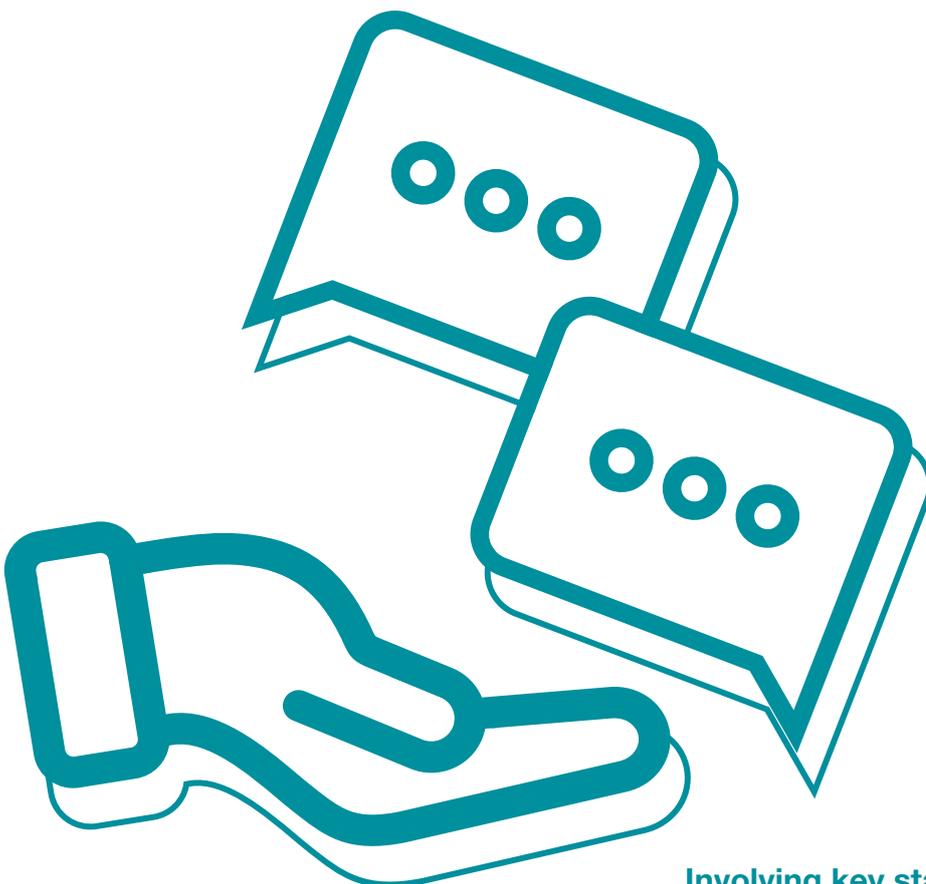# Involving key stakeholders

This section outlines how St Monica Trust identified and engaged key stakeholders to support its apprenticeship programme, focusing on inclusive recruitment, tailored support and collaborative delivery.

Strategic partnerships were established with internal teams – HR, finance and care managers – and external organisations such as Connect2AdultCare and HOPE Virtual School. Each played a vital role in recruitment, onboarding, training and pastoral care, ensuring the programme was supported from multiple angles.

Communication was structured and responsive, with monthly reports, tailored engagement methods and regular meetings enabling timely interventions. Relationships were strengthened through shared training, mentoring and co-designed solutions, fostering collaboration and sustained success.

This section is split into the following topics:

- identifying key stakeholders
- stakeholder needs and contributions
- engagement and communication
- key decisions and key learning.

Identifying key stakeholders

- **Identifying internal stakeholders** – Key teams included apprenticeship and training, HR, finance, and operational managers, each playing interconnected roles in recruitment, onboarding and support.
- **Building external partnerships** – Connect2AdultCare was chosen as the apprenticeship provider for its flexible, tailored learning models, including remote and on-site delivery, a single assessor for continuity, and monthly progress reports for early intervention.
- **Reaching care-experienced candidates** – HOPE Virtual School provided enhanced careers advice and introductions, helping to identify candidates with genuine interest in care roles and supporting workforce diversity.
- **Expanding recruitment channels** – The Trust engaged local schools, colleges and referral agencies such as the King's Trust, using youth-friendly marketing formats and avoiding platforms like LinkedIn or Facebook.
- **Creating a robust pipeline** – By treating stakeholders as strategic partners, the Trust built an inclusive recruitment network capable of addressing complex challenges and delivering long-term impact.

Stakeholder needs and contributions

- **Addressing internal priorities** – HR required a recruitment model for young people with limited experience and documentation. Finance needed accurate forecasting tools for levy complexities, while operational managers looked for assurance that apprentices would be supported without disrupting care delivery.
- **Supporting children in care learners** – HOPE Virtual School highlighted barriers such as disrupted education, trauma and lack of stable environments. Their advocates provided careers advice and practical help with ID checks and transport.
- **Adapting organisational processes** – The Trust introduced flexible shift patterns and a three-month supernumerary period to allow apprentices to build confidence before assuming responsibilities.
- **Embedding inclusivity and responsiveness** – By listening and co-designing solutions, the Trust created a programme that meets organisational needs, as well as apprentices' educational and personal needs. This ensures operational viability and social impact.

