication of the impact of the pandemic on NHS staff.
- The survey was nationally administered by the **Survey Coordination Centre**, based at **Picker**, on behalf of **NHS England and NHS Improvement**.

How has the survey mode changed over the last 5 years?

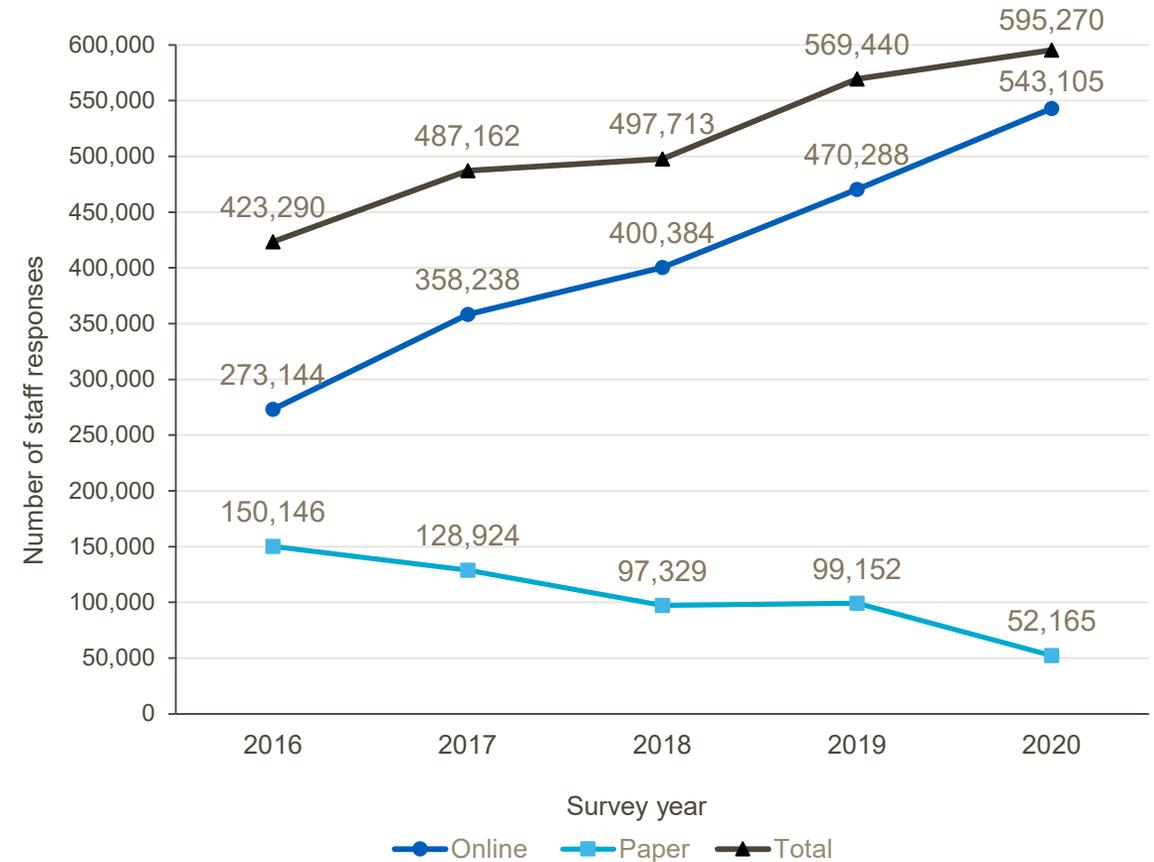
The graph on the right highlights that online completion of the survey has been steadily increasing since 2016. In 2020, 543,105 staff responded online, around double the number who completed the survey online in 2016 (273,144).

Since 2019, the number of staff responding on paper has almost halved while the number responding online has increased by more than 70,000:

- Paper: 2019: 99,152
2020: 52,165
- Online: 2019: 470,288
2020: 543,105



Mode of survey completion over the last 5 years



Note: for the first time in 2020, some staff who received the survey on paper were given the option to complete it online

2. Technical details



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- The **results presented in this report only cover the 220 NHS trusts that took part in the survey**. Organisations that participated voluntarily are excluded from the national results because we do not have representative data for these types of organisations.
- Data in this report have been weighted to adjust for differences in occupational group proportions between trusts and for differences in trust size¹, except where otherwise stated. Base sizes are presented unweighted.
- Ten summary indicators referred to as ‘themes’ have been created from the responses to certain individual survey questions. These have been calculated for previous years where possible.
- All themes are scored on a scale that ranges from 0 (worst) to 10 (best). Sections 4-13 of this report are focused on results relating to each of these themes.
- All figures reported are results for 2020, unless otherwise indicated.
- Further information about the technical details of the survey and the result outputs can be found in the [Technical Document](#).

NATIONAL RESULTS NHS trusts in England



579,400 responses from
staff at NHS trusts
47% response rate

¹ NB The weighting does not adjust for differences in the occupation group profile of any of the subgroups of staff reported in this document (e.g. redeployed staff, staff who were shielding etc.). This may affect the comparability of the results of these subgroups.

3. The Covid-19 pandemic



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Working in Covid-19 specific areas

34.2% of staff had worked on a Covid-19 specific ward or area at any time (q20a)



- This proportion was highest within Acute/Acute & Community Trusts (39.3%) and lower amongst staff working in Community Trusts (21.1%) and Mental Health / Learning Disability Trusts or Combined MH/LD and Community Trusts (19.3%)

Working remotely / from home

36.0% of staff had been required to work remotely / from home (q20c)



- Working remotely was most common amongst staff working in Mental Health / Learning Disability Trusts or Combined MH/LD and Community Trusts (64.3%) and those working in Community Trusts (61.5%)
- Staff in Ambulance Trusts were least likely to have worked remotely (18.1%)

Redeployment

18.5% of staff had been redeployed due to the Covid-19 pandemic (q20b)



- This proportion was highest within Acute/Acute & Community Trusts (20.6%) and lowest in Ambulance Trusts (11.9%) and Mental Health / Learning Disability Trusts or Combined MH/LD and Community Trusts (11.7%)

Shielding

10.4% of staff had been shielding, either for themselves and/or for a member of their household (q20d)



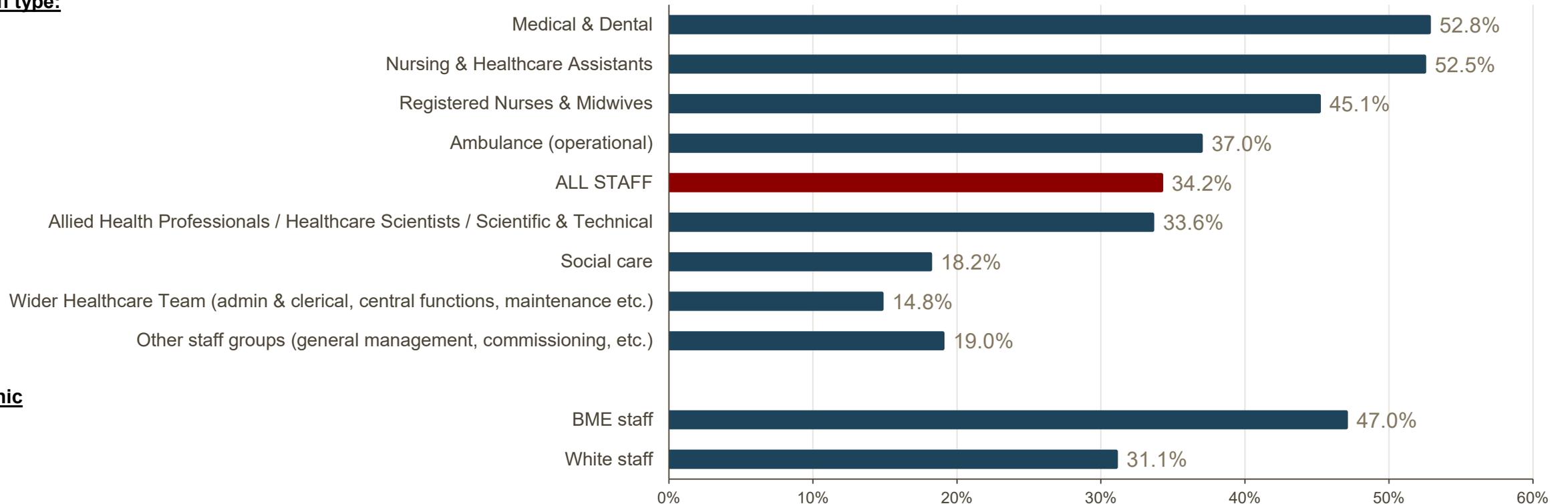
- 7.4% had been shielding for themselves
- 3.6% had been shielding for a member of their household

Who worked on a Covid-19 specific ward or area during the pandemic?

