

Outcomes, impact and learning



Overview of actions

The wellbeing champion network initiative has delivered strong short-term outcomes and is laying the groundwork for long-term cultural change in adult social care. Despite operating on a modest budget, the programme achieved significant engagement, improved morale and strengthened access to wellbeing resources, while highlighting lessons for sustainability and future replication.

- **Rapid network growth** – From the first meeting in May 2024 with 15 champions, the network expanded to 109 champions across 46 services within a year, supporting an estimated 2,376 staff. By the end of 2025, the network was supporting approximately 10% of the adult social care workforce in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICB footprint.
- **Improved workplace culture** – Champions helped normalise conversations around mental health, menopause and financial wellbeing. Staff reported feeling heard, valued and supported, contributing to improved morale, trust, and team cohesion – outcomes reinforced by feedback during network meetings.
- **Enhanced wellbeing engagement and champion development** – Engagement with the Staff Psychological Wellbeing Hub rose by 76%, alongside increased uptake of psychological services and team-building activities. Champions gained practical skills in signposting and psychological first aid, boosting confidence, providing CPD benefits and positioning them as wellbeing leaders with a strengthened sense of purpose.
- **Positive impact on team dynamics and morale** – Champions reported improved access to resources, greater confidence in supporting colleagues and stronger team cohesion. Anecdotal evidence from network meetings highlighted staff feeling heard and valued – an outcome beyond quantitative measures.
- **Strengthened connections and reduced isolation** – Qualitative feedback showed enhanced morale, a sense of pride among champions, and improved links between social care and the wider ICS. This reduced provider isolation and fostered a more connected, supportive environment.
- **Governance and adaptability strengthened credibility** – The programme's focus on continuous evaluation and transparency enhanced trust. By balancing structure with flexibility, the initiative responded to emerging needs while maintaining its core objectives: improving staff wellbeing and retention.

- **Low-cost, high-value approach** – Costs were minimal, limited to onboarding materials such as badges and seed packets. The most significant resource was staff time during setup, which decreased as processes streamlined –demonstrating that impact does not require large budgets.
- **Limited measurable impact on retention** – While anecdotal feedback suggests improved morale and more open conversations, there is no current evidence of reduced turnover. Recruitment and retention remain complex, multi-factor issues, and it may take time for the initiative’s benefits to appear in workforce data.

“A 76% increase in engagement with wellbeing services and reduced sickness absence showed real impact. Evaluation confirmed the initiative’s value and helped us sustain momentum.”

Karina Bennion, Former ICS People Partner for Social Care,
Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICS/ICB





Key decisions

- Evaluated progress at six and 12 months to measure impact and guide future planning.
- Used staff feedback and engagement data to demonstrate value and refine resources.
- Maintained central co-ordination to ensure consistency and momentum across the network.

Key learning

The initiative highlighted critical lessons for impact and sustainability:

- **Central co-ordination underpins consistency** – A single co-ordination point ensured quality, reduced fragmentation and supported sustained delivery.
- **Staff feedback drives credibility** – Responsive adaptation to front line insights increased trust and strengthened participation.
- **Sustainability relies on simplicity** – Low-cost, low-burden structures proved essential for long-term viability in a resource-pressured sector.

“Six- and 12-month evaluations were vital. They showed engagement was growing, barriers were reducing, and the initiative was worth continuing.”

Karina Bennion, Former ICS People Partner for Social Care,
Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent ICS/ICB