Engagement and communication

- **Involving stakeholders early** – Internal and external stakeholders shaped the programme from the outset, ensuring alignment across departments and partners. Operational managers helped define roles and support learners.
- **Maintaining learning provider dialogue** – Regular communication with Connect2AdultCare included monthly reports on learner progress, meeting schedules and support needs. A single point of contact and consistent assessor improved trust and continuity.
- **Collaborating with HOPE Virtual School** – Frequent contact with social workers and advocates ensured individual needs were addressed. Personal education plan (PEP) meetings, held three times a year, provided structured reviews and adjustments.
- **Using multi-channel communication** – Meetings were held virtually or in person, adapting to circumstances and stakeholder preferences for accessibility and responsiveness.
- **Creating open dialogue** – By tailoring communication to audience needs, the Trust fostered collaboration that supported learner success and programme sustainability.
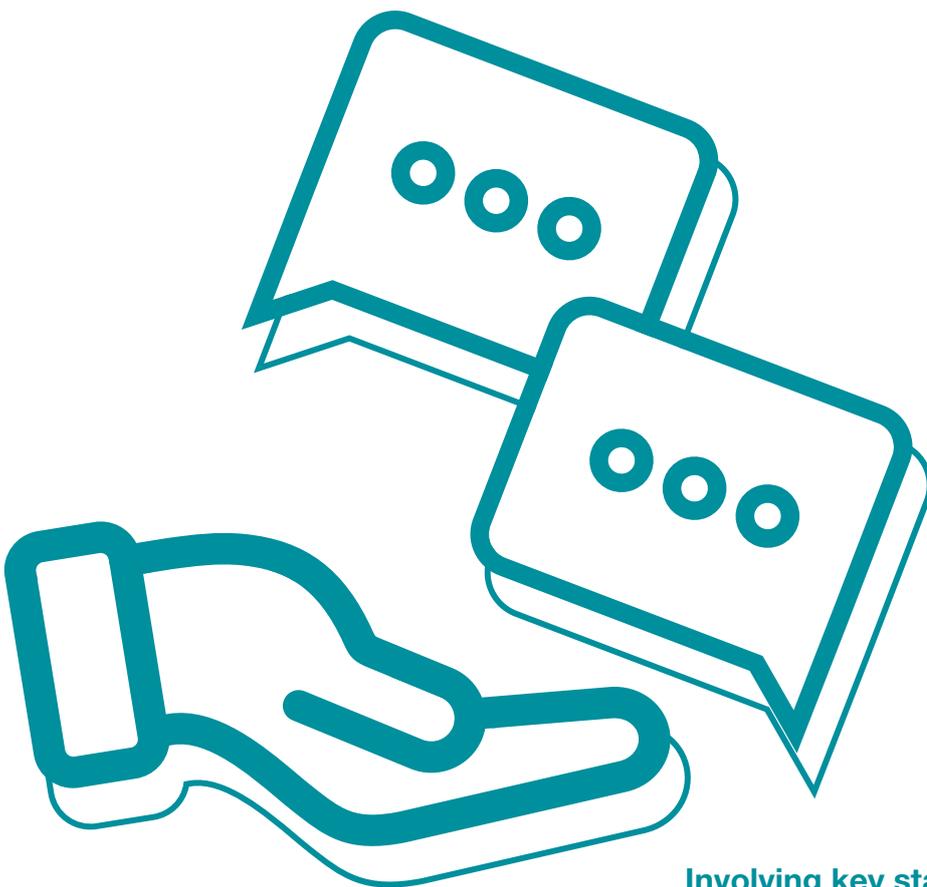
Key decisions

Here is a summary of the key decisions made around stakeholder engagement:

- A single point of contact was established with the training provider to streamline communication and ensure continuity across all apprentice interactions.
- An education and advocacy service was engaged as a strategic partner to identify and support young people in or leaving care, ensuring recruitment aligned with social impact goals.
- Internal stakeholder management was structured through layered reporting systems, enabling departmental updates to inform executive and trustee-level decisions efficiently.
- Communication styles were adapted to stakeholder preferences, using instant messaging for apprentices and templated summaries for governance groups, to maintain engagement and responsiveness.

Key learning

St Monica Trust's stakeholder planning shows that meaningful involvement requires early identification, shared ownership and adaptive collaboration.

- **Engage internally from the start** – Cross-departmental collaboration – especially with HR, finance, and operational managers – aligned recruitment, onboarding and support systems.
- **Build strategic external partnerships** – Organisations like Connect2AdultCare and HOPE Virtual School were chosen for their ability to co-design flexible, trauma-informed approaches.
- **Map stakeholder needs in detail** – From funding and forecasting, to emotional resilience and transport logistics, planning addressed practical and wellbeing priorities.
- **Tailor communication** – Monthly reports, PEP meetings and responsive messaging ensured clarity and continuity for different stakeholder groups.
- **Embed stakeholder voice** – Co-design and feedback loops created a collaborative foundation that could flex with learner needs and organisational realities.
- **Move beyond consultation** – Success came from shared ownership and sustained, two-way engagement – not one-off input.

Recommendations

Access a checklist of practical recommendations inspired by St Monica Trust's approach via Skills for Care's website.