34.2% of staff reported having worked on a Covid-19 specific ward or area (q20a). Those working in clinical and patient-facing roles were more likely to report having worked in a Covid-19 area and staff from BME backgrounds were more likely to have done so than white staff.

% of staff who worked on a Covid-19 specific ward or area (q20a)

Staff type:



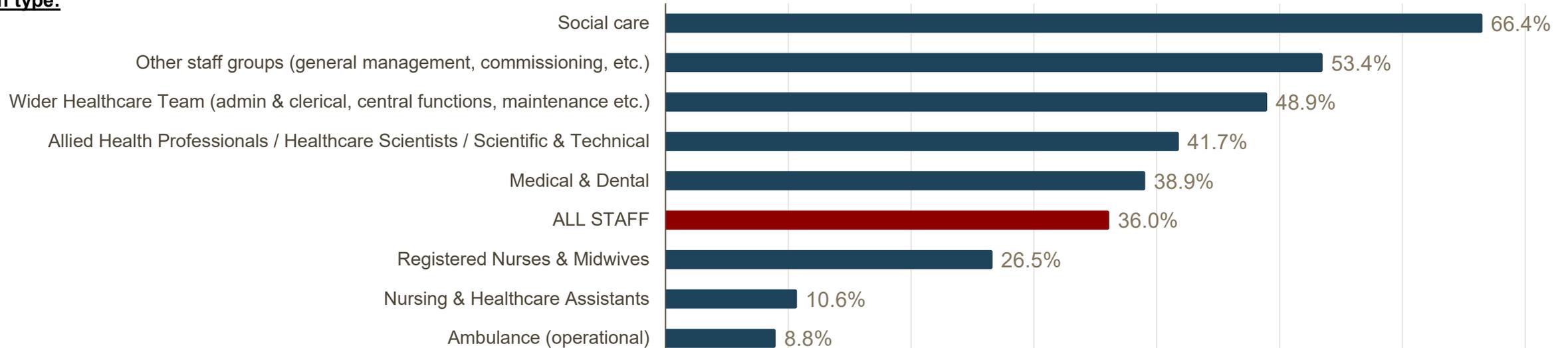
Ethnic

Which staff were required to work remotely/from home as a result of the pandemic?

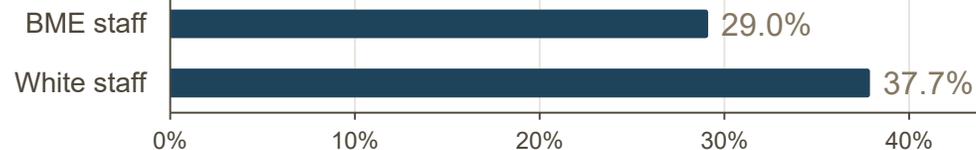
36.0% of staff were required to work remotely/from home due to the Covid-19 pandemic (q20c). The graph below shows how this proportion varied by occupation and ethnic background.

% of staff required to work remotely/from home due to the Covid-19 pandemic (q20c)

Staff type:



Ethnic



4. Health & wellbeing



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Theme score: 6.1, which is higher than in previous years (5.9 in 2018/2019 and 6.0 in 2016/2017)

Organisational work on health & wellbeing

57.0% of staff were satisfied with the opportunities for flexible working (q5h)



- This measure has steadily improved since 2016 (51.8%) with a notable increase this year (54% in 2019)
- Improvements were seen across all trust types

33.4% said their trust definitely takes positive action on health & wellbeing (q11a)



- This measure has improved considerably since 2019 (29.3%)
- Improvements were seen across all trust types this year
- Remains highest in Community Trusts (41.9%) and lowest in Ambulance Trusts (25.7%)

Staff health

44.0% reported feeling unwell as a result of work related stress in the last 12 months (q11c)



- This measure has seen a marked increase this year (40.3% in 2019) and has increased steadily since 2016 (36.8%)
- Increases were sharpest in Acute/Acute & Community Trusts and Acute Specialist Trusts

29.3% experienced musculoskeletal problems (MSK) as a result of work activities in the last 12 months (q11b)



- This is higher than last year (28.0% in 2019) and has increased steadily since 2016 (25.2%)

Working when ill

46.4% said they have gone to work in the last three months, despite not feeling well enough to perform their duties (q11d). This is notably fewer than in previous years (56.6% in 2019)



What proportion of NHS staff work additional unpaid hours (q10c)?

While over half of **staff continue to work additional unpaid hours** on a weekly basis (55.2%), this proportion declined between 2018 (58.0%) and 2019 (55.9%) and has continued to decline this year.

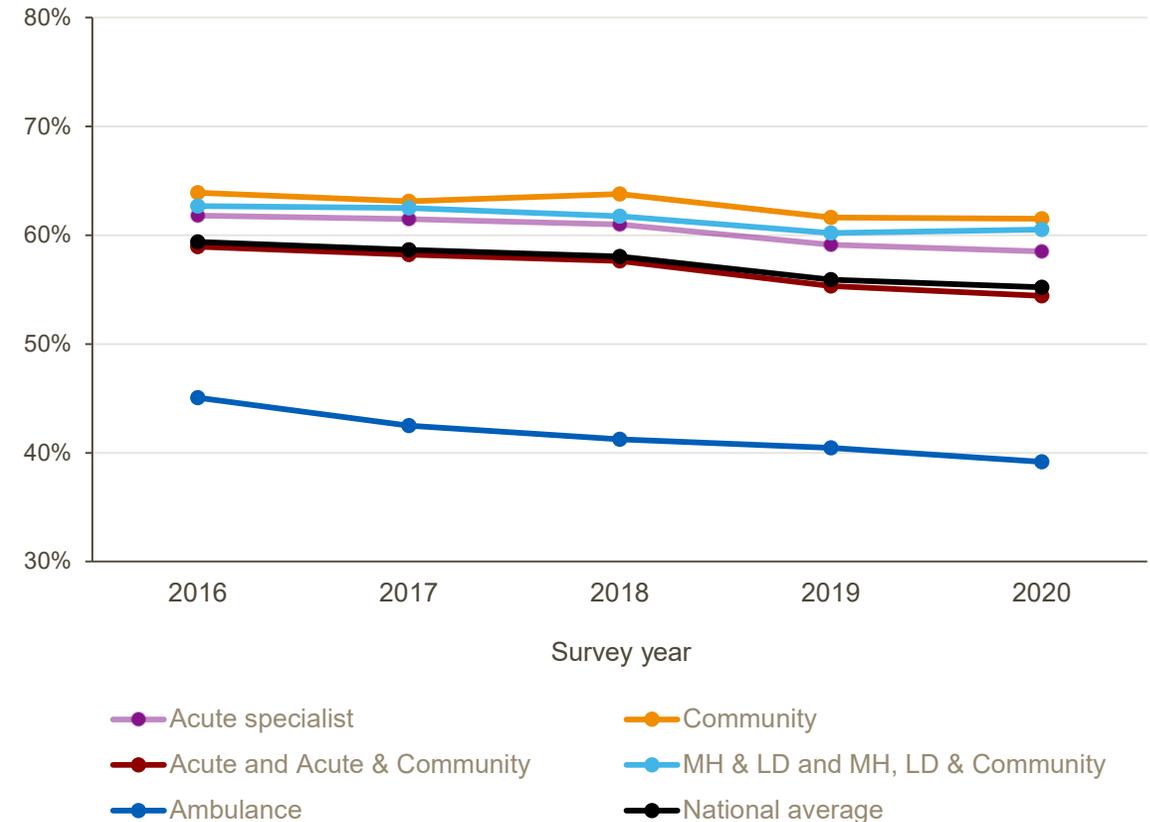
Nationally there has been a steady year on year decline in this measure over several years, with the proportion falling from 59.4% in 2016.

A decline was observed this year in all trust types except Mental Health / Learning Disability Trusts (including Combined MH/LD and Community Trusts) where there was a slight increase between 2019 and 2020 (from 60.2% to 60.5%) (see chart).

The proportion of staff working additional unpaid hours remains above the national average in Community, Mental Health / Learning Disability and Acute Specialist Trusts.



