

Methodology



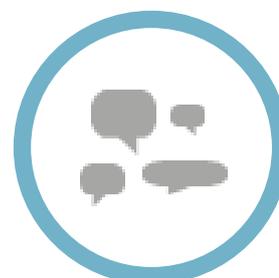
An **Immersion Phase** was held at the beginning of the project. This involved **in-depth interviews with several senior DH officials**. These discussions outlined the context in which the Department is currently working and clarified objectives for the research.



Following this, Ipsos MORI conducted **118 in-depth interviews with key stakeholders** identified by DH. Interviews were conducted between 4th November and 21st December 2015 and lasted 30-45 minutes on average.



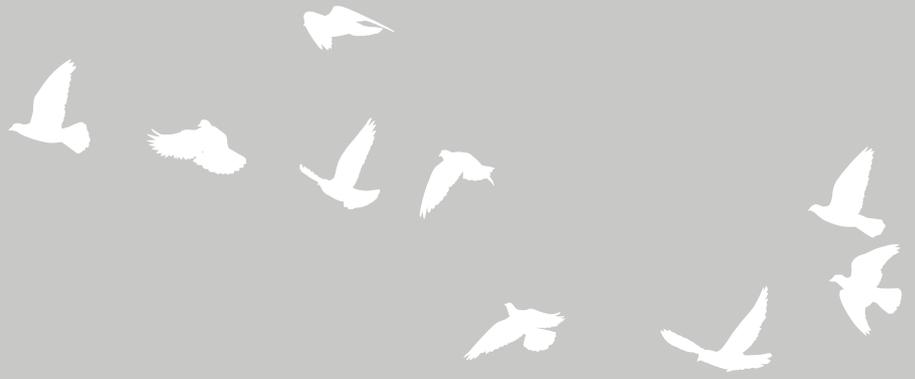
Apart from six quantitative questions, the data presented in this report is qualitative and therefore **illustrative and exploratory rather than statistically reliable**. Verbatim comments have been included to provide insight into particular issues or topics. The quantitative data should also be seen as indicative due to the small base sizes.



This slidepack presents key findings identified from the research within the following themes:

- Working relationships
- Approach to engagement
- Policy making
- Role and strategy
- Future directions

It is designed to provide an overview of the key findings and help inform the Department's strategy moving forward.



The year in summary

2015 has been a busy year for the Department with an election and the formation of a new government. However, for stakeholders it has felt quiet, with something of a hiatus in terms of engagement.

- At the time stakeholders were interviewed, they were waiting for two major announcements:



- The **outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review**, published on 25 November (towards the end of the interviewing process); and,



- **The Shared Delivery Plan**

Summary of key findings

Working Relationships

- Steady **progress** in a number of areas.
- Stakeholders describe **collaborative and honest** relationships based on mutual understanding.
- **Strong links with individuals.**

We have a good relationship with lots of collaboration, and co-produced work...They are responsive and willing to have conversations. Local Government

Concern that relationships too reliant on links with a few individuals

We work closely with two people [and] have got a long established relationship... It's critically dependent on these two people we would be very unconfident if they left.

Professional Body



Strong, personal relationships are also a risk for the Department, as **they rely to such a great extent on one or two individuals for each stakeholder.**

Stakeholders emphasised the **vulnerability of these relationships** to organisational change.

Understanding of stakeholders' issues and challenges

A **positive shift** in levels of agreement that the Department understands the issues and challenges of stakeholders' organisations...however:

Timeliness of engagement could be improved

Stakeholders feel they are often involved at short notice, which limits their ability to collaborate.

"Sometimes the Department forgets that we've got a day job to do...they'll say, oh we need something but in a week's time...sometimes there's a lack of an appreciation of what our day job involves.

Arms Length Body

DH understands the issues and challenges my organisation is facing

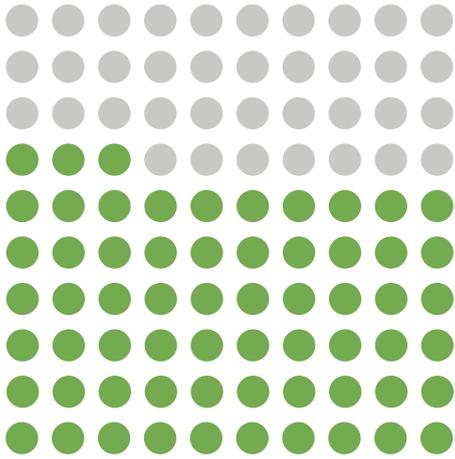


Working Relationships

Doing business with DH

64% agree that DH is good to do business with

This represents a small decrease on the percentage in agreement in the previous two years.



