

Team Leads Hearts and Minds
Findings from Team Leads Chat (TLC)
-Working through the PANDEMIC-(Inc. session notes)

About Team Leads Chats (TLCs)

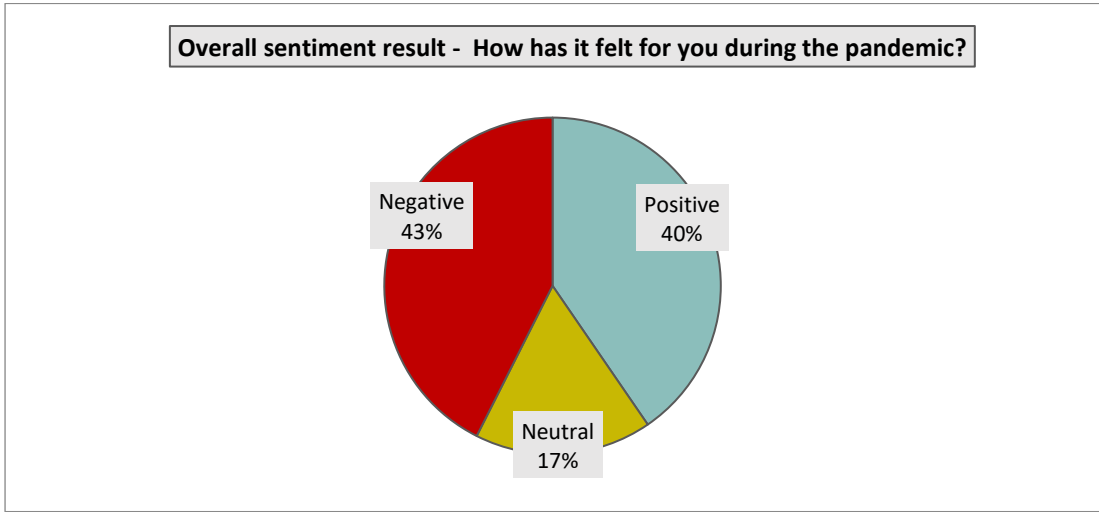
Workforce experience is critical for shaping the future of health and care in Leeds. TLCs create a space for our health and care workforce to *talk, listen, connect* and share experiences of living and working during the pandemic, or working in partnership with health and care colleagues from across the system.

Context

Covid-19 has clearly brought significant challenges for people both within their personal and working lives. All our experiences of living and working during a pandemic have been unique and before moving towards a new way of *living with Covid-19* it has been helpful to reflect on what has been and what has changed. In acknowledgement of this a number of citywide Team Leads Chats (TLCs) were held to hear the ***experiences of our health and care workforce living and working through the pandemic***. The learning that was shared will help to increase awareness and make Leeds an even better place to work.

The majority of staff who attended TLCs work in desk-based roles and have been working remotely for much, if not all, of the pandemic. **Unfortunately, it has been logistically more difficult to attract participants from frontline roles during this period.**

Analysing the sentiment of each statement response to **“How has it felt for you during the pandemic”** there is an almost even split of responses which were either positive (40%) or negative (43%).



Key findings-positive

Outcomes

- Removal of organisational barriers enabled effective delivery of work that has made a *real difference to real people*.
- The pandemic has provided greater clarity of organisational priorities.
- Positive disruption to the system created opportunities for *some* people to work outside their usual role to support and collaborate with others.

Our workforce:

- Work /life balance has improved for some; with many welcoming opportunities to work remotely or more flexibly.
- Empathy and tolerance between colleagues and partners has increased.
- Re-connecting and developing relationships on a human level feels more important than ever.
- Many people express feeling valued; appreciated, energised, grateful, and privileged to be part of a historic event.

Key findings-Negative

- Feelings of overwhelm and anxiety have dominated; heightened by continuous remote working, prolonged periods of isolation and increased working hours.
- Joining an organisation whilst working remotely interrupts relationship building, personal confidence and ability to settle.
- Urgent reassignment to alternative job roles to support the pandemic has led some people to question the value of their usual role.
- Remote workers have experienced guilt for frontline workforce.
- Many people express feeling scared and disconnected, isolated, exhausted, angry, ill-prepared, with feelings of relentlessness, grief, loss, sadness and uncertainty.

Conclusion:

All experiences of the pandemic are unique, with individual experiences impacted by personal circumstances, opportunity to support pandemic related work, and levels of available workplace support.

Whilst organisational representation has differed in number across the Team Leeds Chats, the focus groups have effectively reached a broad cross section of our Leeds Health and Care Partnership. Feedback from the TLCs for living and working through the pandemic is consistent and demonstrates a sense of psychological relief for many; a cathartic space in which to share experiences, and to reconnect with others on a very personal and human level. TLCs have strengthened the voice of our workforce and set the tone for positive cultural change moving forward.