% of staff working additional unpaid hours (q10c)



5. Morale



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Theme score: **6.2**, which is unchanged from 2019 (6.2)

Stress factors

Relationships

- 71.4%** said they receive the respect they deserve from their colleagues (q4j), slightly less than in 2019 (72.3%)
- 70.3%** said their immediate manager encourages them at work (q8a). This is a little lower than in 2019 (70.9%)
- 47.1%** said relationships at work are never or rarely strained (q6c). This measure has improved year on year since it was introduced in 2018 (45.1%)

Ways of working

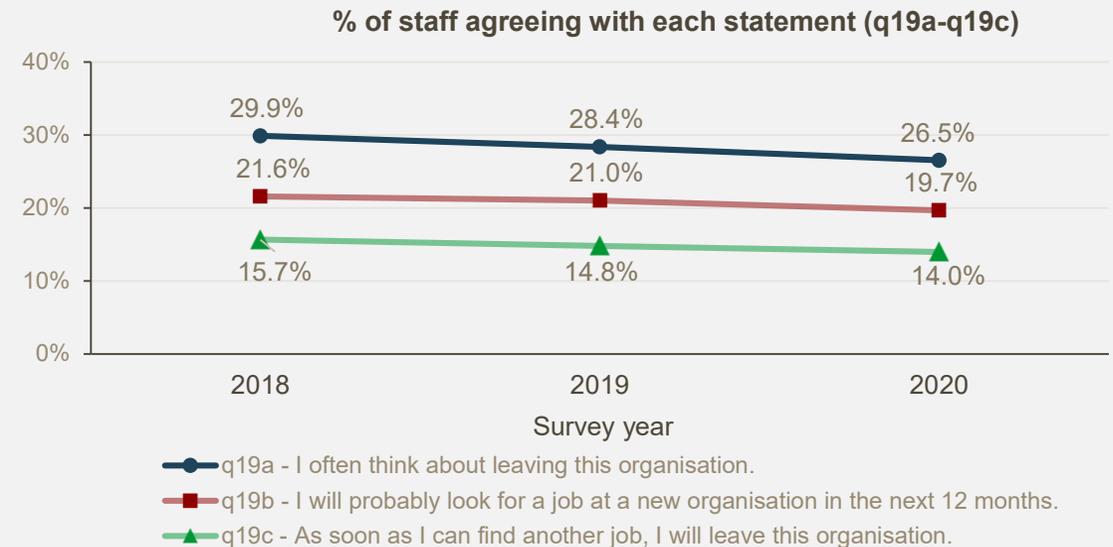
- 50.1%** are involved in deciding on changes introduced that affect their work (q4c). This has deteriorated since 2019 (52.0%)
- 55.7%** often or always have a choice in deciding how to do their work (q6b) (56.0% in 2019)
- 25.3%** never or rarely have unrealistic time pressures (q6a), which represents an improvement since 2019 (22.9%)

Thinking about leaving

The following percentage of staff said they...

- 26.5%** ...often think about leaving their organisation (q19a)
- 19.7%** ...will probably look for a job at a new organisation in the next 12 months (q19b)
- 14.0%** ...will leave their organisation as soon as they can find another job (q19c)

All three measures have **improved year on year since 2018**:

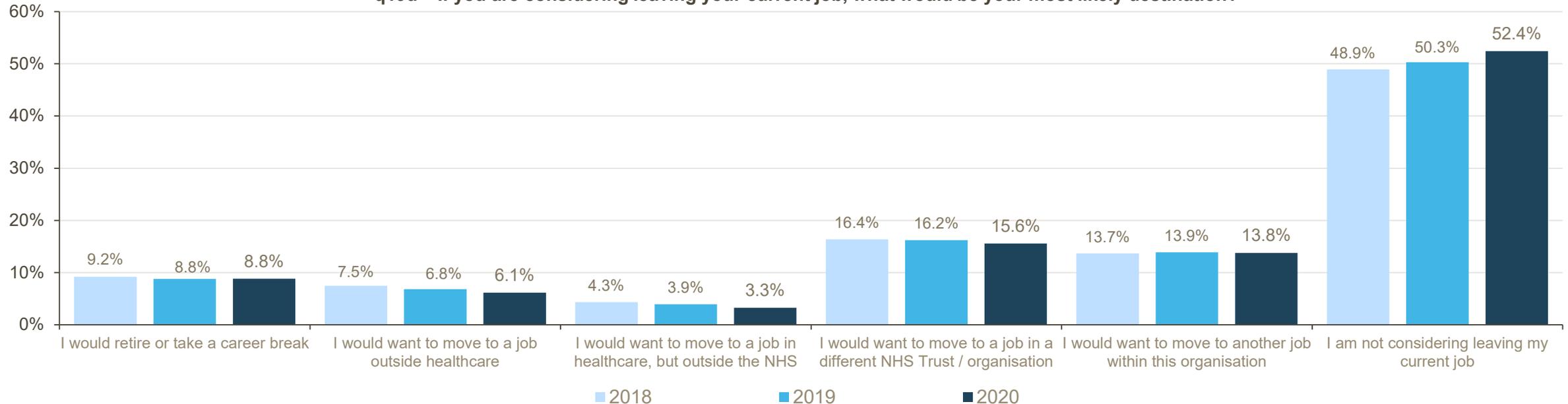


Do staff want to continue working within their organisation or leave (q19d)?*

The proportion of staff who are **considering leaving their current NHS organisation** has **decreased by 2 percentage points** since 2019 (down from 35.8% to 33.8%) and continues an improving trend since 2018 (37.4%). This figure includes all staff considering leaving their current job other than those looking to move to another job within the same organisation.

The proportion of staff who **are considering leaving the NHS altogether** has **decreased by 1 percentage point** since 2019 (down from 19.6% to 18.2%) and has also seen year on year improvement since 2018 (21.0%). This includes those considering retiring or taking a career break and those considering moving to a job outside healthcare or in healthcare but outside the NHS.

q19d – If you are considering leaving your current job, what would be your most likely destination?



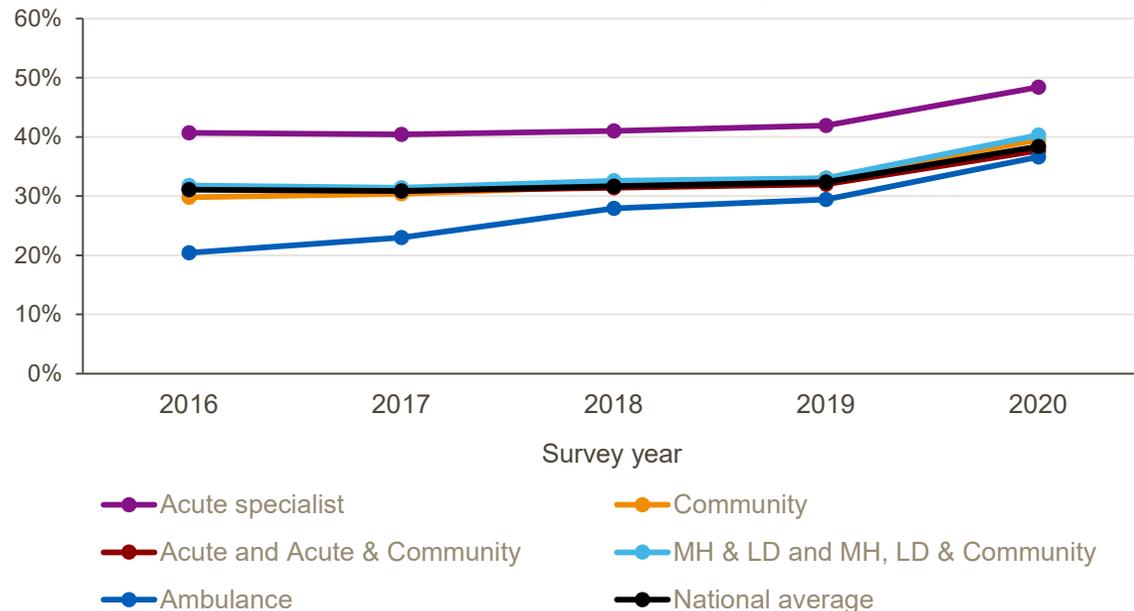
*Note: results reported on this page are unweighted because this data does not refer to an experience measure.

Of all staff nationally:

38.4% agree that there are enough staff at their organisation for them to do their job properly, an **increase of 6 percentage points** from 2019 (32.4%) (q4g)

- This measure **increased by between 5 and 10 percentage points** in all benchmarking groups this year (see chart)

% of staff saying there are enough staff at their organisation for them to do their job properly (q4g)



47.7% agree that they are able to meet all the conflicting demands on their time at work, up from 46.1% in 2019 (q4e)

- This measure has improved year on year since 2017 (44.5%)



60.3% feel they have adequate materials, supplies and equipment to do their work, an **increase of over 4 percentage points** since 2019 (56.2%) (q4f)

- There have been year on year improvements in this measure in all benchmarking groups since 2017
- Community Trusts have seen a particularly sharp improvement since 2019 (up from 61.2% to 68.5%) and are now the best performing benchmarking group on this measure

To see how the different benchmarking groups compare on these measures please refer to the interactive dashboards available on our [results site](#).

