

Somerset Partnership  
NHS Foundation Trust



ENHANCING STAFF AND PATIENT  
ENGAGEMENT WITH QUESTBACK

# SOMERSET PARTNERSHIP ENHANCES STAFF AND PATIENT ENGAGEMENT WITH QUESTBACK



## SITUATION

Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust provides a wide range of community health, mental health and learning disability services in Somerset. It also provides a number of regional specialist services to patients from across the wider southwest, meaning that its nearly 4,000 staff are spread across around 80 locations in Somerset, Dorset and the Isle of Wight. It has over 400,000 patient contacts every year.

### Objectives:

- › Find new ways to attract and retain employees
- › Provide staff with a strong voice
- › Increase engagement with patients

As with every NHS organisation attracting and retaining employees is a central focus for Somerset Partnership, which is continually looking to differentiate itself through the experience it provides to staff. At the same time engaging with such a dispersed, workforce provides a specific challenge. Providing staff with a strong voice was also particularly important at a time when the Trust was rolling out a new organisational culture, making employee engagement with its values vital to its success.

Somerset Partnership also wanted to increase engagement with patients, making it as easy as possible for them to provide feedback which could be used to measure satisfaction, uncover areas for improvement and also to evidence successful outcomes to funding bodies.



## SOLUTION

Somerset Partnership understood that it needed to adopt a new approach to engagement with both employees and patients, putting their feedback at the heart of its operations. Having seen the success of Questback's NHS Community Solution at the nearby Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust, it chose to implement similar technology for its people.

Questback's NHS Staff Community enables healthcare organisations to have a continuous lifetime relationship with their employees. It provides a personalised, interactive platform to listen to, engage and communicate with staff, wherever they are located, whenever they log on and whatever device they use.

Initially, Somerset Partnership has focused on the powerful survey capabilities within the Questback solution, using it to collect and integrate all types of employee and patient feedback, including scheduled, pulse, employee lifecycle and event-based surveys.

It began by running its Staff Family and Friends Test (FFT), through Questback. As Questback links directly to the data extracted from the NHS Electronic Staff Record (ESR), it is able to automatically select respondents every quarter and send email invitations, ensuring that all staff have the chance to complete the survey annually.

Measuring staff engagement with the Trust culture is a primary objective, and Somerset Partnership's quarterly Cultural Barometer pulse survey enables it to analyse the culture within specific teams, identify improvement actions and measure change over time. This has a direct bearing on key performance indicators, such as patient safety.

To aid retention, Somerset Partnership is collecting feedback at key touchpoints during the staff lifecycle, starting with onboarding and exit. By measuring the experience of new starters through recruitment and induction, it is able to make fast interventions to ensure that staff get up to speed quickly and stay for the long term, while exit surveys add further to its knowledge, helping identify ways to maximise retention within the Trust.



"With a dynamic system such as Questback's NHS Staff Community we can quickly gauge staff views and make changes immediately, giving staff confidence in the Trust and its leaders."

### NICK MACKLIN

Director of People and Organisational Development

Given the flexibility of Questback, the Trust is also using it as the backbone of its Patient Family and Friends Test (FFT), analysing data to produce faster reporting on completion rates and outcomes.



The adoption of Questback is also enabling managers to collect feedback and act on the insight across a growing variety of projects. For example, one of Somerset Partnership's programmes trains teachers and other staff within schools on adolescent mental health and Questback is being used to collect feedback on the effectiveness of the Trust's training and support.

"At the very time we are engaging with staff on our new values and embedding a new organisational culture, we needed a reliable and effective platform to engage our staff and give them a strong voice in our Trust. With a dynamic system such as Questback's NHS Staff Community we can quickly gauge staff views and make changes immediately, giving staff confidence in the Trust and its leaders." Nick Macklin, Director for People and Organisational Development at Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.



## RESULT

While it has only been up and running with Questback for less than twelve months, Somerset Partnership is already seeing improvements in five key areas:

### 1 Deeper understanding of engagement

Through Questback, the Trust can centralise all staff and patient feedback, making it easier to analyse, understand and cross-reference this insight. Using Questback enables the Trust to segment and interact with discrete groups of people. As surveys are targeted at the right people at the right time and are easier to access Somerset Partnership is benefiting from greater completion rates. Having access to more information helps give a more holistic picture of engagement, supporting management decisions and pinpointing areas for improvement.

### 2 Improved retention and recruitment

By measuring the staff experience at key touchpoints, Somerset Partnership aims to improve retention rates and therefore reduce the budgetary and patient care impact of staff leaving. It is also helping with recruitment, providing the ability to keep in contact with students that have been on placements at the Trust, building a pipeline of potential applicants for the future.

### 3 Greater efficiency

Questback's easy to use interface speeds up the creation, launch and analysis of feedback exercises, freeing up staff time to act on the results. The time to run and analyse the Staff FFT survey has dropped from a working day to being almost instantaneous, thanks to Questback's powerful automation capabilities. Built-in reporting means that results can be shared in a more timely manner, spreading feedback insight more widely across the organisation.

### 4 Improved measurement of outcomes

Demonstrating the effectiveness of its programmes to stakeholders and funding bodies is central to retaining their trust and safeguarding future projects. Using Questback makes it easy for the Trust to collect feedback evidence on outcomes, enabling it to meet the requirements of the CQUIN payments framework.

### 5 Platform for future engagement

Somerset Partnership is taking a phased approach to using the Questback NHS Staff Community. Following the successful roll-out of staff and patient surveys, it is now looking at adopting the community forums within the platform, providing staff with the ability to discuss key issues, share best practice and contribute ideas. Once this is implemented, under the "Our Voice" brand, the Trust expects this to drive greater engagement and collaboration between dispersed teams and support ongoing cultural change.



"Working with Questback helps us to make Somerset Partnership as responsive and engaged as possible for patients and staff. We now have a flexible platform that supports all of our engagement and feedback needs - now and in the future"

**NICK MACKLIN**  
Director of People and Organisational Development

#### Results:

- › More detailed understanding of engagement
- › Improved retention and recruitment
- › Greater efficiency
- › Improved measurement of outcomes
- › Platform for future engagement



## ABOUT SOMERSET PARTNERSHIP NHS TRUST

**Company**  
Somerset Partnership NHS Trust

Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust provides a wide range of integrated community health, mental health, learning disability and social care services to people of all ages.

**Industry**  
Healthcare

The Trust employs 3,838 staff, and has a turnover of £158 million. It provides services from 13 community hospitals across the county, and mental health inpatient services on 9 mental health wards. The Trust runs 7 minor unit units and 4 dental access centres, including on the Isle of Wight and in Dorset. Trust makes more than 1.1 million patient contacts each year.

**Area of Use**  
Employee Engagement

Somerset Partnership was authorised as a Foundation Trust on 1 May 2008, and has more than 10,000 members and 33 governors.



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