NHS Flex for the Future Programme

Workshop 2: Where are you now?

In conjunction with

NHS England and NHS Improvement

INTRODUCTION & WELCOME

Thank you for taking part in the NHS Flex for the Future programme and being a member of the Flexible Working Change Team for your organisation.

Each of the six workshops in the NHS Flex for the Future programme has an accompanying booklet like this one, containing reference material and tools to support you to learn more and take action in your organisation.

Inside this booklet you'll find a summary of the workshop content, plus additional guidance, information, tools and places to look to find out more.

The workshop slides and recording of the live workshop are also available in the Resource Library

Contents

If you have questions about the programme please get in touch:

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1. Workshop summary and key concepts

This workshop focuses on collecting, collating and analysing workforce and demographic data within your NHS organisation, considering what qualitative and quantitative data may be useful. The tools and resources relating to this workshop will help you to gather and use data to assess your organisation’s current position in relation to flexibility and gain insight about how this relates to your key priorities and workforce challenges.

Gathering data and information in its broadest sense is an important part of the ‘discovery’ phase of your organisational change project. You may gain information and insight from sources as varied as workforce data, conversations with organisational leaders, your staff survey and exit conversations.

Similarly, think about other reporting initiatives which may provide you with insight which is relevant to flexibility at work. For example, your **Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) report, Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) report**, and your organisation's **Gender Pay Gap report**. Also have a look at information about your organisation’s level **of e-rostering maturity**.

All these data sources can provide you with interesting evidence on which to base your approach to your flex change project. Data will help you to convince key stakeholders of the need for change, and enable you to decide where to focus your action plan.

You may find that your organisation does not currently collect some of the data that you are interested in. This in itself is useful to know and may help you identify actions to start collecting and reporting on this data in the future.

You may also want to check what currently gets reported in your regular workforce data report at the Board. Does this report contain any indicators that measure progress on flexible working? If not, you may want to address this in your action plan, ensuring progress on key indicators over time, building in Board ownership of this agenda.

Data collection can feel like a big undertaking, but it doesn't need to be - our aim in this workshop is to support you to make a start – whether you choose to explore workforce data for the entire organisation, or gather qualitative input from employees through focus groups.

Whatever combination of data you interrogate, your change project will be more robust as a result of you taking an evidence-based approach.

2. Workforce and survey data

I. Scope

The first step is to decide the scope of your workforce and survey data collection. As a change team, you need to decide what data to collate and this will of course partly be based on what data is available, how easily accessible it is, and the time you have available to spend on this. It should also be based on what is most important to your organisation right now - what the organisational drivers are for this work on flexibility.

Your ESR system will be a useful source for workforce data and has a 'Flexible working patterns' field, which is a good place to start. However it may not be used in your organisation, and/or may not record all forms of flexibility that you are interested in e.g. flexible start/finish times, fixed shift arrangements. Are there other ways you could gather this information? ESR is unlikely to contain information relating to flexible working requests or exit interviews. You will need to find out if you can access this data elsewhere. In some organisations it may not be held centrally, and if this is the case for you, this in itself is useful to know and may help mean you make a recommendation following this programme for your organisation to start collecting and/or collating and reporting on this data in the future.

Consider whether you want to analyse workforce and survey data for the whole organisation or whether you are going to break it down and gather data on a divisional or directorate level. Or you may decide to focus solely on a particular sub-group of the organisation for analysis e.g. medical workforce or clinical or support staff. This may be appropriate if you have particular goals for the programme in relation to certain workforce groups, although it may still be helpful to do some wider data analysis so you can place these groups in context.

II. Analysing staff survey results

Analysing Question 5(H) from your staff survey (**How satisfied are you with… The opportunities for flexible working patterns)** is a good place to start, as this will give you some insight into how the levels of satisfaction with flexibility vary across your workforce.
The NHS Flex team have written a short blog with some tips and suggestions for how you can use the national portal to explore the responses to this question in more detail.