6. Staff engagement



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Theme score: 7.0, which has been the same since 2016 (7.0)

Motivation

- 58.7%** said they often or always look forward to going to work (q2a)
 - This has declined slightly since 2019 (59.5%)
- 73.0%** said they are often or always enthusiastic about their job (q2b)
 - This is almost **2 percentage points down** on 2019 (74.8%)
- 75.5%** said time often or always passes quickly when they are working (q2c) (2019: 76.7%)

Ability to contribute to improvements



- 72.1%** said they have frequent opportunities to show initiative in their role (q4a) (2019: 72.9%)
- 73.0%** said they are able to make suggestions to improve the work of their team / department (q4b) (2019: 74.0%)
- 55.2%** said they are able to make improvements happen in their area of work (q4d) (2019: 55.9%)

Recommendation of their organisation

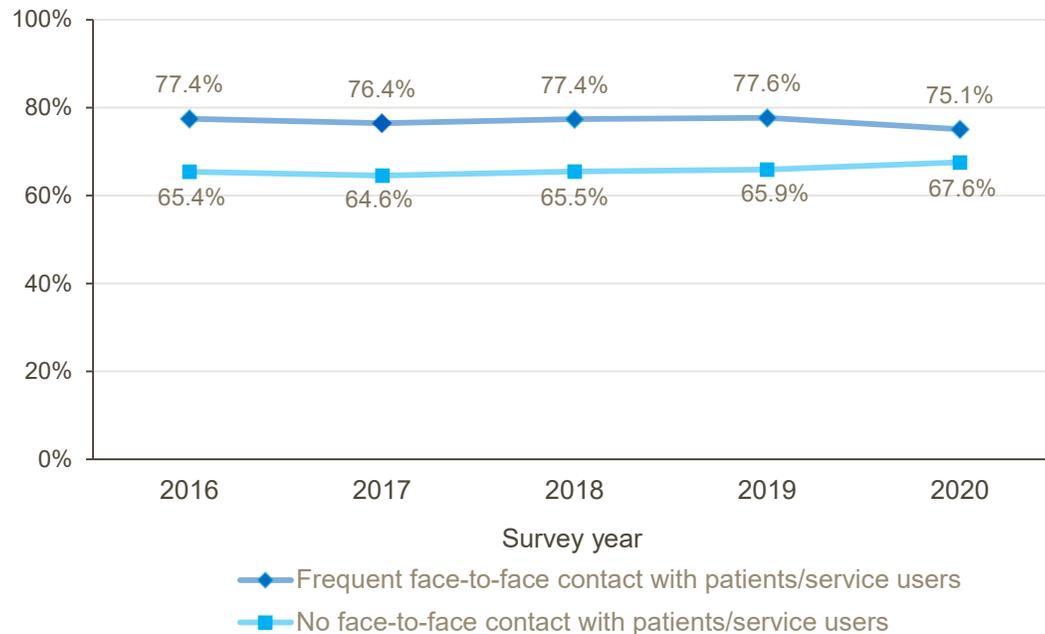
- 66.8%** said they would recommend their organisation as a place to work (q18c)
 - This is an **improvement of 3.5 percentage points** since 2019 (63.3%) and continues a positive trend since 2017 (59.6%)
- 74.2%** said they would be happy with the standard of care provided by their organisation for a friend or relative needing treatment (q18d)
 - This measure has also improved this year (up from 71.4% in 2019) and seen steady improvement since 2016 (69.8%)
- 79.5%** said that care of patients / service users is their organisation's top priority (q18a)
 - This has **improved by over 2 percentage points** since 2019 (77.3%)



Does motivation vary by role?

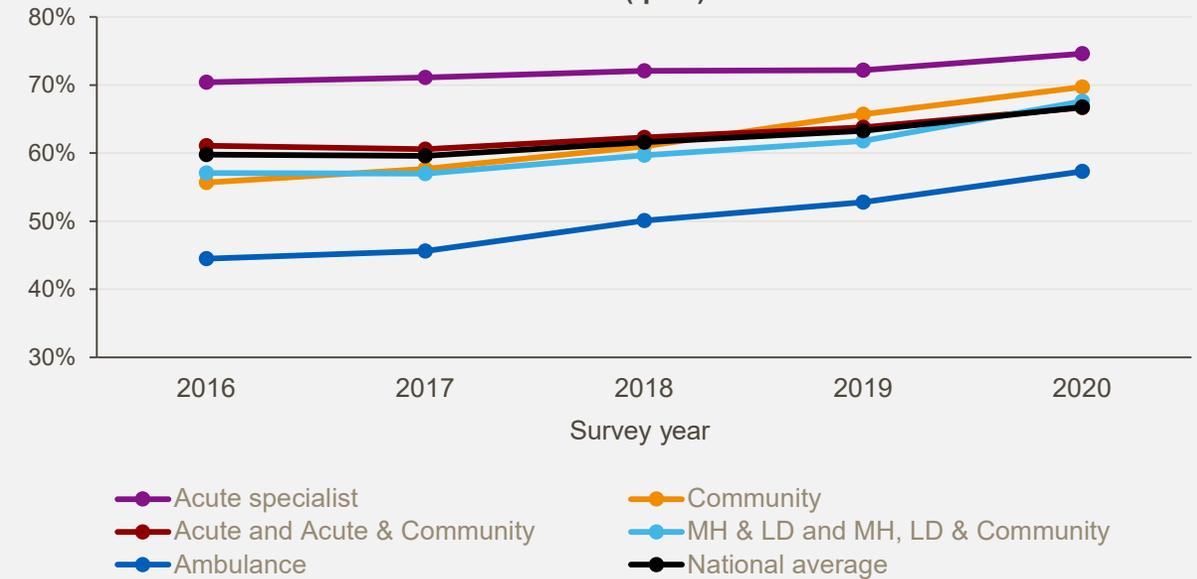
Over the last 5 years, staff with frequent face-to face contact with patients or service users have reported more enthusiasm for their job than staff in non patient facing roles. However in 2020 the proportion of staff in patient-facing roles describing themselves as enthusiastic about their job declined, while enthusiasm increased amongst those with no patient contact.

% of staff saying they are enthusiastic about their job (q2b)



Does recommendation vary by benchmarking group?

% of staff saying they would recommend their organisation as a place to work (q18c)



As seen in the graph above, the percentage of staff who would recommend their organisation as a place to work has increased year on year since 2017.

While Ambulance Trusts have improved markedly on this measure since 2016 and continued to improve in 2020, they remain the only benchmarking group to be performing below the national average. Community Trusts and Mental Health / Learning Disability Trusts (including combined MH/LD & Community Trusts) have shown steady year on year improvements on this measure for a number of years.

7. Immediate managers



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Theme score: 6.9, which is unchanged since 2019 (6.9), and remains a little higher than 2016-2018 (6.8)

Support & feedback

70.2%



of staff were satisfied with the support they got from their immediate manager (q5b)

- This measure saw a slight decrease this year (down from 71.0%) following year-on-year improvement since 2016 (67.8%)

62.1%



of staff said that their immediate manager gave them clear feedback on their work (q8c)

- This is a slight decline since 2019 (62.9%) although still remains higher than 2016-2018

Inclusion & motivation

The following percentage of staff said that their manager:

70.4%



...takes a positive interest in their health and well-being (q8f)

- This has improved since 2019 (69.8%) and is **2 percentage points higher** than in 2018 (68.4%)

55.8%

...asks for their opinion before making decisions that affect their work (q8d)

- This has decreased slightly since 2019 (56.2%) although still remains higher than 2016-2018

72.6%

...values their work (q8g)

- This measure has declined slightly this year (down from 73.3% in 2019), having previously increased steadily since 2016 (71.4%)

8. Team working



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Theme score: **6.5**, which is a little lower than in 2016-2019 (6.6)

Team objectives and effectiveness

The following percentage of staff said that the team they work in...

71.8% ...has a set of shared objectives (q4h) (2019: 72.4%)

- This measure declined amongst staff working in Acute/Acute & Community Trusts, Ambulance Trusts and Community Trusts this year.

