

Involving key stakeholders



Overview of actions

Stakeholder involvement relied on WDPs that aligned employers, colleges and sector bodies. WDPs are multi-agency groups that bring together employers, colleges and partners to co-design skills solutions. Collaboration enabled shared purpose, reduced duplication and ensured the design reflected student and provider needs.

WDPs

The WDPs are a core part of the Thames Valley LSIP, created to tackle adult social care workforce challenges in Oxfordshire and Berkshire.

- **Cross-sector membership supports alignment** – WDPs involve employers, colleges, training providers and strategic bodies, allowing diverse voices to shape solutions rooted in local workforce challenges and practical education realities.
- **Embedding provider voice in curricula** – Providers help colleges include relevant practical skills, ensuring students develop confidence in real world tasks and gain a clearer understanding of workplace expectations and responsibilities.
- **Flexible, demand led training pathways** – WDPs promote short specialist modules, leadership development and cultural awareness training that respond directly to provider needs and support stronger recruitment and retention.

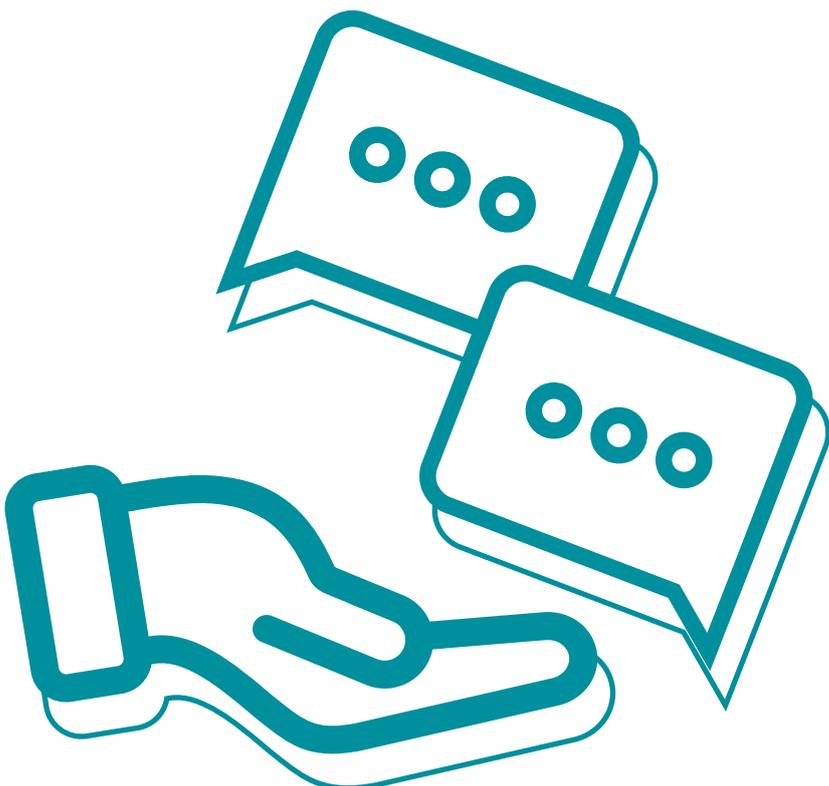
“The real power of these partnerships is getting employers and educators in the same room, face-to-face, and working on practical solutions. Running meetings in care organisations brings the sector to life for colleges.”

Simon Barrable, Engagement Officer,
Thames Valley Berkshire and Oxfordshire LSIPs

How key strategic partners worked together on The Care Connection festival

Partnership working underpinned the festival's success, combining national intelligence, local insight and practical support to design and deliver an event strongly aligned to workforce priorities.

- **Partners aligned early around a shared purpose** – Skills for Care, the Oxfordshire Association of Care Providers, the LSIPs team and college representatives formed a joint planning group that combined national intelligence, local employer insight and operational capacity to co-design the festival.
- **Cross agency co-ordination reduced duplication** – A live planning document helped partners track provider communication, venue arrangements and confirmations, preventing overlap in outreach and ensuring clarity.
- **Regular strategic updates ensured alignment** – System level intelligence on reforms, workforce pressures and provider trends helped the partnership tailor festival content to real workforce needs.
- **Joint problem solving supported rapid adaptation** – When the initial venue became unsuitable, partners worked together to review safeguarding, logistics and capacity before jointly agreeing a replacement that met student and adult social care provider needs.
- **Shared leadership built trust and collective ownership** – TVCC co-ordinated delivery; Skills for Care and the Oxfordshire Association of Care Providers led provider engagement; and colleges shaped student participation, ensuring collaborative ownership of the event.