For example, to identify whether there are particular age groups or ethnic backgrounds that have a lower percentage of satisfaction with flexible working, or if there are particular occupational groups or Bands that show lower scores on this question.

This insight could help you decide where to conduct further data collection and collation. For example, you might decide to undertake focus groups with groups that have lower percentages of satisfaction, and/or with those with higher levels of satisfaction, to gather examples of what is working well. Equally, you may want to compare the satisfaction data from the survey with the prevalence of flexible working arrangements or level of turnover in your workforce data, to explore whether there may be a correlation between these items.

Your local HR analyst may also be able to give you the breakdown of question 5(h) by different Directorates and Departments, again giving you insight into which areas might be experiencing greater challenges, to give focus to your decision about where to start.

You can also explore how your organisation’s response on this question compares with other organisations of a similar type, which is useful data to include in the business case or case for change that you make to influence your internal stakeholders of the need to take action on flexibility.

We work flexibly

NHS

The blog can be found on the NHS FUTURES forum under:

Flexible working in the NHS / Thoughts on flexible working / Analysing the flexible working question in your local staff survey

III. Using the data capture and analysis tool

The data capture and analysis tool shared with you in the workshop and available on the resource library, is designed to support you to gather and analyse your existing workforce data in order to assess your current position with regard to flexibility in the workplace. It is not designed to be exhaustive or stand-alone and should be used alongside any other data you decide to collect, e.g. survey data or qualitative data.

The areas in the tool cover a range of issues which are relevant to flexibility at work, and will provide useful context and insight, to help you identify opportunities to enhance flexibility within your NHS organisation. The worksheets within the tool are grouped by type of flexibility and/or particular area of the NHS Flex for the Future programme model. Again this is designed to help your analysis.