69%

agreed in
2014

78%

agreed in
2013

65%

agreed in
2012

2015

Transactional relationships could be improved

There continues to be the perception that **the Department is being stretched**, as it has less capacity than before. As a result, progress was sometimes slower than stakeholders would have hoped.

Projects and changes just don't get moved to fruition in any timely manner - there are real, real problems in terms of delays.
Professional Body

If DH wants to work in partnership with charities, it needs to change the way it pays.

Procurement remains an issue for VCS & Social Enterprises who were critical of the length of time it takes for funding to be awarded and funds transferred.

VCS and Social Enterprises

Some need help **navigating the Department structure**. Where strong close relationships were absent, stakeholders spoke of the difficulties in finding relevant people to engage with.

Don't ask them for much - partly because I don't know who to ask, so being bit clearer on the roles and responsibilities would be really good.
Professional Body

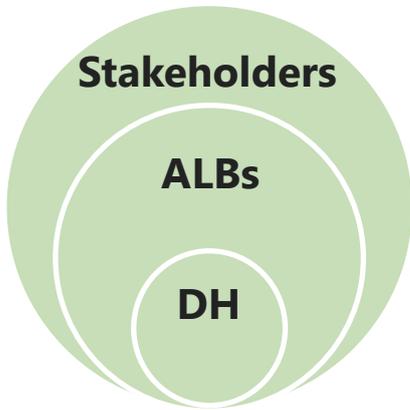


Stakeholders suggested that organisational maps would help them negotiate their way through the Department.



Working Relationships

Relationships require re-defining



Stakeholders are increasingly distant from the Department since the Health & Social Care Act 2012.

Increasing contact with other bodies such as Public Health England, HSCIC and NHS England.

Because cancer policy is delivered by NHSE they are now our first port of call. Most of our day to day interactions are with NHSE.

VCS and Social Enterprises

There is a need for the Department to re-define its relationship with these stakeholders and manage their expectations.

The necessity to show leadership in the sector

There is a continuing need for the Department to take a leadership role, particularly:

Co-ordination

Conflicting priorities and duplication in the work between the Department and ALBs remain unresolved, causing confusion.

Stakeholders spoke of the need for a co-ordinated approach to initiatives and policy making to allow them to work more effectively together.

There have been many times where there's duplication of efforts between the different bodies (DH and NHS England). I'm not quite sure who runs the shop, if anyone does.

Professional Body

Accountability

Stakeholders were unclear about where accountability lies between the Department and ALBs.

"No one understands who has what powers between DH and NHSE."

Other Government Department

Approach to engagement

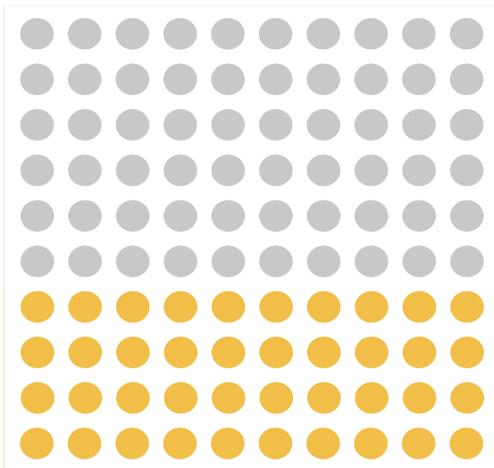
Informal communications were generally seen as good

[they give] me a broad idea of what they're working on – research breakthroughs, appointments, a rounded view of what's happening and what's making a difference.

Regulator and Statutory Body

Email communication around the Spending Review, which kept stakeholders aware of DH's role and perspective during that time, was **highlighted as one particularly positive** example

Opinions of formal communications were, however, more varied: some stakeholders felt they were not hearing from DH regularly enough, while others said they felt overwhelmed



2015

40%

Agree that DH effectively communicates what it is doing

38% (2014) 35% (2012)

I definitely get frequent communications, but it isn't the stuff I necessarily want to know about.

VCS and Social Enterprise

Short notice requests continue to be a problem and this is something that was mentioned consistently across stakeholder groups

Stakeholders described **the impact this had on their ability to engage effectively** with the Department – and it was mentioned in relation to meetings, consultations and other requests for input.

Sometimes the engagement and partnership can be 'ta-da! do you like this?'

VCS & Social Enterprises

Approach to engagement

Among the engagement programmes, the Health and Care Partnership was the most well-known; however the approach may need a rethink



The Health and Care Partnership was thought to offer **good opportunities for networking**



It's good it's there, it's good to be able to ask questions of ministers and senior folk in a public forum and have that debate with others.

