

### Key findings

- The majority of respondents were negative in their attitudes towards working in the NHS. Although overall the respondents were more likely to indicate they were more enthusiastic than motivated when compared to the other scales.
- Pressures on doctors have risen greatly compared to last year, with the majority of respondents feeling less empowered at work. GPs were more likely to report feeling pressure due to patient demands and a lack of time.
- A large proportion of respondents wanted to make improvements to their services in the past year but the vast majority faced barriers when seeking to drive change.
- Integration and better demand management were highlighted by respondents as being crucial for the NHS to survive over the next 65 years.

### Background

A series of nine questions about working in the NHS were sent to members of the BMA's online in-touch panel. These questions included asking doctors about their current pressures and their fears and aspirations for the future.

The survey was sent to a sample of 5,879 BMA panel members in the UK. An initial response rate of 17.5 per cent (1,031 respondents) was achieved. However, 35 respondents who were not working in the NHS were excluded prior to any analysis, giving a final response rate of 17.2 per cent (996 of 5,879).

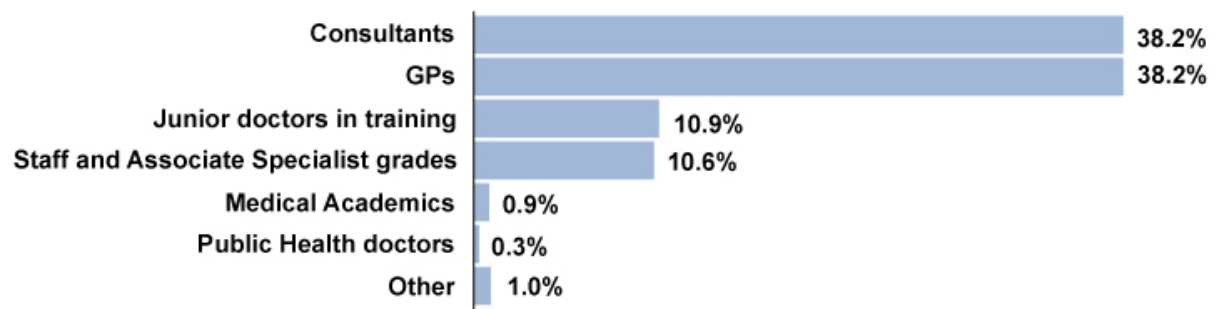
### Results

#### Respondents

Figure 1 illustrates that equal numbers of respondents were consultants and GPs (38.2 per cent of each). 10.9 per cent of respondents were junior doctors in training. Compared with BMA membership distributions, consultants and GPs were over represented; whereas, juniors' opinions were considerably underrepresented.

Respondents were asked where they were currently working. A majority of 77.9 per cent worked in England, 14.6 per cent Scotland, 5.1 per cent Wales and 2.5 per cent Northern Ireland. This is broadly representative of the UK medical workforce.

