

Letter to The Times from 13 NHS Chief Executives

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Hospital staff adopt a new approach to patient care

Sir, The Francis report into Mid Staffordshire makes difficult reading for all of us in the NHS. None of us came into the service to “not care”, and we don’t believe any of our colleagues joined to not care either.

At its best, we know that most of our staff work tremendously hard and often go the extra mile to help their patients. We also know that this is not always the case, and that we need to take responsibility as leaders in the NHS to put this right. As the powers-that-be pore over the findings and recommendations, we would offer up our own prescription: enabling and empowering our frontline and support teams to deliver the best care for patients.

Over the past ten months, 17 NHS Trusts have become National Pioneers on Staff Engagement and Empowerment through adoption of Listening into Action (LiA)®, and eight more begin next week. The positive impact for patients and staff is clear and compelling.

Listening is important, but how we listen and put responses into action has to be learnt — and that is what we are doing. We know from the simple Staff Pulse Check we use that only 20 per cent of staff feel valued by their organisation, and 15 per cent feel that day-to-day frustrations are dealt with effectively. What kind of service can we expect to deliver when our staff are feeling like this?

So our commitment is to put our frontline teams in charge of leading the service. We are connecting the right people through clinically-led, catalysing conversations, and supporting them to turn their ideas into action. For the first time, we have a way of responding to any challenge, a way that is simple, intuitive and not just another nice initiative.

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Signed by 13 NHS Chief Executives

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 John Saxby, Chief Executive, Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust
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