



England

# Understanding staff mental health and wellbeing: A national perspective

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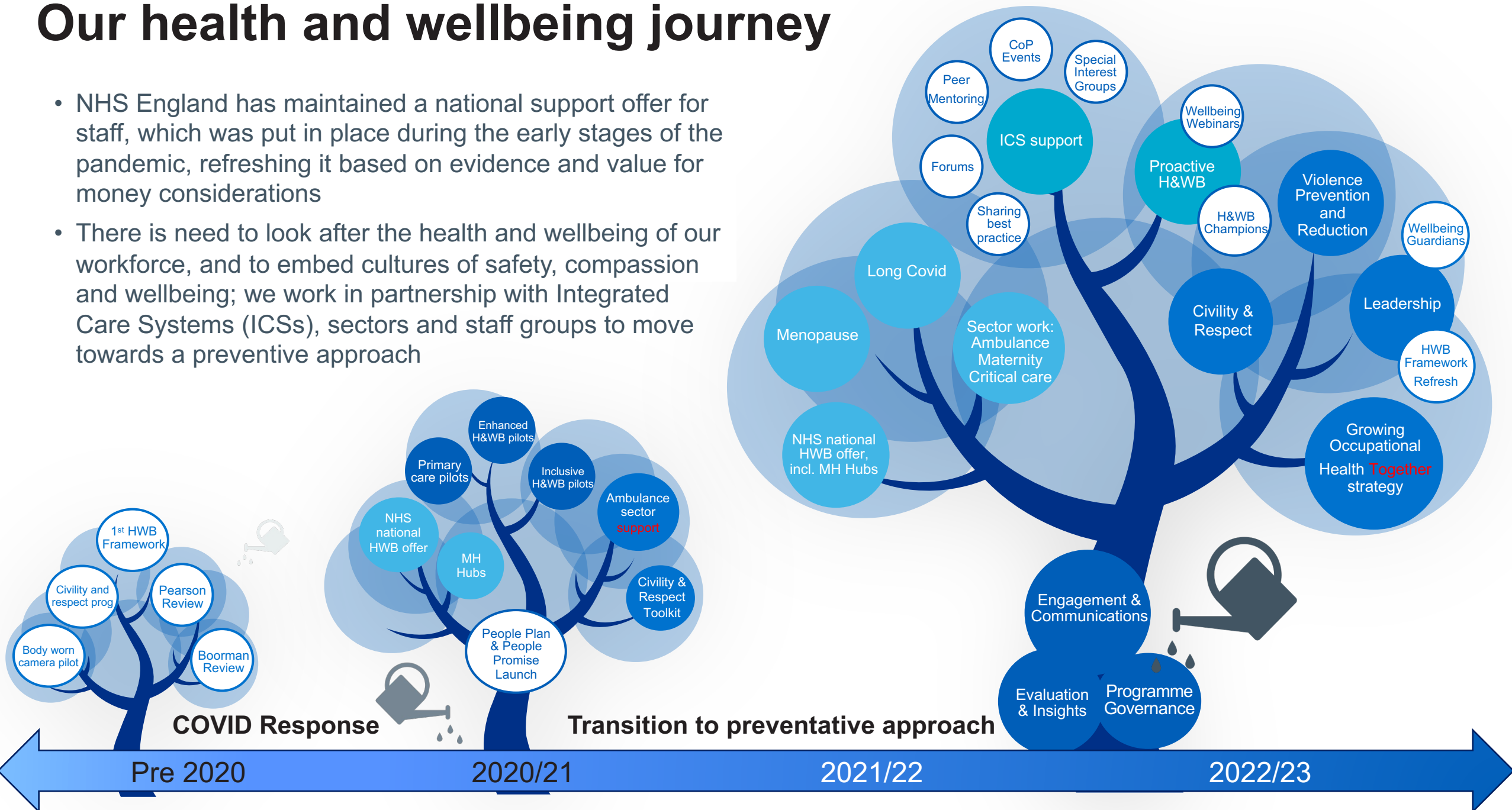
# Overview

**A summary of the work that the staff health and wellbeing programme at NHS England has undertaken since 2020 to understand and respond nationally to staff mental health and wellbeing in the NHS**

- The COVID-19 response including how need was understood and the programme evaluated
- How NHS England has worked to understand staff wellbeing, including through evaluation; working in partnership with research and academic expert colleagues; the development of the Staff Survey and NHS People Pulse; and how we have worked with the Ambulance and maternity sectors
- How we have collaborated and shared learning with ICSs as they prepare to take on greater responsibility for staff wellbeing and delivery of the Long Term Workforce Plan, in line with the new operating framework for the NHS