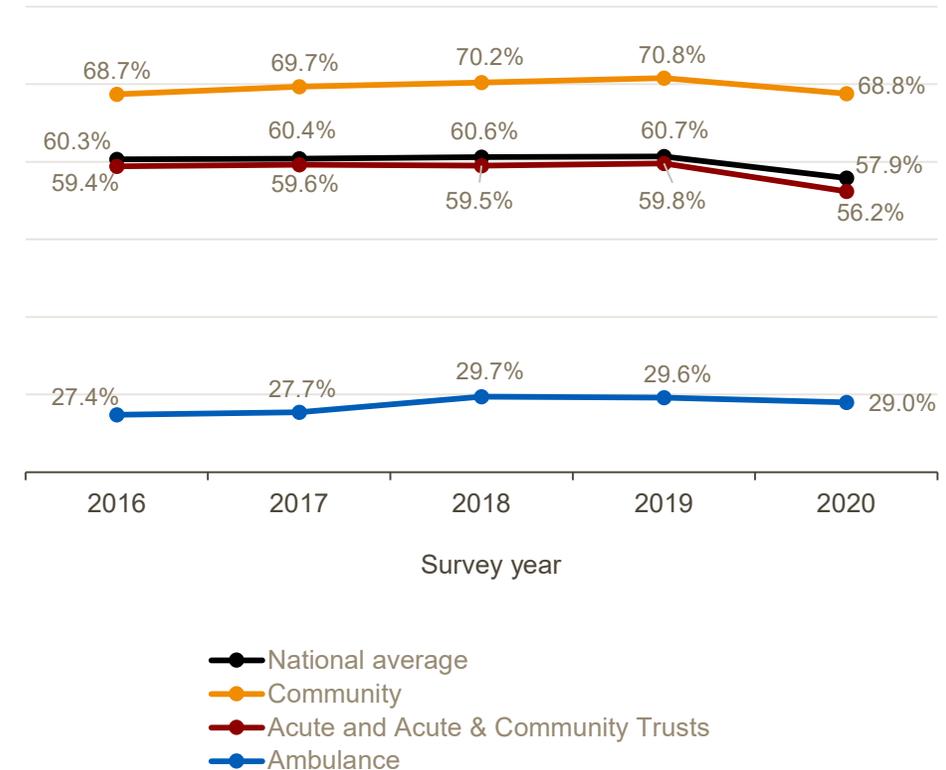
57.9% ...often meets to discuss the team's effectiveness (q4i) (2019: 60.7%)

- Ambulance Trusts continue to perform well below the national average, while Community Trusts perform above average (see chart on right).
- The decline in this measure since 2019 is particularly marked in Acute / Acute & Community Trusts.



To see how the different benchmarking groups compare on this measure, please refer to the interactive dashboards available on our [results site](#).

% of staff saying the team they work in often meets to discuss the team's effectiveness (q4i)



9. Equality, diversity & inclusion



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Theme score: 9.0, which is unchanged since 2017 (9.0) but was a little higher in 2016 (9.1)

Equal opportunities

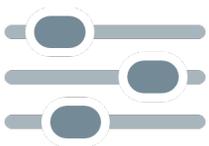
83.6%



of staff felt their organisation acts fairly with regard to career progression or promotion, regardless of ethnic background, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability or age (q14)

- Nationally, this has declined since 2019 (83.9%) and is around **2 percentage points lower** than in 2016 (85.5%)
- Following two years of steady improvement, the score for ambulance trusts fell to 72% this year (2019: 72.8%) and this remains the lowest benchmarking group on this measure

76.5%



of staff with a long term physical or mental health condition or illness² said their employer had made adequate adjustments to enable them to carry out their work (q26b), up more than 2 percentage points since 2019 (73.8%)

Discrimination

The following percentage of staff reported personally experiencing discrimination at work in the last 12 months:

7.2%

...from patients / service users, their relatives or other members of the public (q15a)



- This showed no change from 2019 (7.2%)

8.4%

...from managers or colleagues (q15b)

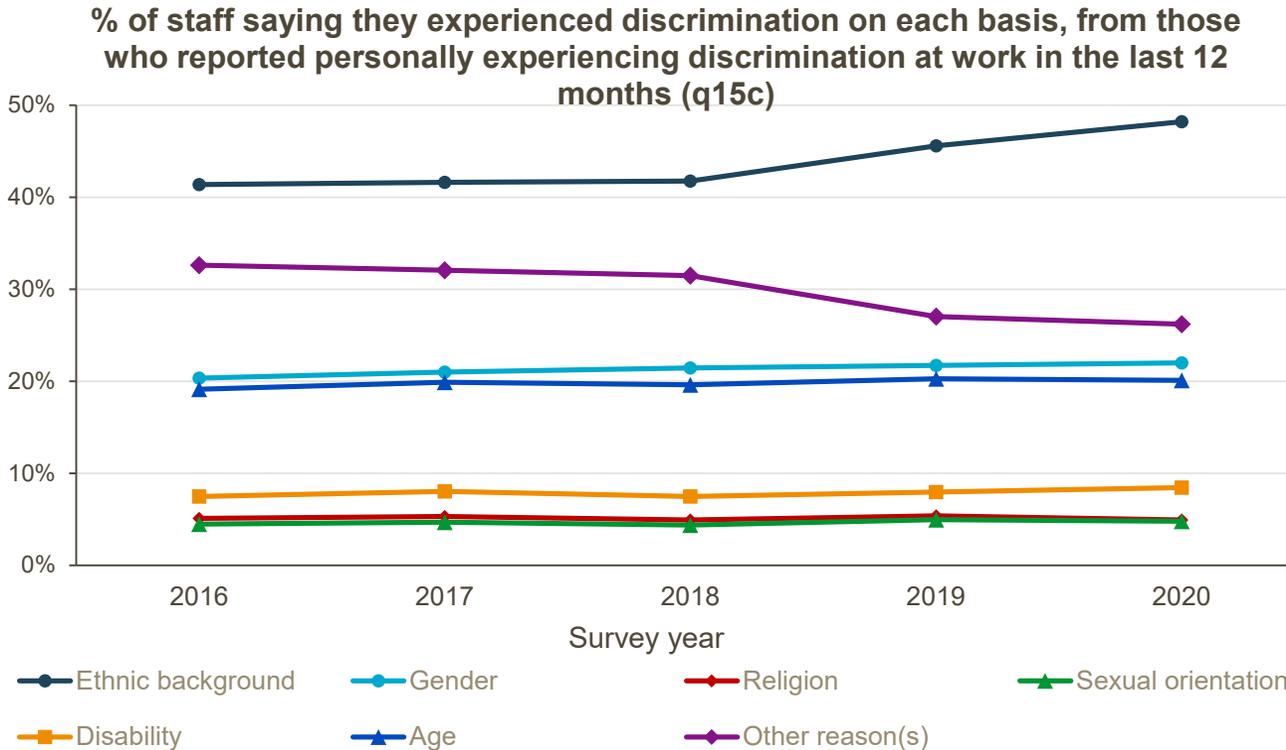


- This has increased since 2019 (7.7%) and is now at its highest level in the last five years

² NB Defined as staff 'with a disability or long term condition' prior to 2020

On what grounds is discrimination experienced?

In the 2020 survey **13.1% of staff reported experiencing discrimination at work** (q15a & b). The graph below shows on what basis staff claimed to have experienced discrimination.



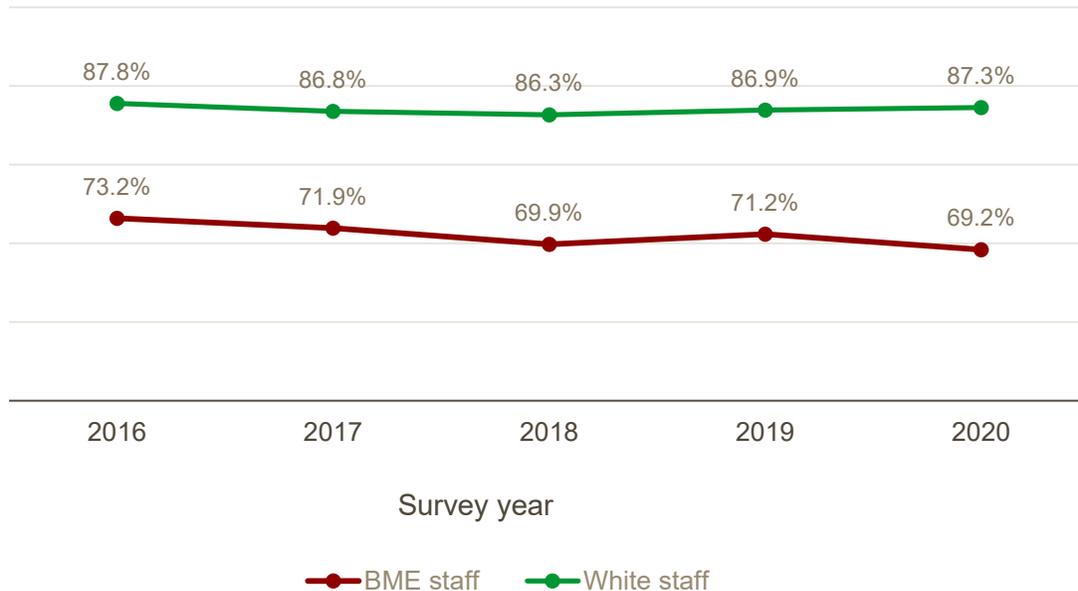
Ethnic background continues to be the most common reason cited and was mentioned by 48.2% of staff who claimed to have experienced discrimination at work.

