



## Telling your staff

When selling, how and when you tell your staff is essential to maintain their loyalty and ensure morale is maintained.

You may want to keep the sale of your practice confidential from patients and staff until you're sure the sale will proceed. It's not uncommon for staff to be told after contracts have been exchanged. However, there might be advantages to involving staff earlier, so they can help make a good impression to prospective buyers.

**When thinking about the right time to tell staff of the sale, it's well worth exploring the benefits and drawbacks. If staff are involved at an early stage, there are some potential risks:**

- Morale may suffer
- The news might leak out to the patients which could compromise the buyer's opportunity to gain maximum value from goodwill
- Staff may feel you don't value them because you are selling the practice and 'them'

To minimise these risks it's a good idea to let your practice team know why you are selling. Your team will also want reassurance about job security – there is legislation in place – see Staff Rights below for more information.

It's important that all appraisals are kept up to date and that you answer all questions openly and honestly. In some cases, staff may want to leave the practice once the sale completes, particularly if you are not staying on. All this needs to be discussed, particularly with the buyer.

**The advantages of involving staff at an early stage of include:**

- The opportunity for you to explain in full the reasons for the sale
- Reduces the risk of ill-founded rumour
- It allows staff to promote the practice to potential buyers

Experience suggests that this is the most likely time for staff to be told. The risk is that staff may find out anyway and feel undervalued or not trusted, which may lead to resentment. Naturally, staff should be told prior to any communication with patients to ensure they have the necessary information to answer any questions they may have.

There is no specific time that applies to all sales. It depends on each circumstance but try to make a decision as soon as possible.

## Staff rights

The Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment (TUPE) Regulations 2006, came into force on 6 April 2006. Under these regulations, all employees are afforded special rights during the transfer of undertakings. These are highly complex issues, and employers and employees cannot agree to exclude the effect of TUPE. Legal advice should be taken before proceeding.

