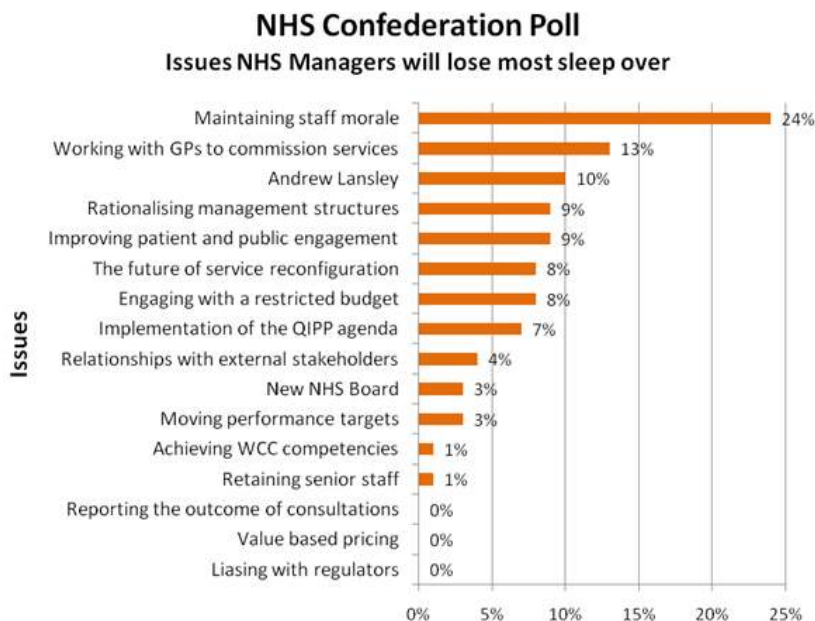


# NHS Confederation Poll reveals senior NHS managers concerned over maintaining staff morale and delivering engagement in challenging times

*Survey conducted by INOVEM, Participate and Brenda Cook highlights top issues affecting NHS managers, plus a critical need for feasible engagement processes*

**London, UK, 12 July 2010** – Nearly a quarter of senior managers from across the NHS are losing sleep over maintaining staff morale, while significant percentages have major concerns over GP commissioning, announcements from Andrew Lansley, the rationalisation of management structures and the future of patient and public engagement.

These were the pivotal issues revealed by a timely poll conducted at the recent NHS Confederation by pioneering e-consultation and engagement solutions specialist [INOVEM](#), social communications consultancy Participate and independent consultant Brenda Cook.



Given the current backdrop of budget cuts, management restructures, halted projects and general uncertainty pervading the NHS, the biggest issue concerning respondents was perhaps unsurprisingly ‘maintaining staff morale’:

The integration of GPs as commissioners is a concern for 10% of NHS managers surveyed, due to a lack of clarity over how GPs will be afforded the time to be effective commissioners and what level of support and resources they will require. Andrew Lansley, secretary for health, who spoke at the NHS Confederation, is keeping 9% surveyed awake at night because guidelines are still vague in regard to their futures and the future of their organisations. Discussions with those surveyed revealed that staff engagement is seen to be crucial for NHS managers striving to ensure quality personnel are not lost or devalued.

Against this backdrop, synchronised methods of engagement that keep staff, stakeholders and patients engaged and reassured has never been more challenging – or important. NHS managers are now tasked with reassessing how they will deliver services for growing populations with limited resources, without clear guidelines as to how they can engage people in the debate.

Louise Booth, director at Participate, said: “Our clients are undoubtedly in a very challenging position. They need support and advice at a time when there are no clear guidelines showing them how to move forward and how to best use the budget and resources they *do* have to continue to engage with the public, patients and key partners.”

There are new engagement challenges too. Many of the NHS managers surveyed said they felt ‘in limbo’, realising a real need to engage with stakeholders and GPs, but feeling powerless without the ‘all clear’ to instigate complex processes.

John Glover, sales and marketing director at INOVEM, said: “With so much uncertainty across the NHS, senior managers are desperate for straightforward advice on how they can do more, with less. INOVEM, Participate and Brenda Cook hold joint credentials as Approved Partners of The Consultation Institute. Together we’re ‘a safe pair of hands’ ready to support NHS trusts looking to introduce auditable, robust engagement processes that are meaningful, cost-effective to run and deliver a quick return on minimal investment.”

Despite the restrictions and challenges facing NHS managers today, their stakeholders, patients and staff are still crying out for information and dialogue about what these possible changes could mean for them. It is important for staff and stakeholders to have a robust conduit for discussion about trade-offs and priorities at a time of strict financial challenges. Senior NHS managers including those polled at the NHS Confederation can turn to the technology of INOVEM and the expertise of Participate and Brenda Cook to actively engage with staff and keep them informed.

- *INOVEM, Participate and Brenda Cook are currently developing specific services to enable GP, staff and stakeholder engagement to explain and deliberate current NHS issues. More information is available by calling 0845 094 8191, including a free advisory service for NHS managers.*

**Note to editors:**

**[About INOVEM](#)**

INOVEM is a developer of [collaboration workspace](#) and [consultation software](#) that enables public sector organisations and private businesses to collaborate, consult and engage internal and external stakeholders. INOVEM Inclusionware solutions are definitive Web 2.0 technologies that exemplify the second wave of interactive web applications: harnessing collective intelligence – the architecture of participation.

**More information can be found at [www.inovem.com](http://www.inovem.com)**

**[About Participate](#)**

Participate is a social communications consultancy which specialises in delivering consultation, engagement and research solutions for its public service clients.

**More information can be found at [www.participate.uk.com](http://www.participate.uk.com)**

**[About Brenda Cook](#)**

Brenda is a consultant and facilitator with specialist expertise of stakeholder involvement in influencing service development, within health and other public sector services. Brenda has previously worked for the Department of Health, the Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health, and a number of local authorities in both strategic and operational roles.

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