Equal opportunities

Staff views on whether their organisation provides equal opportunities for career progression / promotion have continued to vary greatly by ethnicity and whether staff had long-lasting health conditions or illnesses (q14):

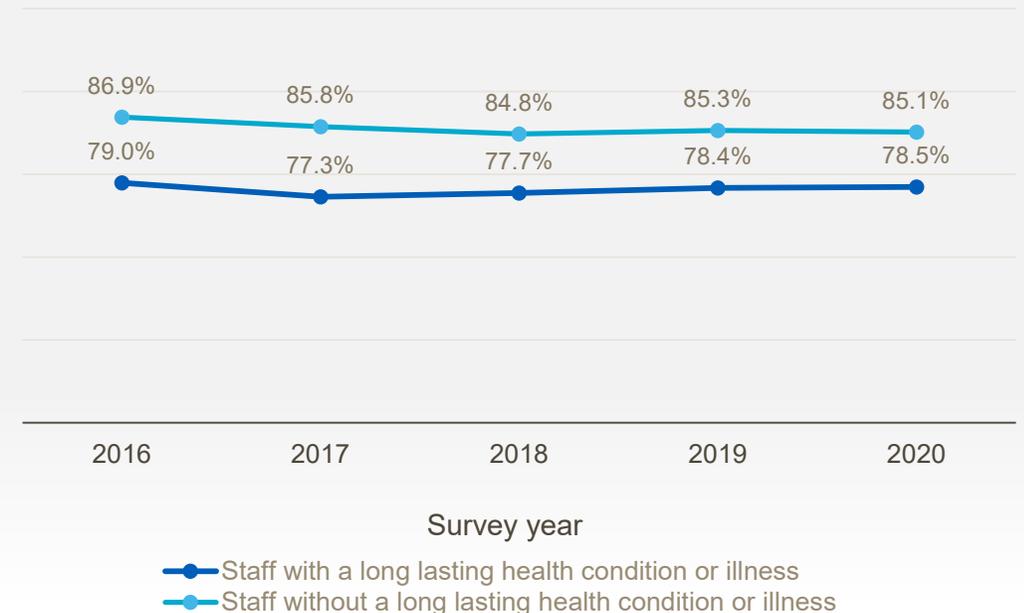
69.2% of **BME staff** said their organisation provides equal opportunities. In contrast **87.3%** of **white staff** said the same.

% of staff saying their organisation provides equal opportunities for career progression / promotion (q14)



78.5% of staff with a long-lasting health condition or illness said their organisation provides equal opportunities, compared to **85.1%** of staff without a long last health condition or illness.

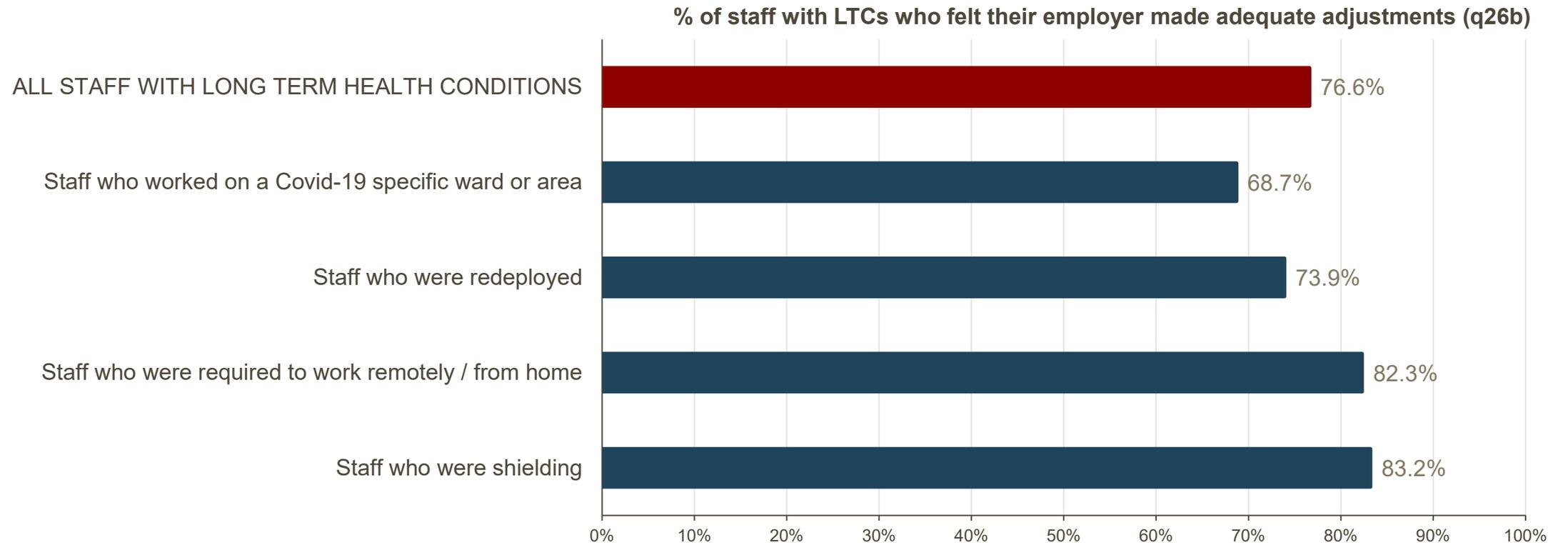
% of staff saying their organisation provides equal opportunities for career progression / promotion (q14)



Staff with long term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses (LTCs)

Has your employer made adequate adjustments to enable you to carry out your work? (q26b)

76.6% of staff with long term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses felt that their employer made adequate adjustments to enable them to carry out their work. The proportion was lower amongst those who worked on a Covid-19 specific ward or area (68.7%)



10. Quality of care



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Theme score: 7.5 which is the same as 2019 (7.5)

Quality of care

82.1% of staff were satisfied with the quality of care they give to patients / service users (q7a)

- This is **up 1 percentage point** since 2019 (81.1%)
- All trusts saw slight improvement, with Acute Specialist Trusts continuing to perform best
- Ambulance Trusts have improved from 82.0% to 84.2% since 2016

89.4% felt their role makes a difference to patients / service users (q7b) (2019: 89.6%)

69.7% said they are able to deliver the care they aspire to (q7c)

- This has improved year on year since 2017 (66.8%)



11. Safety Culture



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Theme score: 6.8, which is the same as 2019 (6.8)

Action on reported incidents



The following percentage of staff said that their organisation...

- 60.9%** ...treats staff who are involved in an error, near miss or incident fairly (q16a)
 - This is an improvement since 2019 (59.7%) and continues a positive trend since 2016 (53.9%)
- 73.4%** ...takes action to ensure that reported errors, near misses or incidents do not happen again (q16c)
 - This has improved by over **2 percentage points** since 2019 (71.1%) and continues a positive trend since 2016 (68.7%)
- 74.8%** ...acts on concerns raised by patients / service users (q18b)
 - This has **improved by 1 percentage point** since 2019 (73.8%)
- 62.7%** ...gives them feedback about changes made in response to reported errors, near misses and incidents (q16d)
 - This is an improvement since 2019 (61.1%) and continues an upward trend since 2016 (57.1%)

Reporting incidents

The following percentage of staff said they...

- 72.5%** ...would feel secure raising concerns about unsafe clinical practice (q17b)
 - This has increased steadily since 2017 (70.2%)
- 60.4%** ...were confident that their organisation would address their concern (q17c)
 - This has continued an upward trend since 2017 (57.6%)



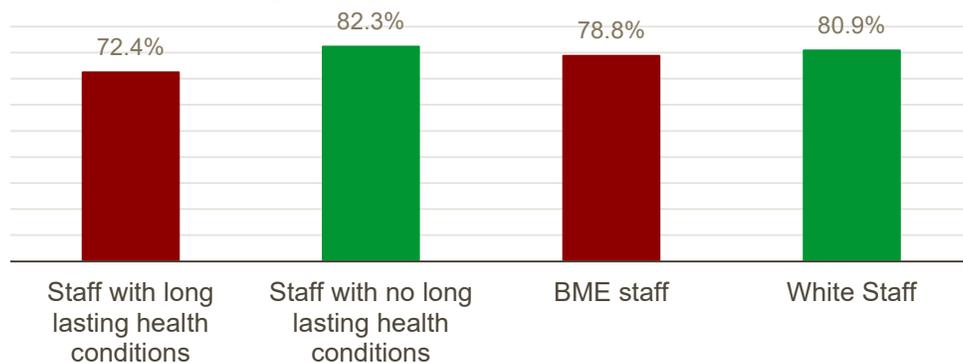
New questions for 2020 asked whether staff feel **safe in their work** (Q18e) and **safe to speak up about anything that concerns them in their organisation** (Q18f).