**Figure 1 - Number of respondents by grade**



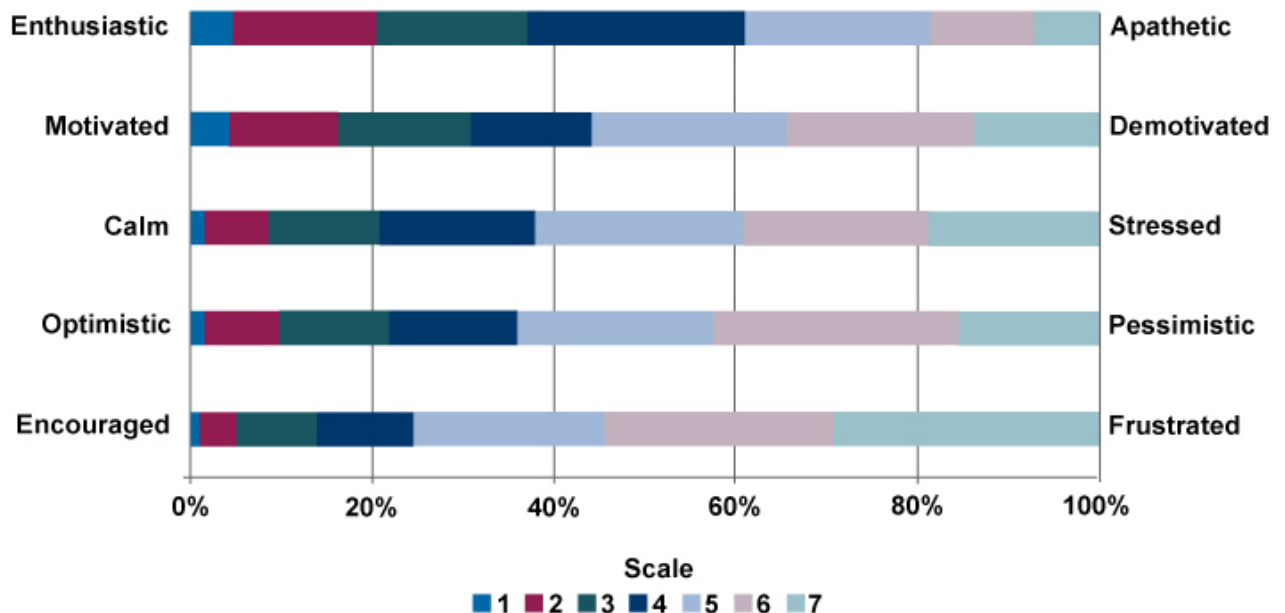
### Working in the NHS

Respondents were asked to describe their attitude on five aspects of working in the NHS, using a scale of one to seven; where one was a positive indicator and seven a negative indicator.

When looking at the five aspects of working for the NHS, doctors were most likely to elicit more positive responses for enthusiasm and motivation compared to the other three measures. However, respondents generally felt more demotivated than motivated (mean = 4.5) and equal proportions of respondents reported being enthusiastic or apathetic (mean = 4.0).

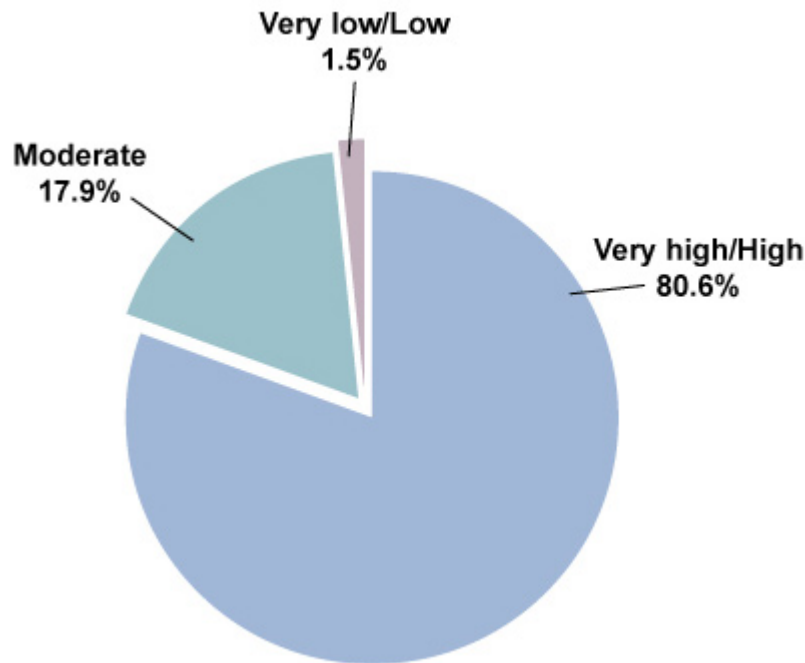
Respondents were most likely to indicate being frustrated than encouraged (mean = 5.4) and were more likely to be stressed than calm (mean = 4.8). Respondents were also more inclined to indicate a pessimistic than optimistic view towards working in the NHS (mean = 4.9) (figure 2).

**Figure 2 - How would you describe your current attitude to work in the NHS?  
(On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is a positive indicator and 7 is a negative indicator)**



80.6 per cent of respondents (801 of 993) felt that their current level of pressure at work was very high or high, only 1.5 per cent felt a low or very low amount of pressure (15 of 993) (figure 3).