3. Qualitative Data Collection

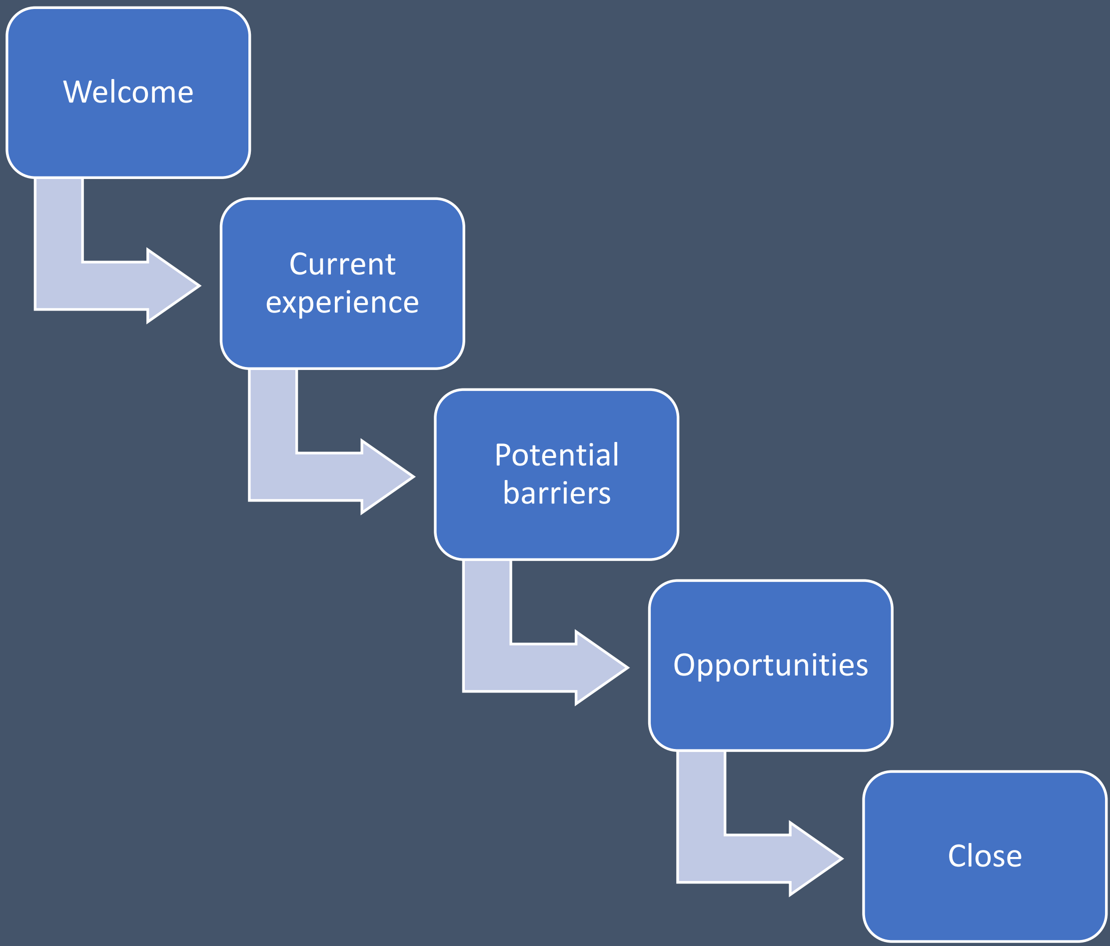
I. A guide to running focus groups

The table on the next page offers a structure which you can use as the basis for planning and running a focus group session to gather qualitative data change team kick off session. Consider asking your Senior Responsible Officer for the project to lend their support by opening the focus groups, or sending the invitation to participants. This will underline the importance and value of the sessions to the project and the organisation.

Set up & preparation	Ensure you agree and communicate to attendees the aims of the session, and particular lines of inquiry (these may have emerged through your workforce data analysis, or relate to organisational priorities). Also consider and communicate how you will ensure confidentiality and what the data you gather in the session is being used for. Communicate this as part of your invitation but you will also need to reiterate when you open the session. **Size of group:** we recommend 8-10 people so that everyone has enough 'air time' to contribute **Attendees:** consider anything which may reduce attendees' ability to be open and honest. For example, we often recommend holding separate groups for managers and non-managers. You may want to group people from similar roles together, and consider inviting people from across different areas of the organisation to get a cross section of experiences. Ensure that you have representatives in the group with experience of different flexible working patterns, and those without any. You may also want to consider what part you want your SRO to play – for example to open some groups and then leave to allow for an open discussion, or to maybe record a video saying why the organisation thinks flexible working is important and what they hope to get from considering the results of the focus groups. **Remember:** a focus group is small and is never going to be a representative sample in the way a survey can aim to be. Be aware of selection biases which may apply depending on who is identifying individuals to attend. For example - do you have a range of people who are supportive and sceptical of flexibility, or is it just individuals who are interested and engaged in the need for flex? Being aware of these biases is important.
Practicalities	Decide whether to conduct the focus groups in person or virtually. If in person consider size and location of room, materials such as flip charts, pens & post it notes to help you (and attendees) capture thoughts. Can you

	provide refreshments? You will also need to consider your current organisational Covid guidelines for meetings. If virtual, consider where attendees will be dialling in from. Will they be in a place where they can talk freely without being overheard? What is the best platform to use e.g. MS Teams, Zoom? Do you want to use add-on apps to gather opinions within the virtual meeting (have a look at: www.mentimeter.com and https://www.sli.do/ for ideas) **Session length:** we recommend 90 minutes as a good amount of time to cover the different experiences and generate opportunities and barriers. **Roles:** you will need a facilitator for the session and ideally someone else to help take notes and/or capture the discussion. Make sure you explain the roles to the group at the start of the session so that they are clear who everyone is and why they are there. If you would like to use quotes from the focus groups you can ask the note-taker / person responsible for discussion capture to record some specific verbatim quotes. It may be a good idea to agree in advance the type of quotes you're likely to want e.g. a quote talking about the benefits of flexibility / a quote about leadership or manager perceptions / a quote about the barriers that are in place. It's important to explain to the group that relevant quotes are being captured but they won't be attributed to individuals or organisations.
Session flow and suggested questions / lines of inquiry	The diagram below shows the suggested flow of a focus group session. In terms of timings, we would recommend spending 5-7 minutes on the welcome and on the close, and 20-25 minutes on each of the main three sections (current experience, potential barriers, opportunities)

The suggested stages of a focus group session:



Tips for questioning:

When developing your questions ensure you are designing them to be open and exploratory. You can follow up with closed questions to clarify points or examples that are given.