Feeling safe in my work

80.1% of staff agreed that they **feel safe in their work** (q18e)

- 6.2% of staff disagreed
- Staff working in Acute Specialist Trusts (86.7%) and Community Trusts (84.7%) performed the best on this measure. Agreement was lower in Ambulance Trusts, where 71.4% agreed but 10.7% said that they do not feel safe.
- Staff with long lasting health conditions or illnesses and staff from BME backgrounds were less likely to say that they feel safe in their work (see chart below)

% of staff agreeing that they feel safe in their work (q18e)

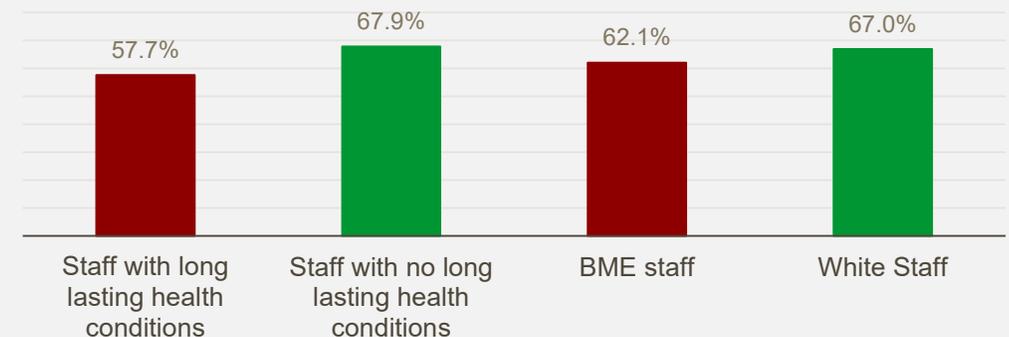


Feeling safe to speak up

65.6% of staff agreed that they **feel safe to speak up** about anything that concerns them in their organisation (q18f)

- 13.3% of staff disagreed
- Agreement was lowest in Ambulance Trusts (57.7%) where 20.6% of staff said they did not feel safe to speak up about their concerns.
- Staff with long lasting health conditions or illnesses and staff from BME backgrounds are less likely to feel safe to speak up about any concerns (see chart below)

% of staff agreeing that they feel safe to speak up about anything that concerns them in their organisation (q18f)



12. Safe environment – Bullying & harassment



1. Introduction

2. Technical details

3. The Covid-19 pandemic

4. Health & wellbeing

5. Morale

6. Staff engagement

7. Immediate managers

8. Team working

9. Equality, diversity & inclusion

10. Quality of care

11. Safety culture

12. Safe environment – Bullying & Harassment

13. Safe environment – Violence



Theme score: 8.1, which is a slight improvement on previous years (8.0 each year since 2016)

Staff experiencing bullying & harassment

The following percentages of staff experienced at least one incident of bullying, harassment or abuse in the last 12 months:



26.7% ...from patients / service users, their relatives or other members of the public (q13a)

- This is an improvement on last year (28.6% in 2019)
- Staff at Ambulance Trusts continue to experience more bullying, harassment and abuse from patients / service users, their relatives and other members of the public than staff at other trusts types where this has noticeably declined this year (see chart)



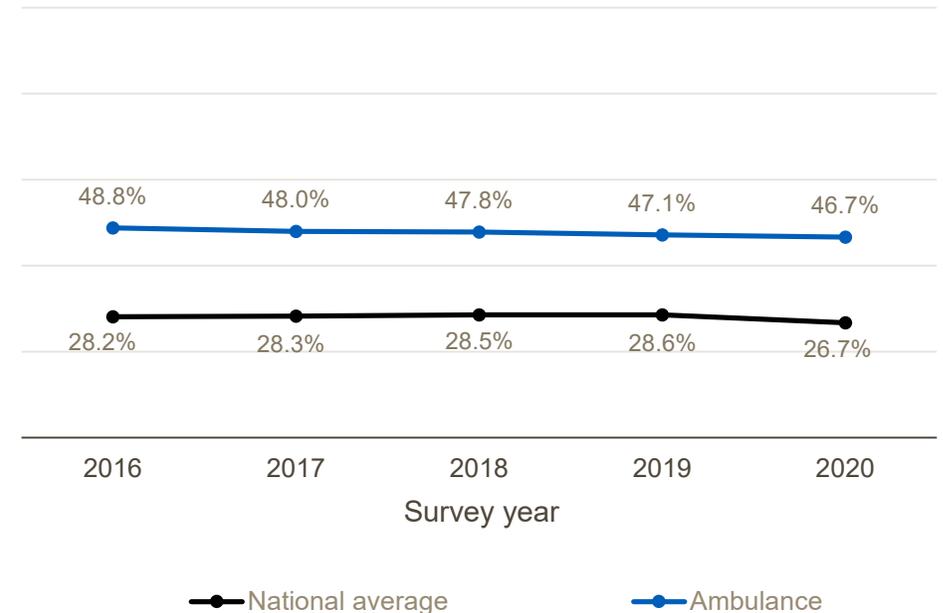
12.4% ...from managers (q13b) (12.3% in 2019)



18.7% ...from other colleagues (q13c) (19.0% in 2019)

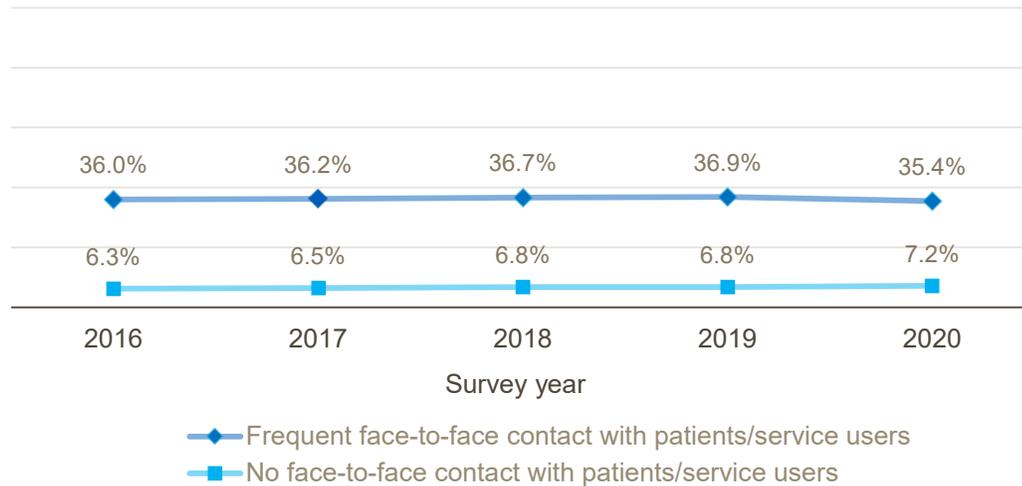
- Improvement from 2019 was seen particularly in Community Trusts and Mental Health/Learning Disability and Combined Mental Health/Learning Disability & Community Trusts

% of staff saying they have personally experienced harassment, bullying or abuse at work from patients / service users, their relatives or other members of the public in the last 12 months (q13a)



Safe environment – bullying and harassment by patient facing roles

% of staff saying they experienced at least one incident of bullying, harassment or abuse from patients / service users, their relatives or other members of the public in the last 12 months (q13a)



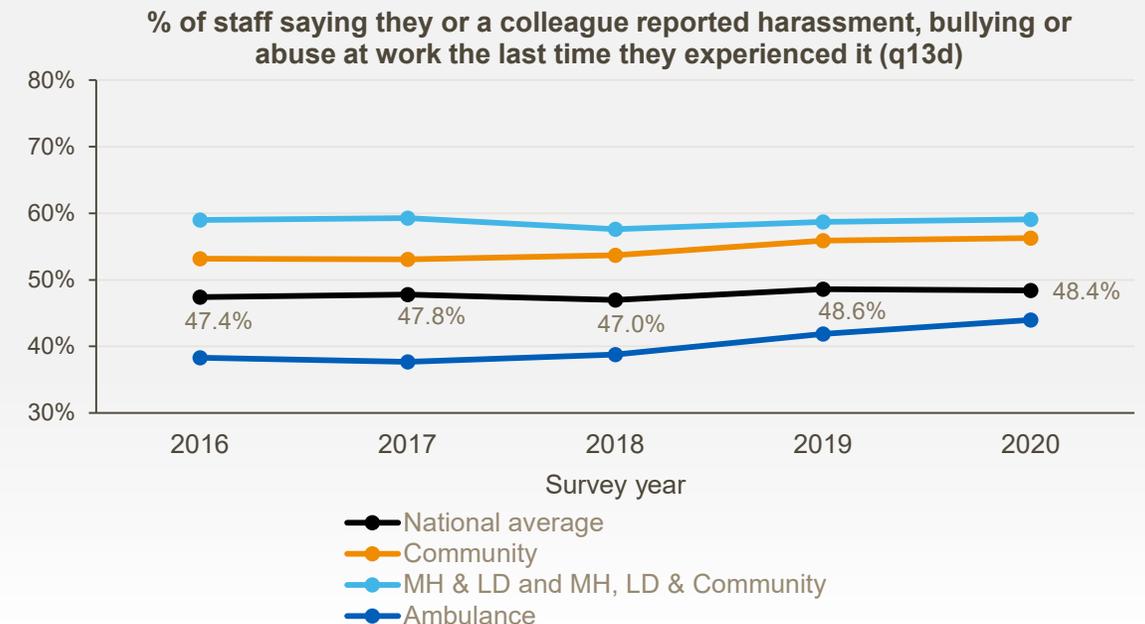
Amongst NHS staff who have frequent face-to-face contact with patients/service users, more than one in three claim to have experienced at least one incident of bullying, harassment or abuse from patients / service users, their relatives or other members of the public in the last 12 months (35.4% in 2020).