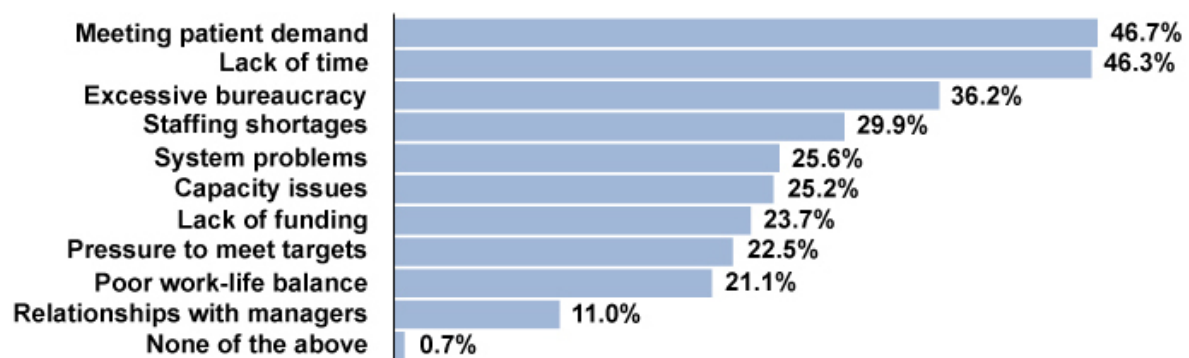
**Figure 3 - How would you describe your current level of pressure at work?**



Further analysis by grade shows that GPs (89.4 per cent) were most likely to indicate very high or high levels of pressure, followed by consultants (80.6 per cent), staff and associate specialist grades (68.9 per cent) and junior doctors in training (66.1 per cent).

Respondents were provided with a list of pressures which had been anecdotally reported by other doctors and health professionals and asked to pick no more than three of the biggest pressures they experienced in the workplace. Meeting patient demand was the most frequently reported (46.7 per cent), closely followed by lack of time (46.3 per cent) and excessive bureaucracy (36.2 per cent) (figure 4).

**Figure 4 - Which of the following are the biggest pressures you currently face in your workplace?**

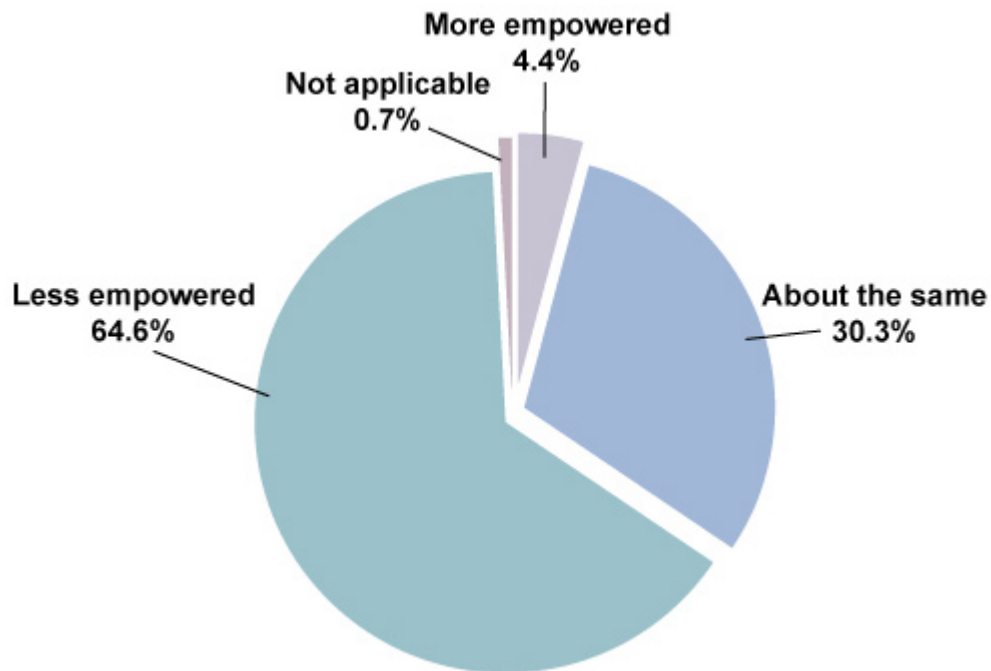


When the top three pressures were further analysed by grade, GPs were the most likely to report experiencing pressure from meeting patient demand and lack of time. Staff and associate specialists were most likely to report pressure from excessive bureaucracy (44.3 per cent).