The flow of questioning should start broad and then narrow. We recommend you start each section with some broad, open questions and then narrow down to ask for specific examples e.g. of current arrangements, barriers or opportunities. You can ask participants to be specific about their ideas, as this will help you identify what actions you put in your plan.

It’s also important to ensure that you are using lay language. For example, including in your introduction and welcome a definition of what you mean by flexibility is very important, and avoiding jargon around types of flexible working or working patterns.

WELCOME

- Purpose
- Guidelines for how session will run
- Roles
- Reiterate confidentiality – ensure that you have informed consent of the attendees to participate in the conversation
- Definition of flex

CURRENT EXPERIENCE

- Exploring the current situation as they experience it
- Satisfaction with hours/work-life balance / flex
- Examples of flex shared by the group
- What is the current process for requesting?
- What works well?
- What doesn’t work well?

BARRIERS

- Exploring constraints – operational / cultural/ procedural
- Shifts/rostering
- Technology
- Job design

OPPORTUNITIES

- What needs to change?
- How can we mitigate the barriers above?
- What has helped to date?
- Where should we focus our efforts?
- What would make the most difference/impact?

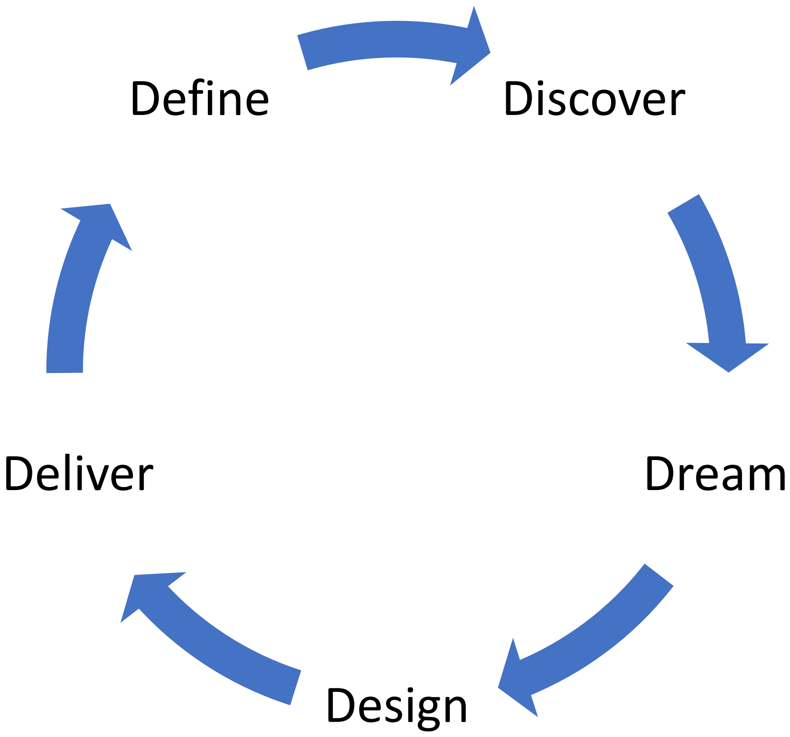
II. Appreciative Inquiry

One of the case studies presented in the workshop shared how The Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust used an Appreciative Inquiry methodology within focus groups.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a methodology which takes a positive, strengths-based approach to help identify opportunities and improvements.

