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|  Catrin.macey@wales.nhs.ukCreating a Firebreak for theNHS. A Practical User’s Guide |
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# **Fire Fighting**

# Since the NHS was created it has provided free healthcare and supported research however in some respects it has become a victim of its own success. Innovation and more complex interventions have increased clinical activity and demand without an increase in resources leading to an increase in patient dis-satisfaction and a decrease in staff wellbeing. In recent years the term firefighting has been adopted to describe the state of the NHS. The NHS is burning and the challenge facing individuals and teams is how we can move from this “firefighting” state to one where we have capacity to work in a proactive rather than a reactive manner.

## **Fire Break for the NHS**

The NHS is burning, we need a firebreak. Used by firefighters, a firebreak is created to stop the fire from spreading giving them time, to think, and plan to proactively prevent further damage. The NHS cannot simply continue to fight the flames of increased demands and a disempowered workforce, we need a firebreak to stop time, to allow individuals to breath, to think and to create more time and capacity within the confines of current resources. Individuals and teams form the foundation of the NHS with frontline knowledge of issues. As a Leader you are their advocate and can enable them to be the best that they can, facilitating change and improving outcomes, not only for them but for the communities that we serve but this requires time.

**Just an hour. How to introduce the Firebreak.**

It starts with just an hour, and four questions, give a firebreak grab pack and one hour each week to each team member. What’s important is that this isn’t about knowing all the answers at the beginning; it’s a journey of learning and change by asking what matters to them. You may say that we cannot afford to give staff this time well the reality is that we simply cannot afford not to act, it’s not enough to keep on doing the things the way we do, Firefighting is not sustainable, we will continue to see burnout, high levels of sickness and low levels of recruitment within our services,

**We will never be in a position to progress the NHS unless we invest TIME in activities other than clinical**

# **The Firebreak grab pack**

Each individual is given a grab pack that contains;

* Four pre-set Questions
* Pen
* Paper
* KitKat – have a break have a KitKat and most of us think a little better with a bit of a sugar boost.
* An hour

**The Four Questions**

1) Is there something that takes a significant chunk of your time, does it need to be done and are you the right person to do it?

2) Are there things that you do that are duplicated by others, and who is best placed to do it?

3) What one change to the way you work would make the biggest difference?

4) What is your main learning, upskilling or development need that would enable you to improve patient outcomes and job satisfaction?

These questions are designed to start the individual on their journey to consider what matters to them, why do they do something, how do they do it, does it need to be done, is there a better, smarter way to do it and what do they need to make the change? It may take more than the first hour to fully answer the questions, even if it takes four sessions they need to be a true picture of the individuals’ current practice.

**Establishing the Firebreak**

The answers form the foundations to the toolkit and establish the firebreak, your role is to empower staff to implement rapid change following on from their learning. You may not agree with all the suggestions but these are the things that matter to the individual and they need permission to trial changes, with clear review and audit to assess the result.

**The Toolkit**

The firebreak and the changes made have an ongoing effect to create time within the confines of current available resources. The other elements of the toolkit can now be introduced to proactively move forward towards sustainability.

**Structured Audit**

* Empower individuals to expand and further consider key themes identified from the four initial questions and changes they believe need to be made.
* Further develop questions into audit of systems and processes currently in use and challenge old ways of working.
* Findings and outcomes should be used to highlight areas of good practice which meet patient outcomes and those that do not.
* Rapid implementation of change according to findings of initial review.
* Implement new practice alongside robust audit of desired outcomes before any changes and at regular intervals.

**Population Engagement**

* Work with population groups to identify how communication can be improved.
* Develop stewardship forums.
* Identify the desired patient outcomes for specific population groups.
* Plan care and service in collaboration with service users.

**Maximizing Resources**

* Reduce duplication of services
* Reduce silo working
* Promote collaborative working practice
* Cross sector working with social, private and voluntary service
* Promote informal and self-care care closer to home right person, right place, right time.
* Develop value based healthcare.

As the toolkit is put into action and changes to working practice are implemented the ultimate aim is for individuals to have 10% of working hours each week to continue the toolkit activities. This provides space to develop a valued and empowered workforce and introduces value based healthcare putting staff wellbeing and improved patient outcomes at the forefront of the NHS

**Tomorrow needs to be better than today**

## **About the Firebreak Movement.**

Catrin Macey is a Nurse with over 30 years’ experience in the NHS. She is part of the first cohort of Climb Wales (an innovative new leadership course for the NHS in Wales) and was given the challenge to consider what mattered most to her as a leader. Constantly hearing the term firefighting in work she has developed the Firebreak to empower individuals and teams (the core of the NHS) to move forwards and break the cycle of ever increasing pressure, demand and stress If we are to move the NHS forwards Working towards this means investing in a truly valued workforce where staff wellbeing and the outcomes of patients are the priority, creating meaningful opportunities for those working within the NHS by asking what matters to them.

If you would like to introduce the firebreak personally or within your team please register so the impact of the firebreak can be monitored and reviewed. To register or if you have any questions please contact Catrin.