Results for the other groups can be reviewed through our [interactive dashboards](#) available on our [results site](#).

Is harassment, bullying or abuse reported by staff?

As shown in the graph below, at a national level the proportion of harassment, bullying or abuse reported by staff is slightly lower than in 2019 (2019: 48.6%, 2020: 48.4%). However for Ambulance Trusts, despite remaining below the national average, the proportion of staff who said the harassment, bullying or abuse they experienced was reported has continued a year on year improvement since 2017.

Results for the other benchmarking groups can be reviewed through our [interactive dashboards](#) available on our [results site](#).



13. Safe environment – Violence



1. Introduction

2. Technical details

3. The Covid-19 pandemic

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managers

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care

11. Safety
culture

12. Safe environment –
Bullying & Harassment

13. Safe
environment –
Violence

Theme score: 9.5, which is slightly improved on previous years (9.4 each year between 2016 and 2019)

Staff experiencing physical violence

The following percentage of staff experienced at least one incident of physical violence in the last 12 months:



14.5%

...from patients / service users, their relatives or other members of the public (q12a)

- This is slightly lower than in 2019 (14.9%) and similar to 2018 (14.6%)
- Staff at Ambulance Trusts continue to report more cases of violence from patients /service users, their relatives or other members of the public than staff in other types of Trust (see chart)



0.6%

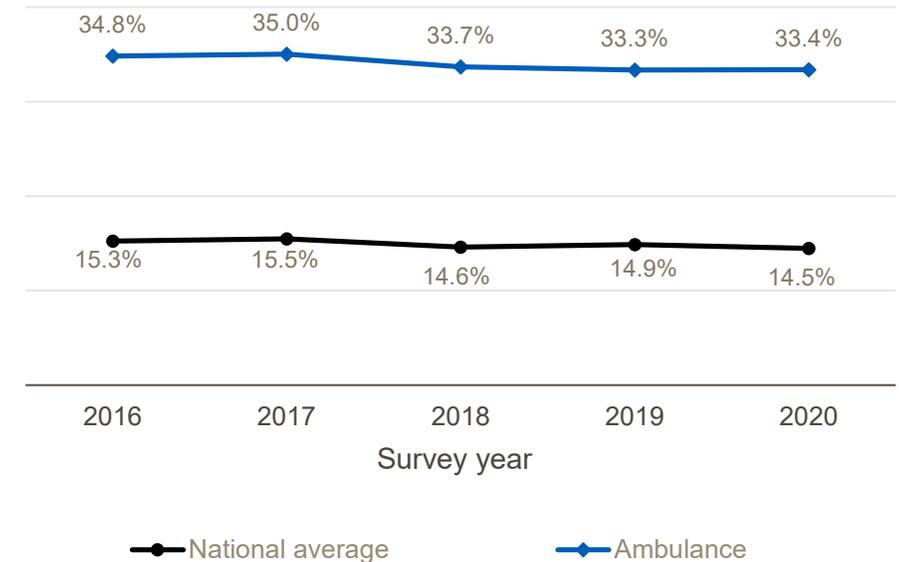
...from managers (q12b) (2019: 0.6%)



1.4%

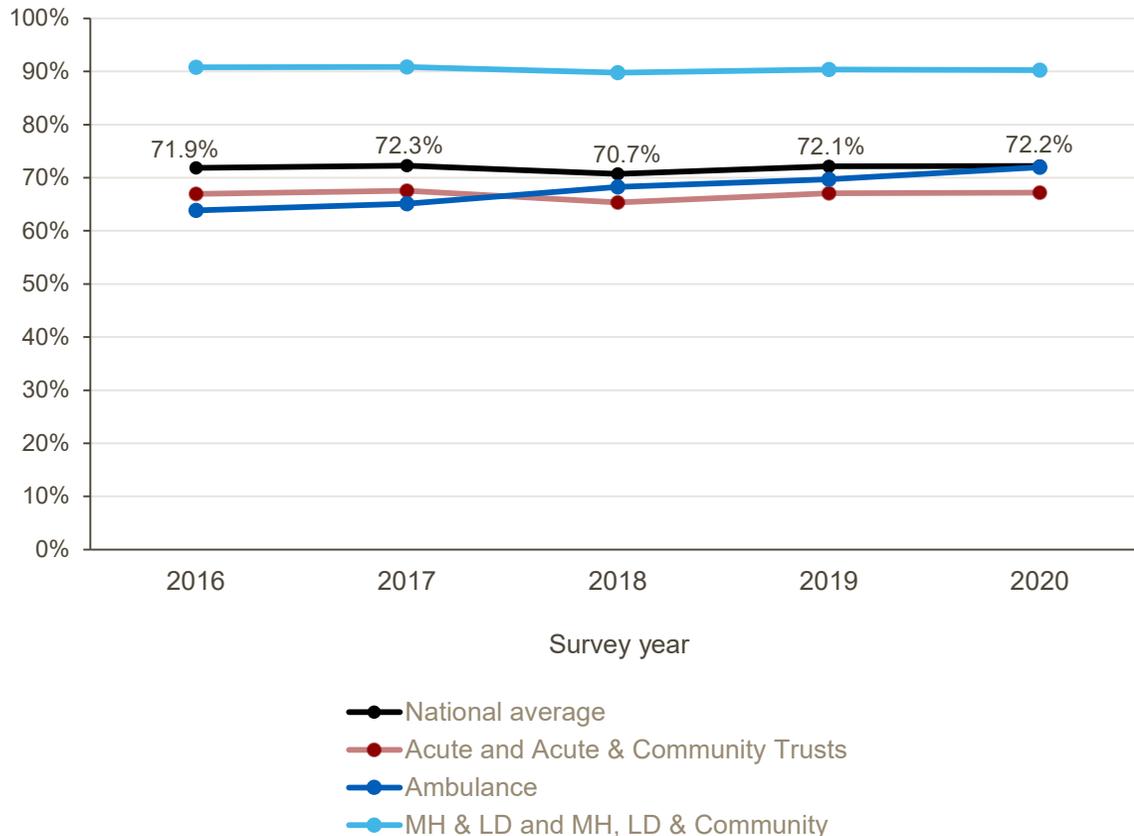
...from other colleagues (q12c) (2019: 1.5%)

% of staff who have experienced at least one incident of physical violence from patients / service users, their relatives or other members of the public in the last 12 months (q12a)



Is physical violence reported by staff?

% of staff saying the last time they experienced physical violence at work, they or a colleague reported it (q12d)



The graph on the left highlights that at a national level, reporting of incidents of physical violence has remained at a similar level to last year (72.2% in 2020).

Mental Health / Learning Disability Trusts (including Mental Health / Learning Disability and Community Trusts) continue to see the highest levels of reporting when incidents of physical violence occur (90.3% in 2020).

Reporting remains lowest amongst staff in Acute / Combined Acute & Community Trusts (67.2% in 2020)

The proportion of staff reporting such incidents has continued to improve in Ambulance Trusts (up year on year from 63.8% in 2016 to 72.0% in 2020).

For further details on these trends for other benchmarking groups please refer to our [interactive dashboards](#) available on our [results site](#).

➤ For further information...



For more information about the NHS Staff Survey please visit our website:

www.nhsstaffsurveys.com

Our results website provides data from the survey via interactive dashboards:

www.nhsstaffsurveyresults.com

If you have any questions about any aspect of the NHS Staff Survey please do not hesitate to get in touch with the **Survey Coordination Centre**:



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