# Our health and wellbeing journey

- NHS England has maintained a national support offer for staff, which was put in place during the early stages of the pandemic, refreshing it based on evidence and value for money considerations
- There is need to look after the health and wellbeing of our workforce, and to embed cultures of safety, compassion and wellbeing; we work in partnership with Integrated Care Systems (ICSs), sectors and staff groups to move towards a preventative approach



# The NHS staff health and wellbeing programme Covid response: understanding and using the evidence

The NHS staff COVID-19 health and wellbeing support programme was formally launched on 8 April

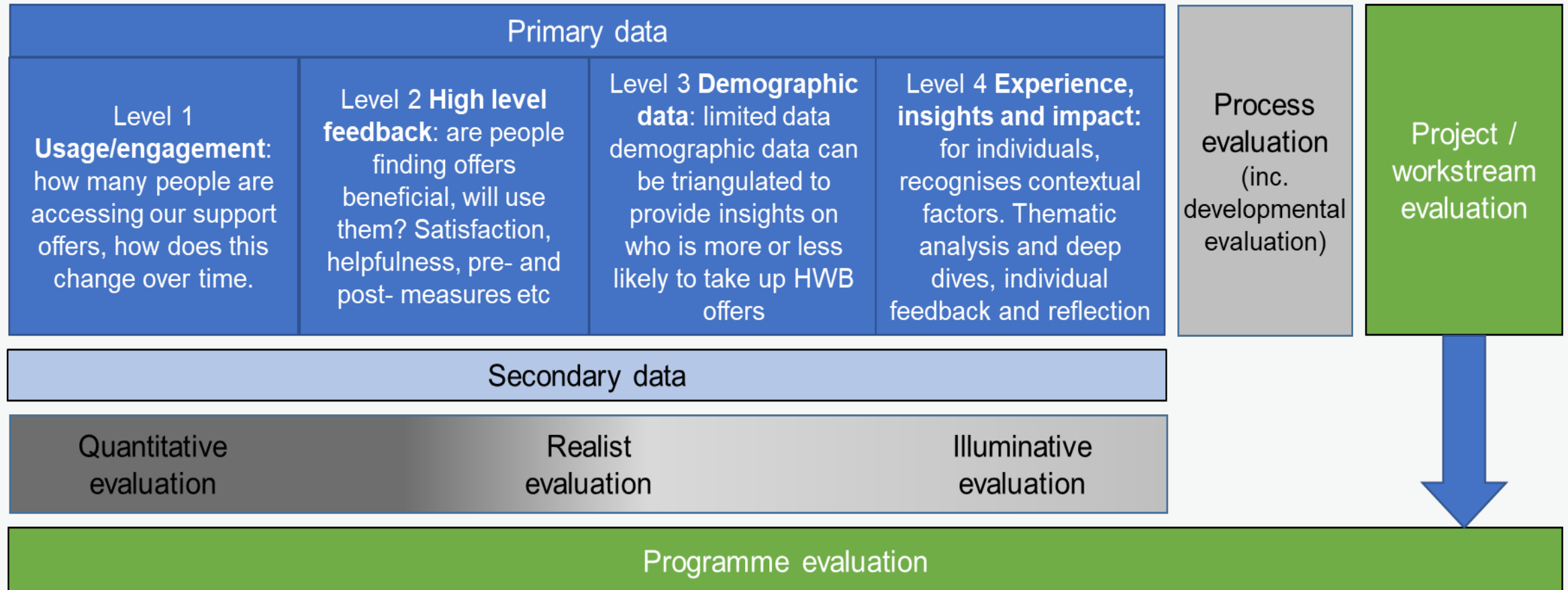
Evidence for development of the programme was based on discussions with clinical experts and based on experience of previous incidents such as Ebola and response to the Manchester Arena bombing

The aims of the programme were to translate the findings into evidence-based action, with a focus on

- Self Help
- Need to talk (including crisis support)
- More intensive support
- Supporting leaders and managers

We were in an unprecedented situation and had to adapt rapidly as we learnt more and as we received feedback and evaluation data

# The Covid-19 NHS staff health and wellbeing programme: evaluation approach



# The value of illuminative evaluation in complex large-scale evaluation of a novel programme



# Health and wellbeing Covid response timeline

## Sources of new data and evidence we gathered to inform developments in the offer in 'real time'

- 
- People Pulse commenced 1 July 2020: Focus on BAME staff
  - People Pulse (Jul-September) feedback on HWB support
  - Interim evaluation report August 2020
  - AHSN evaluation findings September 2020
  - Samaritans volunteers survey findings September
  - People Pulse Wave 10 (Dec-Jan) HWB supports findings