Email: catrin.macey@wales.nhs.uk

# **Fire Break Survey 2022**

**Fire Break**

The questionnaire is anonymous, and should only take 3 minutes to complete.
Many thanks for your support

### **1. What date did you start your fire break \***

|  |
| --- |
|  |

### **2. At what point are you in the fire break while filling in this form? \***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | Just starting |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | Just finished the questions |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | Three Months after start date |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | Six months after start date |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | Other (please specify):

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### **3. Please indicate your age by ticking the appropriate box \***

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| --- | --- |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | 16-24 |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | 25-34 |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | 35-44 |

|  |  |
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| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | 45-54 |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | 55-64 |

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| --- | --- |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | 65-74 |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | 75 and above |

### **4. Are you considering leaving the NHS in the next year? \***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | Yes |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | No |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | Maybe |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | Other (please specify):

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### **5. Any further comment regarding your plan for the next year (i.e. Question 4) \***

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**6. What best suits you gender? \***

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| --- | --- |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | Male |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | Female |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | Other |

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| --- | --- |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | Prefer to self-describe |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | Prefer not to say |

### **7. How is your job role described? \***

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| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | Additional Clinical Services |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | Add Prof Scientific and Technic |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | Administrative and Clerical |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | Allied health professionals |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | Estates and Ancillary |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | Healthcare Scientists |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | Medical and Dental |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | Nursing and midwifery registered |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | Corporate / Management |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | Student |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | Other (please specify):

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### **8. Which division do you work in? \***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | West |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | Central |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | East |

### **9. Do you feel burnt out? \***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | Yes |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | No |
| https://app.smartsurvey.co.uk/images/ico/print/checkbox.png   | maybe |

### **10. What extra information can you give us about how you feel with regards to burn out? \***

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**NHS FIREBREAK ASSESSMENT**

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| **Before commencing with your firebreak, you are invited to use this form to help you identify work and home related pressures, please complete this form to the best of your ability to reflect the view of any pressures you may or may not be experiencing in your working environment. This assessment will help to identify the outcome and effectiveness of the firebreak for you personally and you will be asked to repeat the assessment at six months.** **Name:** ……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….**Occupation:**……………………………………………………………… **Department:**………………………………………….**East /Central / West \***   **Date of Assessment:** ……/……/…… **Initial assessment** **Six-month assessment \* \*delete as applicable.** |
| 1. **Support**
 | **YES** | **Partly**  | **NO** |  | 1. **Change**
 | **YES** | **Partly**  | **NO**  |
| Do you feel you get enough support and help from your colleagues? | 0 | 1 | 2 |  | Are you made aware of changes that are happening at work? | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Do you feel you get enough support and help from your line manager? | 0 | 1 | 2 |  | Do you feel you have opportunity to comment and ask questions on the change(s) | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Do you get encouragement and supportive feedback regarding your work?  | 0 | 1 | 2 |  | Do you feel supported during change at work?  | 0 | 1 | 2 |
|  **Support Total Score =**  |  |  | **Changes Total Score =**  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **2. Relationships**  | **YES** | **Partly**  | **NO** |  | 1. **Control**
 | **YES** | **Partly**  | **NO** |
| Do you feel relationships at work are strained? | 2 | 1 | 0 |  | Are you able to have some say about how your job is done? | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Do you feel affected by conflict in the team? | 3 | 2 | 0 |  | Do you feel able to contribute to team decisions / are your suggestions considered? | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Are you subjected to personal harassment in the form of unkind words or behaviours?  | 5 | 3 | 0 |  | Do you feel you are using the skills you have to full effect? | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| **Relationships Total Score =**  |  |  | **Control Total Score =**  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. **Role**
 | **YES** | **Partly**  | **NO**  |  | 1. **Demands**
 | **YES** | **Partly**  | **NO** |
| Are you clear about what is expected of you at work? | 0 | 1 | 2 |  | Are you able to take adequate breaks? | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Are you clear what your responsibilities and duties are? | 0 | 1 | 2 |  | Are you able to meet the demands of your job within agreed hours of work / deadlines? | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Are you clear about the goals and objectives for you department / organisation are?  | 0 | 1 | 2 |  | Do you have conflicting demands?  | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| **Role Total Score =**  |  |  | **Demands Total Score =** |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. **Home / Personal**
 | **YES** | **Partly**  | **NO**  |  | **Score For Individual**  | **Low 0-2** | **Medium 3-4** | **High 5-9** |
| Do you have other stressors worrying you?  | 2 | 1 | 0 |  | 1. **Support**
 |  |  |  |
| Do you use 5 ways to wellbeing? | 0 | 1 | 2 |  | 1. **Relationships**
 |  |  |  |
| Do you have enough work life balance?  | 0 | 1 | 2 |  | 1. **Role**
 |  |  |  |
| **HOME / PERSONAL TOTAL SCORE =** |  |  | 1. **Home / Personal**
 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | 1. **Change**
 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | 1. **Control**
 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | 1. **Demands**
 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  | **Totals**  |  |  |  |

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| **NHS FIREBREAK ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN DATE: ……./……./…….** |

 |
| ***Following on from the firebreak questions Identify areas for change within your work***  | **Identify actions needed to make the changes.** | **Timescale for the changes** | **How will you know the change is effective and how will you review it?** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |