

Conducting a member survey

It will sometimes be useful to conduct a member survey to test their views and/or to demonstrate to management the strength of feeling, or level of concern. It can be used to demonstrate that UNISON stewards are representative of members' views especially if it is being suggested this is not the case. It can also, in some situations, be used jointly with the employer to identify what staff want done to resolve concerns.

Keep the survey short and try to ask questions in a form that can be answered by ticking boxes - it makes the results much quicker and easier to analyse.

Design the survey in a way which means that those responding can't easily be identified - and make it clear that individuals will not be identified in any report arising from the survey. Avoid asking obviously leading questions and leave space for members to give examples or explain answers to important questions.

Consider whether you will want to analyse the survey results by factors such as occupation, gender or ethnic background and ask questions accordingly.

Test the survey out on a couple of colleagues before sending it out to check for any mistakes or confusing questions.

Identify who you need to circulate the survey to and make sure they get a copy. It is a local decision whether or not to include non-UNISON members in the survey - it may be a good recruitment tool.

If you can, offer the opportunity for members to fax or email replies. If staff have access to the internet you may wish to use an online survey (www.surveymonkey.com is a useful free online survey tool). Leave enough time for people to reply - at least two weeks. And, if possible, send out a reminder. It is OK to allow an extra day for responses after the published closing date, but no more.

If you intend to share the results of the survey externally (for example, with your employer) then the number of responses may need to be sufficiently large to demonstrate that they represent a significant enough proportion of the total target group.

Make sure any report you produced from the survey is short, written fairly and presented in a balanced way. If you write a report, give it a title, number the paragraphs, and include a copy of the questionnaire as an appendix.

Sample Survey

Dear colleague

Survey on staffing and workloads within the XYZ Service

In response to concerns expressed by a number of UNISON members, we have decided it is important that we have a comprehensive picture of the impact of (*specify current problem here*) and your views about it.

It will greatly help our discussions with senior management if we have the highest possible response to this survey.

We need your replies back no later than (date). They can be sent by internal post to me, (name) in the ABC Office, by Fax on (Fax number) or e: mail a copy of the at a.steward@XYZ.uk

If you are unsure about what any of the questions mean, or want to know more about the issues please ask any UNISON steward within the service (names below).

Yours sincerely

Your UNISON stewards

(and how to contact them)

Survey

Tick one box only for each question.

1. Which Department do you work in?
 - a. No.1
 - b. No.2.
 - c. No.3

2. Compared with this time last year, would you say that in your working area or department the WORKLOAD has increased, decreased or stayed the same...?
Increased
Decreased
Remained the same
Don't know

3. Compared with this time last year, would you say that in your working area or department the LEVEL OF STRESS has increased, decreased or stayed the same...?
Increased
Decreased
Remained the same
Don't know

4. Would you say that (*specify current problem here*) has made it more difficult to provide the same quality of care to your patients/clients?
Yes, it has become more difficult to provide the same quality of care
No, it has become easier to provide the same quality of care
I haven't noticed a change.
Don't know

5. What aspect of (*specify current problem here*) has most affected you and your colleagues' ability to do the job that needs to be done? Summarise in one sentence please:

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.....

- 6. Do you feel able to confidently raise with your manager any concerns about patient/service user care that are affected by current pressures?
 - a. I feel confident about raising such concerns
 - b. I am worried about raising such concerns

If you ticked Option b), please explain your answer in one sentence, otherwise go to question 7.

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- 7. UNISON stewards have informed the employer that unless urgent steps are taken to improve staffing, a public campaign, including a formal grievance, will be undertaken. Do you:
 - a. Support such a campaign
 - b. Not support such a campaign

Thank you for completing this survey.

Please return this survey no later than (date)