When using AI, as well as generating data, you are designing and delivering an intervention which can support organisational change by engaging stakeholders and starting to shift mindsets towards what is possible. Within an AI approach, the focus of the conversation is on the positive: for example, in the 'Discover' phase, facilitators encouraging attendees to share ideas about what works well to support staff to work flexibly, rather than asking about barriers. In the 'Dream' phase, attendees are asked what their ideal flexible workplace would be like, again taking a positive lens on the changes that need to happen.

More information about the 5Ds of AI, the methodology and why you might choose to use elements from it, can be found here in a short video produced by the Mid Yorkshire Hospitals team.



The stages of Appreciative Inquiry

4. Internal change team meeting

Following Workshop One you should have held a kick off meeting for your internal change team to discuss goals, roles, stakeholders etc. We would recommend that you continue to meet together in between the workshops in order to keep the momentum of your project. The table below offers a structure which you can use as the basis for your meeting following Workshop Two. As before, run this in a way that works for you, incorporating the most relevant elements.

Introduction	**Aim of the session:** to review progress against actions from last meeting, discuss learnings and insights from Workshop Two, agree approach and actions relating to data collection and analysis.
Agenda	1. **Review of actions from last meeting** Change team Leader updates on actions they have undertaken so far – i.e. updating SRO, collecting and submitting organisational data to contribute to the programme baseline. They may also want to update on the first group clinic if they attended it. Other team members update on any actions they were assigned at the last meeting. It might be a good idea to keep an action log for the project, noting if actions have been completed / are in progress / haven't yet started. 2. **Workshop Two** Consider and share key learnings / take aways from this workshop. Discuss what you found interesting and useful, and implications for your own change project. 3. **Data collection and analysis** Discuss and agree your approach to data collection and analysis for your project. What is the scope of data that you are going to examine - which types of flex / roles / directorates / departments are you particularly interested in? How easy/time consuming will it be to access the different types of data you want to collect? Are you going to collect qualitative data as well via focus groups or similar?

	Identify actions and owners for these different data collection and analysis tasks. 4. **Analysis of staff survey question 5(h)** You may want to use some time in your meeting to start exploring and analysing your staff survey data, as described by Sue Nunn in Workshop Two. This is a good starting point and may be interesting to discuss as a team. 5. **Communications & stakeholder engagement** Consider and discuss the communications needed from your project team to the wider organisation at this stage. What is helpful to update people on? Who and how should this best happen? In your kick off meeting you discussed the key stakeholders to this project. It's good practice to review these and agree how you are keeping them updated and involved. What support or input could they give? How can you keep them engaged with the project? 6. **Agree actions / next steps and owners** Summarise the actions identified relating to the agenda points above, and ensure each one has a nominated person who owns and is responsible for it. 7. **AOB** Any other business relating to the project raised by attendees NB: You may want to produce a simple project plan to guide your activity through the project and put timescales against actions and activities. As a minimum, keep a record of your project team meetings and an action log.
Wrap up and close	Capture actions arising and circulate these (with project plan if you have one) after the meeting. Agree how and when you will next meet as a change team.

5. Further tools and references

Below is a list of relevant reading and tools which may be helpful to you as you progress your flexible working project.

Further reading:

- **We work flexibly** for more resources, examples and case studies take a look here
- **Timewise Knowledge Hub** for general organisational resources
- **Appreciative Inquiry** for more information on AI watch here
- **Case Study – Older Workers**

  The full report by Timewise and the Centre for Ageing Better for the work Emma Stewart talked about in the workshop is here

Analysis resources:

https://model.nhs.uk/

https://www.nhsstaffsurveys.com/

Please remember to submit any questions relating to data collection and analysis via your Group Clinic facilitator, **no later than 12 November**, so they can be answered as part of the **Q&A** with Richard Watson and David Sayer (workshop speakers), which will be uploaded to the resource library for your reference.

Contact:

If you have any questions in relation to this workshop or the programme in general please contact melissa.buntine@timewise.co.uk or weworkflexibly@nhs.net