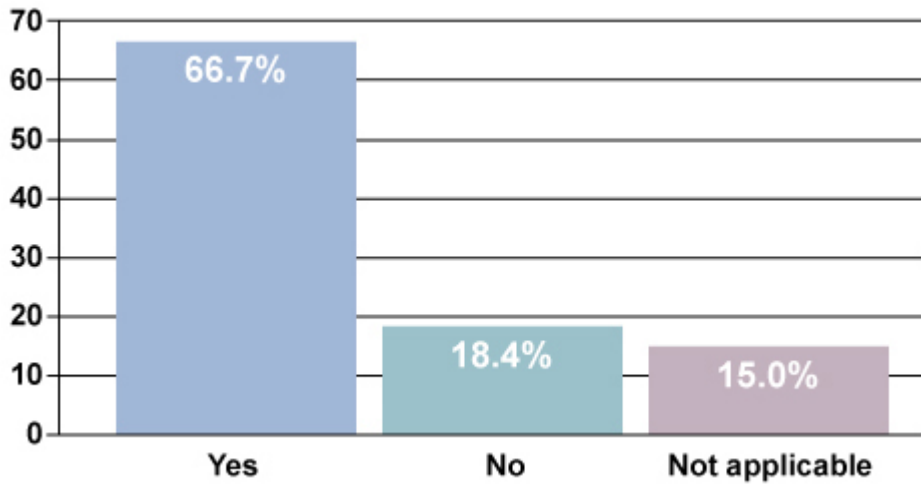
64.6 per cent (641 of 992) of respondents felt less empowered as a doctor in the NHS compared to one year ago (figure 5); with 66.7 per cent of respondents stating they wanted to make changes or improvements to services in the last year (figure 6).

Further examination revealed that GPs reported being less empowered compared to one year ago (74.1 per cent). This was followed by those in the staff and associate specialist grade (64.2 per cent), consultants (60.3 per cent) and juniors in training (49.1 per cent).

**Figure 5 - How empowered do you feel as a doctor in the NHS compared to one year ago?**

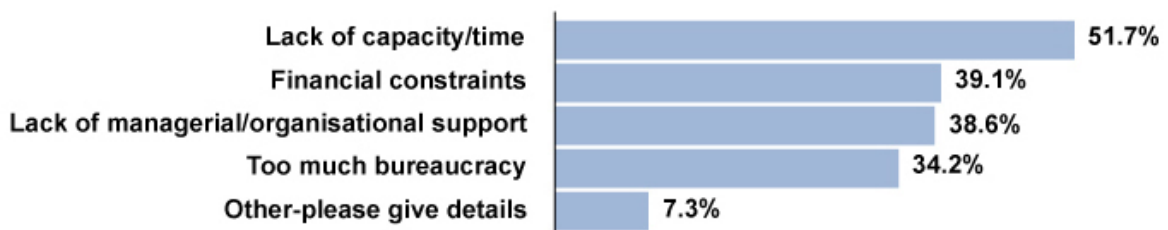


**Figure 6 - Have you wanted to make any changes or improvements to your services in the past year?**



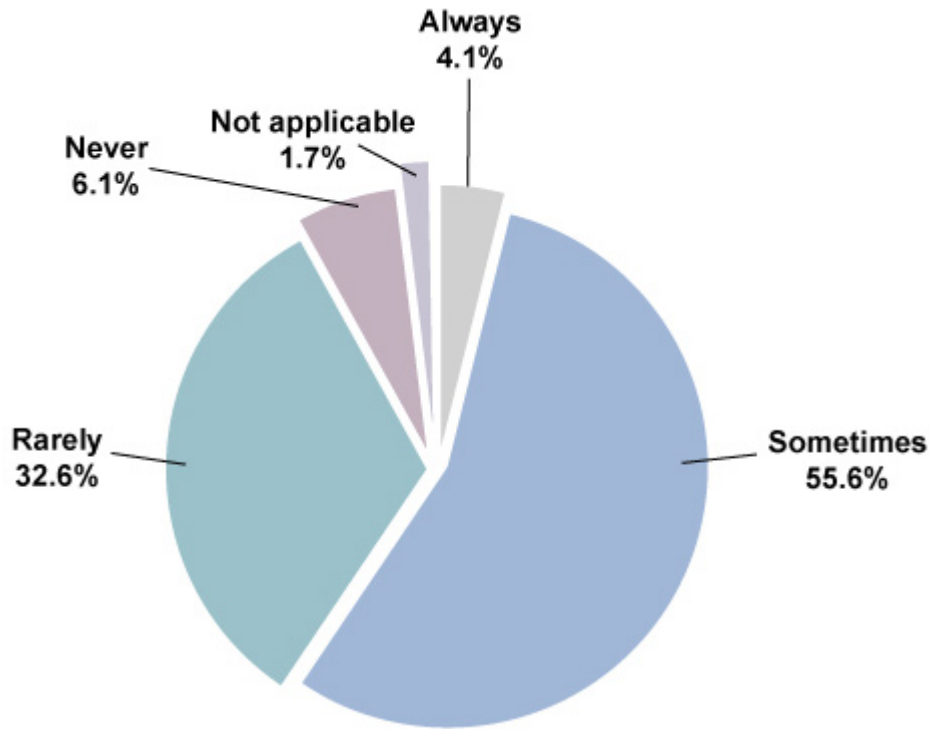
Respondents were asked to state two barriers from a list of five, which they thought were the biggest obstacles faced when attempting to drive change or improve services. The top barrier identified was a lack of capacity or time (51.7 per cent). Overall, 88.7 per cent (883 of 996) of respondents indicated they had faced barriers or obstacles when attempting to drive services (figure 7).