Understanding provider and student needs

“Carers deal with an enormous range of situations. You’re dealing with controlled drugs, complex care tasks like stomach care, catheter care and PEG feeding, and you’re driving under pressure between visits with your emotions going up and down. It’s emotional, it’s physical, it’s clinical. It truly is a profession, and people don’t appreciate that enough.”

Lenny Balendra, Managing Director, Right at Home Oxford

Insights from providers, tutors and learners shaped the event design, ensuring engagement felt relevant, realistic and valuable for everyone involved.

- **Inclusive leadership shaped engagement expectations** – A listening led approach created shared standards for interaction, helping ensure providers delivered student centred, interactive experiences aligned with festival aims.
- **Providers identified key skill gaps** – Providers highlighted essential competencies such as communication, practical care tasks and digital confidence, guiding the design of activities that reflected real workplace expectations.
- **Students prepared for the event** – Colleges supported learners to prepare for the day (e.g., cue cards and briefings) helping them feel more confident, ask purposeful questions and engage more actively with employers.
- **Long-term framing improved provider participation** – Providers welcomed clarification that the event focused on pipeline building rather than immediate recruitment, enabling more meaningful, future oriented conversations with students.

“Our involvement began right at the start of the LSIP work because we already had a strong link with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), the regional body supporting economic development and employer engagement. That early relationship meant we could help shape who should be involved and ensure the right voices were around the table from the beginning.”

Rachel Reid, Locality Manager, Skills for Care

“Having Skills for Care and local care associations involved has been vital. Their warm contacts and insight make engagement easier and ensure what we do is genuinely helpful to employers.”

Siobhan May, Co-ordinator, Thames Valley Berkshire and Oxfordshire LSIPs

Keeping stakeholder and partners informed

Clear, proactive communication was crucial to co-ordinating multiple partners, ensuring strong attendance and maintaining momentum throughout planning and delivery.

- **Structured communication maintained clarity** – Regular meetings and short updates kept partners aligned, reducing delays and ensuring everyone understood responsibilities and expectations.
- **Countdown reminders improved readiness** – Timely reminders helped providers plan their staffing and materials effectively, recognising the reactive pressures that often affect adult social care organisations.
- **Post event follow up sustained momentum** – Thank you messages, feedback requests and invitations to future meetings helped convert one off participation into longer term engagement.



Key decisions

“We’ve brought in interesting local authority people who’ve been very supportive with this, and together it’s become a really strong example of how we improve LSIP work by getting all the people that matter to collaborate effectively. It shows how, when the right colleagues are involved and everyone understands the sector, the whole thing becomes a much better example of partnership working across different organisations.”

Miranda Coates, Senior Regional Transformation Lead, Skills for Care

- Planning roles were clearly defined across partners, reducing overlap and helping each organisation contribute effectively according to its strengths and networks.
- Shared planning tools were adopted to ensure information remained current and accessible, supporting smoother co-ordination across all organisations involved.
- Meetings were held in practical care settings where possible, helping partners maintain strong links to real sector environments and informing more grounded decision-making.





Key learning

Effective LSIP engagement in Thames Valley was built on strong collaboration, creating a coherent and practical approach to adult social care workforce development.

- **Shared ownership strengthens engagement** – Multi agency planning created trust, enabled open dialogue and ensured the festival reflected real needs rather than isolated organisational priorities.
- **Meeting in care settings shifts perceptions** – Hosting partnership meetings within care environments deepened understanding and increased enthusiasm for placements among learners and educators.
- **A consistent partnership model supports momentum** – Regular meetings, clear roles and steady relationship-building helped the partnership stay aligned and moving forward, allowing meaningful initiatives to develop over time.