



Overview of actions

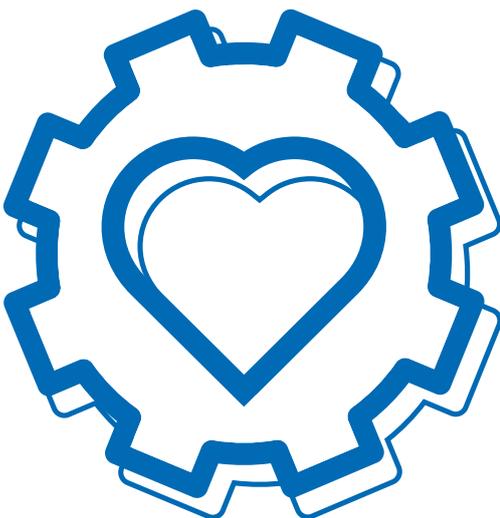
The wellbeing champion role was designed to empower staff and strengthen peer support within social care settings. Champions acted as trusted colleagues, creating safe spaces for wellbeing conversations and embedding a culture of openness and support across diverse services.

- **Recruitment expanded after identifying barriers** – Early recruitment relied on promoting the opportunity via registered managers, but heavy workloads meant wellbeing information wasn't reaching staff. Direct outreach to front line workers – via local authority channels, WhatsApp groups, and existing contacts – created a more reliable route for engagement and allowed staff to volunteer themselves.
- **Trusted peer support** – Champions were approachable individuals who colleagues naturally turned to for advice or a listening ear. Their informal influence made them ideal for promoting wellbeing initiatives and fostering a positive workplace culture.
- **Inclusive recruitment** – Champions were drawn from varied roles, including carers, nurses, activity co-ordinators, kitchen assistants and maintenance staff. This diversity ensured wellbeing support was relatable and accessible to all staff, regardless of job title or seniority.
- **Identifying suitable champions** – There were clear role expectations, including champions being approachable, empathetic and naturally trusted within their teams. Staff who colleagues already turned to for support were particularly well-suited as they could role-model positive wellbeing practices and confidently share information.
- **Practical, visible, peer-led activities** – Champions took responsibility for signposting colleagues to relevant support, promoting everyday wellbeing habits, and maintaining a strong wellbeing presence within their services. They created wellbeing boards, shared updates in team meetings, and used badges or promotional materials to make their role easy to recognise. Their day-to-day visibility and informal influence normalised wellbeing conversations, making support feel accessible and firmly embedded into routine practice.
 - For example, champions hosted informal 'coffee and check-in' sessions, offered a listening ear to colleagues, and encouraged simple wellbeing habits such as regular hydration, and rest and movement throughout the day.
 - They also promoted or helped organise wellbeing events, highlighted development and training opportunities, and signposted staff to specialist support such as menopause guidance or financial wellbeing services.

- **Supporting champions to succeed** – Ongoing training, guidance and communication helped champions to feel confident and connected. Regular network meetings, newsletters and a dedicated digital space ensured they could share learning, ask questions and stay up to date with new initiatives. Although flexible, the role typically required around one hour a week, giving champions manageable time to carry out activities, maintain visibility and build supportive relationships within their teams.
- **Organic, peer-driven growth** – Early champions shared positive experiences with colleagues and contacts in other services, creating natural momentum. Their advocacy encouraged additional staff to join, supported by discussions in manager forums and provider networks, rapidly growing the network.
- **Professional development opportunities** – Participation offered CPD benefits, boosted confidence, and positioned champions as leaders. Training included practical skills such, signposting, MHFA training, and British Sign Language –provided at no cost to enhance capability and inclusivity.
- **Ongoing support and engagement** – Champions attended quarterly virtual meetings designed as informal, peer-led spaces for sharing experiences, troubleshooting challenges and learning from guest speakers. These sessions strengthened relationships, built confidence and maintained momentum across the network.
- **Mutual workforce benefits and resilience** – The programme provided timely support for staff while enabling champions to develop new skills and a sense of purpose. By improving job satisfaction and reducing isolation in a high-stress sector, the model contributed to retention and marked a significant step toward building a more resilient, engaged workforce.

“We maintain confidentiality rigorously in meetings. Creating a safe, non-judgemental space. Champions openly discussed work pressures and personal challenges, building trust and strong peer networks that extended beyond formal meetings. That trust is essential for champions to share challenges and solutions without fear.”

Rich Bagnall, Service Manager, Staff Psychological Wellbeing Hub,
Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent ICB





Key decisions

- Recruited champions from all staff roles to ensure inclusivity and workforce-wide relevance.
- Delivered free, high-impact training to build confidence and wellbeing leadership skills.
- Embedded wellbeing into daily routines through visible roles, peer support and regular engagement.
- Created informal network meetings to sustain momentum and strengthen peer connections.

Key learning

Empowering staff across roles fosters inclusivity and ownership, creating a culture of care that strengthens morale and retention:

- **Peer-led models build trust** – Champions' informal influence made wellbeing discussions approachable and encouraged colleagues to seek support.
- **Inclusive recruitment broadens impact** – Engaging staff from all roles made wellbeing support more relatable, visible and embedded across services.
- **Accessible training empowers staff** – Free, high impact development opportunities built confidence and positioned champions as wellbeing leaders.
- **Everyday integration drives culture change** – Making wellbeing part of daily routines, not an added task, strengthened morale and team cohesion.