Trade Union and Staff Associations



However, stakeholders **questioned whether it was really meeting their needs**, or even those of the Department. Some stakeholders felt it has grown to be **too large** and feels **too general, lacking focus** on specific issues. There was also some concern that it offered **limited opportunity to facilitate true engagement or collaboration**.

It's a useful information gathering exercise, but I'm not sure if it provides any strategic insight, particularly.

Umbrella and Membership Group

The Third Sector Strategic Partner Programme continues to be recognised as a powerful tool for the voluntary sector



Without [the] programmes, [we] wouldn't be able to do the work [we] do for carers.

VCS and Social Enterprise



However, some **potential improvements** were suggested, such as earlier notice to stakeholders of whether the programme will be continued in coming years.

In general, though, the programme was seen as a **useful and potentially** powerful tool.

Policy making

Feedback on DH's approach to policy making was generally positive

Stakeholders felt that the Department contains **skilled and effective policy makers** who are making robust and evidence-based policy in complex and challenging areas.

 *It is rigorous. I think they have some really smart people doing their policy work. Overall, I think they're pretty connected to what is going on.*

Professional Education

However, stakeholders feel that **the Department's hands are sometimes tied** by lack of resources or by politics.

I think that they are just totally pressed for time. It's very, it's probably very haphazard, very rushed and not thought through enough. And that's not their fault. They've got the talent there. It's just a question of time and ministerial demands.

Arm's Length Body

Stakeholders were generally positive about the ways in which DH has engaged them in the development of policy, and improvements seen in previous waves of the research have been maintained

61%



Agree that DH involves its stakeholders in the development of policy and strategies

63% (2014)

66% (2013)

58% (2012)

Stakeholders generally recognised that the Department has built upon improvement made in previous years and has **made a clear and deliberate effort to engage** with stakeholders effectively on policy development

Policy making

The improvements seen year on year do not, however, mean that there is not still more to be done.



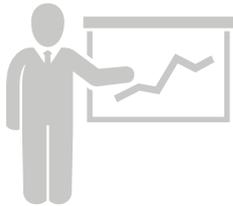
Some stakeholders felt that it would benefit both them and DH if they were **involved earlier in consultations**.



Sometimes it feels like policy is being done, and policy thinking, in the DH without involvement at an early stage of others.

Commercial and Industry

Stakeholders **would appreciate feedback on their input** into policy, where given.



If we are putting forward suggestions and we're just flogging a dead horse, I'd rather that we knew if it's not going to fly with officials. If we're wasting our time and energy then we can go and spend it doing something else.



Local Government



A number of stakeholders expressed **concern over whether the right stakeholders were always being involved** – some thought too much notice was paid to lobbyists rather than representative groups. Stakeholders from **Local Government in particular** felt that they were not always included where they should be.

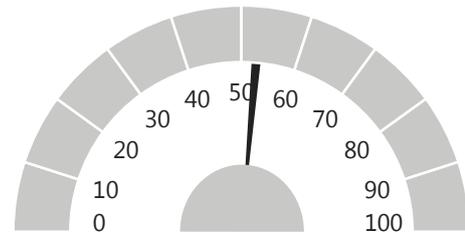


There is a general issue around the extent to which the Department is involving the people who are going to have to implement and fund any policies that came out.

Professional Body

These concerns echo those reported by stakeholders in previous waves of the research, reinforcing that these are important areas to focus on in future