**Figure 7 - Which of the following barriers, if any, were the biggest obstacles to your attempt(s) to drive change or improve services?**



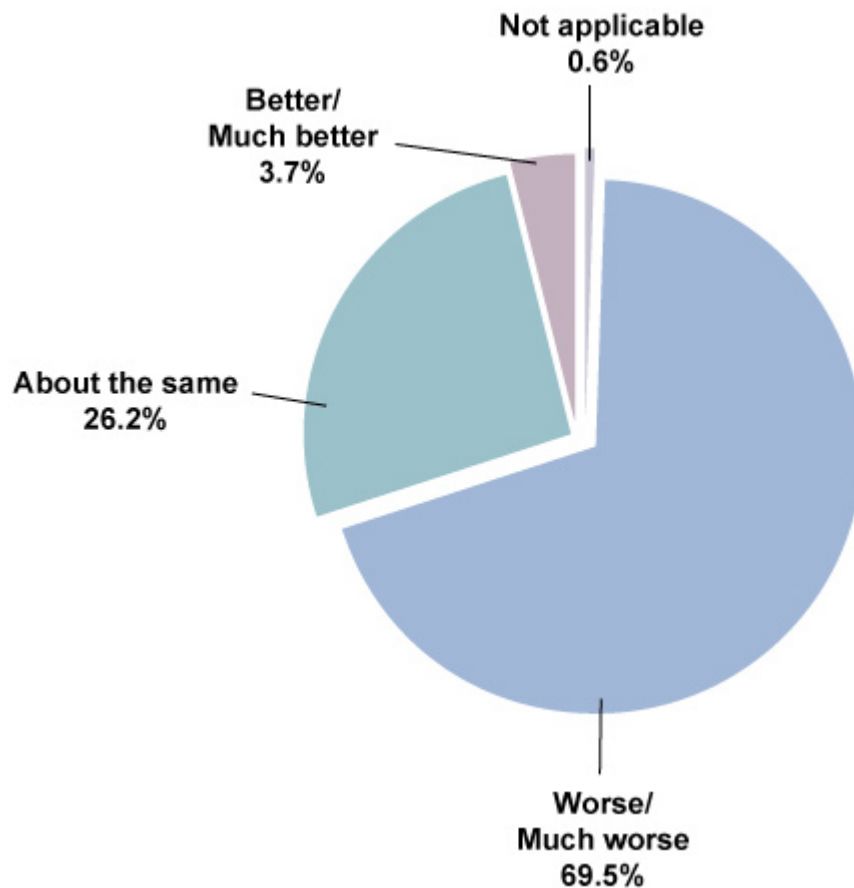
Respondents were asked to indicate the extent they agreed that "As a doctor, I am able to take leadership decisions on behalf of my patients". 55.6 per cent (551 of 991) felt this was true sometimes whereas only 4.1 per cent (41 of 991) felt it was true always; 6.1 per cent felt this was never the case (figure 8).

**Figure 8 - How often would you say the following statement is true of your experience in the NHS: "As a doctor, I am able to take leadership decisions on behalf of my patients."**



Respondents were asked to report about their current experiences at work compared to one year ago. Overall, 69.5 per cent of respondents (689 of 990) felt that their current experiences at work were much worse or worse than those experienced a year ago. Just 6 in 990 respondents (0.6 per cent) felt their experience was better now than a year ago (figure 9).

**Figure 9 - Thinking back to one year ago, how does your current experience at work compare?**



Respondents were asked to pick no more than three options out of 15 factors which they felt needed to happen, to ensure NHS survival over the next 65 years. The three most popular options were greater integration between health and social care (47.4 per cent), better management of patient demand (44.4 per cent) and less emphasis on competition (33.1 per cent) (figure 10).

**Figure 10 - What needs to happen to ensure the NHS survives the next 65 years?**