It is notable that many participants have expressed a sense of guilt for their front-line colleagues. One participant reported: ***'It is important for us all to have an opportunity to have a safe space to reflect'***. This is a key consideration for any future engagement activity *to ensure that Team Leeds reaches and includes all of its members.*

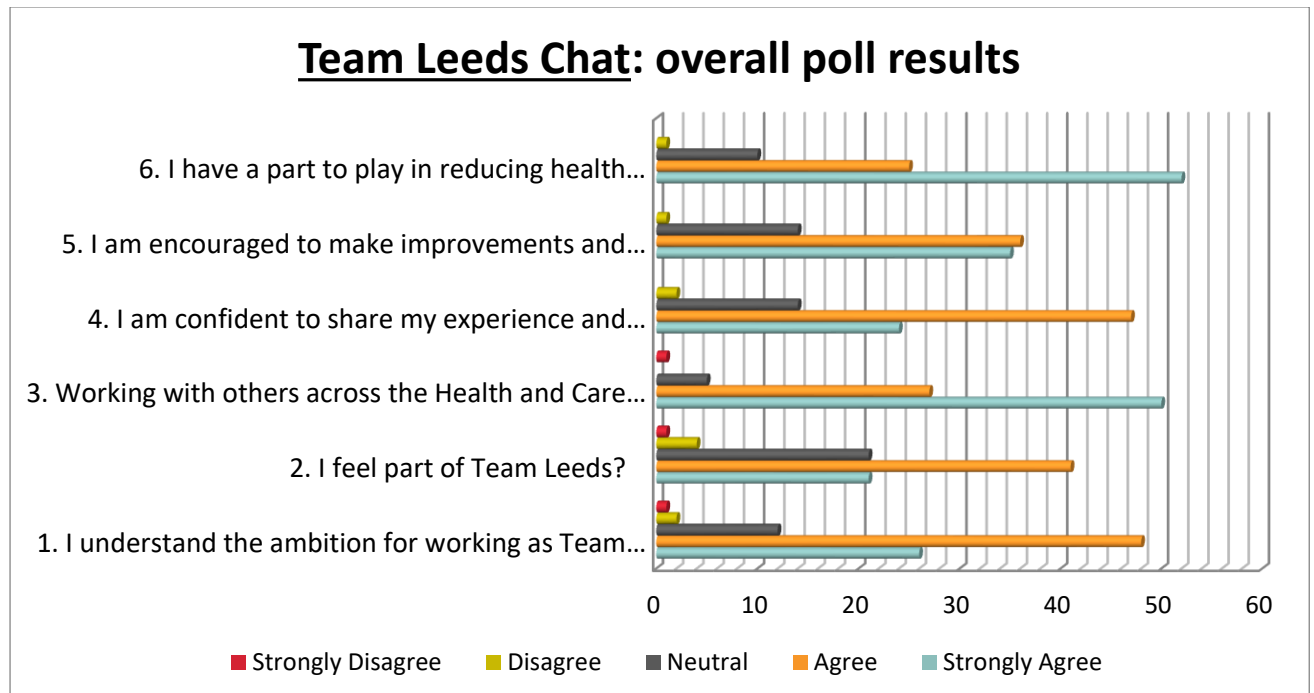
Top 3 Recommendations

- Retain the best of the changes instigated during the pandemic; avoiding a resurgence of bureaucratic processes or silo working.
- Retain flexible working conditions where possible; enabling the workforce to work both remotely and face-face.
- Enable front-line staff (where not already done so) to access a space for reflection of their own lived experiences during the pandemic.

Poll results

TLC participants were asked to take part in a quick-fire poll, which provides an indication of the workforce' understanding of Team Leeds and our joint health and care ambitions.

Note: this is a participant sample of 93 people from across health and care and is not fully representative of all workforce views.



The results from the TLC poll on this occasion indicate there are improvements to be made across all 6 domains; in particular perhaps 'I feel part of Team Leeds' which has been a common theme throughout all TLCs.

Thank-you to everybody who took part in this Team Leeds Chat: we hope this findings report provides a good summary of the key issues discussed. If you have would like to provide further feedback please email us at: leedsth-tr.heartsandmins@nhs.net.

Appendix – Example notes from the Team Leeds Chat

What did participants say were the challenges/ experiences of living and working during the pandemic?

- It was the worst time of my life but, I was blessed to have a line manager who was very supportive.
- I learnt new skills, collaborated with colleagues from diverse departments and made new friends along the way.
- We appreciated the time we got to spend as a family unit however we found working with the children at home a struggle as we were both key workers.
- Moving forward I hope that we can question unnecessary travel and continue the use of online technology to attend meetings.
- Work / life balance has definitely improved without commuting and has meant that I can walk my son to school (a 6 min round trip) with little disruption to work.
- I avoid 90 minutes of commuting per day
- I recognise that there has been lots of positives (the ability to change and adapt) potentially quicker than pre pandemic.
- Lots of feeling of disconnection and helplessness both professionally and personally which I believe will stay with me for a long time to come.
- Catching up with team members online was quite simple but some days back-to-back meetings were intense.
- I like being able to make nice lunches because I'm close to the kitchen!
- I'm excited by the prospects that remote working offers - in future I could work from abroad.
- Travelling between meetings took a lot of time and money so I've been able to get more done efficiently using zoom.
- The necessity to deliver at pace has meant that there's been a really 'can do' attitude and task orientated focus, which has been great, providing tangible outputs and a real sense of achievement. I think to a large extent this has been down to the removal, or at least blurring of organisational boundaries, as required to deliver at scale and pace.
- I felt a bit helpless initially and getting into a work-life routine took a while.
- I'm used to it now and there are many positives from working from home for me.
- It's hard to join an organisation and work completely remotely because you miss the important 'getting to know each other'.
- IT has been a challenge - slow connectivity, systems that don't work well together (e.g. Teams and Explorer).

What did participants say would help to increase support and inclusion in the workplace?

- Wellbeing offers.
- The pandemic brought the opportunity for me to work in various departments that suffered from shortage of staff.
- There was good collaboration that came about impromptu without bureaucratic delays.
- It was difficult working on inadequate equipment (such as laptop at my dining table). When I was able to get a monitor and chair from the office it made working much easier. I had to buy a desk for an office space though because I was perched on a dressing table - so had to drop some money for that.
- The shielding group said “we were innovative, bold and quick.” And “leadership was magnificent”.

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