Role & Strategy

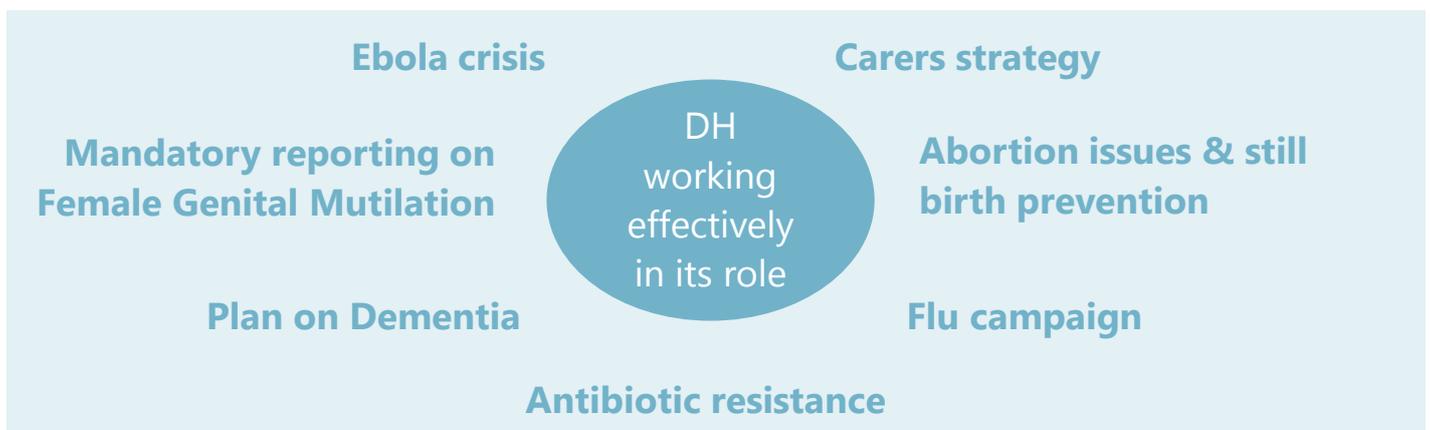


Understanding of DH's role

53% agree that they have a clear understanding of the Department's role and purpose (39% in 2014).

Stakeholders have a good understanding of DH's role, describing it as the '**conveyor**', '**enabler**', '**facilitator**', or '**intermediary**'. There were some good examples of DH performing its role effectively and there appear to be two common ingredients for success identified by stakeholders :

1. **Collaboration**: DH pulling together the necessary organisations to tackle the issue.
2. **Early Involvement**: of stakeholders in the initial/influencing stages.



There are however some areas for improvement...



While there was familiarity with 'stewardship', **the concept was not always clear** to stakeholders.

They have talked about stewardship but this could mean anything – it doesn't answer the question, just rephrases it

Other Government Department

Role & Strategy

Areas for improvement continued...



Stakeholders generally had good theoretical understanding but were **less clear on the detail**: what DH should be leading on, where DH should be adding value, or what influence individual teams were having.



DH, and ministers, have continued involvement in operational matters. This suggests that stakeholders could **benefit from better communication about the Department's role**, with a strong rationale for what it will involve itself in and why.



Policy making and leadership are seen as **requiring two very different, and not necessarily complementary, skill sets**. DH has proven itself in the former but still has some way to go on the latter.

The Department's vision and strategy



Good support for DH's priorities. However stakeholders noted that some have been on the government's agenda for a very long time, and they would like to see some prioritisation within them.



There is a clear vision for the NHS but lacking strategy from DH. The vision for the NHS is very clear (the Five Year Forward View), however what is less clear among stakeholders is DH's vision for the wider sector.

We have the 5 year vision for NHS England but nothing like that for DH. Not sure I know what their role will be in the future 

Professional Education

Future Directions

Stakeholders expect change and improvement



2015 was a quiet year and stakeholders spoke of something of a **hiatus in terms of engagement.**

Stakeholders have seen limited changes over the past year in the way in which they have been engaged.



This has allowed relationships to bed in further, deepen and improve.



However, stakeholders haven't seen action taken on some of the complaints they previously had.

A structured approach to engagement

There are **strong working relationships** between DH and many of its stakeholders. However...

Over-reliance on individuals

Extremely positive about the people they deal with on a daily basis, but relationship feels over-reliant on one or two individuals



There is a need to develop effective structures underpinning engagement

Distancing from DH

Many have less contact with DH; for example some relationships have shifted to ALBs



Sense there is an 'inner circle' with whom DH deals regularly, with others not being included in policy discussions at all

Future Directions

Demonstrating that DH has the right skills in place

Policy making within DH is seen as a **key strength**. However...

These skills do not necessarily **coincide with those needed for leadership**. Questions were raised around whether DH can be both effective policy makers and leaders.



DH needs to **reassure stakeholders** that it is possible to do both, and demonstrate its leadership capabilities.

Further clarity on role and purpose

Continues to be some confusion about DH's role and purpose; DH and ministers continue to be **involved in areas that stakeholders would not expect**.



DH needs to **explain the rationale** for these actions and how this fits with the role as set out in legislation.



Some stakeholders still need more **details of the respective responsibilities** between DH and the ALBs.

Stakeholder priorities

A key area stakeholders want DH to focus on was **finances**. They asked for DH to:

- set out how to achieve more with less;
- lead an honest debate with the public about what can be done within the current funding; and
- fight for increased funding.



Other priorities: impact of an ageing population; improving social care and particularly integration; public health and prevention. **DH needs to be prepared to work across government** to deliver these goals.

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