NHS Staff Health and Wellbeing Support		Date
Headspace Daylight Sleepio Unmind SilverCloud online mental health support		March 2020: Soft launch
people.nhs.uk microsite Samaritans NHS staff helpline SHOUT text support helpline Health and wellbeing guides Health and wellbeing webinars		8 April 2020: Launch of national NHS staff health and wellbeing support
Hospice UK bereavement support Leadership circles Coaching and mentoring for leaders Coaching offer for primary care staff #StayAlive suicide prevention app		April 2020
Virtual Common Rooms Movement for Modern life - online yoga Association of Christian Counsellors support Cityparents support for working parents/carers		May 2020
Liberate Meditation app for POC/BAME communities		June 2020
Bright Sky app - support for those in an abusive relationship		July 2020
REACT training to support mental wellbeing conversations		August 2020
Association of Clinical Psychologists executive support scheme		September 2020
Executive suite of support for NHS executive leaders		September 2020
Place2Be resources for working parents/carers		October 2020
Financial wellbeing support package		November 2020
#ProjectM support for managers		December 2020
Relate: relationship support pilot		December 2020
Start Well End Well: team support		January 2021
		February 2021
Partnership with Invictus Games to support physical wellbeing		February 2021
Coaching support for BAME colleagues		
Mental Health First Aid training for BAME colleagues		
REACT Train the Trainer programme		March 2021

# Engagement with the national health and wellbeing offer



- 1,337,000 website sessions
- 225,874 app downloads



- 24,800 contacts with our dedicated helplines



- 16,424 primary care coaching session bookings



## Inclusive Health and wellbeing:

- 3,000+ coaching sessions for BAME colleagues
- 1,402 faith-based counselling sessions delivered



## Physical wellbeing :

- 6,100 registrations to the physical health offer
- 7,500 referrals for our digital weight management offer



- 37 wellbeing webinars with 140,000+ views of sessions and materials
- 30m+ Twitter impressions
- Virtual events – over 1,500 participants

Between April 2020 and June 2022, the national HWB offer was accessed over 1.8m times



# Programme findings

- The offer for psychological, emotional and mental health support was been **accessed by and valued by NHS staff**.
- The uptake of HWB offers indicated a need for this kind of support offer nationally, in addition to any local or regional support available
- There was evidence that the programme is **helping workforce health and wellbeing** – ie that the offer broadly met its objectives to provide:
  - Access to self-help
  - Supporting resilience and reflection
  - Supporting leaders and managers
  - Helping staff to support colleagues
- Support was also available for, and is being accessed by, staff experiencing mental health concerns and, for a smaller number, crisis support
- The offer had in built flexibility to be responsive to emerging need
- We were able to evolve the offer at pace in response to the needs of staff through the waves of the pandemic
- The NHS staff health and wellbeing support continued to develop over 2020 and 2021, responding to learning on the impact of COVID-19 on staff and what support was most valued
- The offers have been very well received by those accessing them and providing feedback to us
- There was emerging evidence of the positive impact the offer had for individuals, colleagues, and teams

# Barriers to accessing HWB support

- ‘No barriers’ – a number of staff responded ‘no’, indicating they were comfortable accessing HWB support
- Staff not feeling they needed to access HWB support – don’t need or have other sources of support (eg family)
- Time – staff not having / being given / feeling they didn’t have time to access support
- Awareness – a significant number of respondents reported that they weren’t aware of the national offer
- Lack of trust – feeling it would get back to their manager and be used against them, general lack of trust
- Feeling too tired/overwhelmed to even think about what support might help them
- Not wanting to admit they need help
- Issues with IT/access/signing up for apps
- The offer was overwhelming and staff were not sure what support was right for them

# An evolution of the NHS staff health and wellbeing offer

Working across all parts of the NHS, retained a focus on our priority areas as outlined in the NHS People Plan and Long Term Workforce Plan.

For these priorities, and our wider programme of work, our overarching key deliverables have been to:

- Deliver an evidence-based, preventative approach to improving health and wellbeing through organisational-level interventions, embedded with the local culture
- Encourage all colleagues to have access to regular health and wellbeing conversations, leading to locally-driven improvements
- Support Health & Wellbeing Guardians and use the Model Health System Wellbeing Dashboard to inform interventions and track progress over time
- Deliver the 'Growing OH and Wellbeing Together' (GOHWB) strategy and share good practice in the occupational health and wellbeing community, building on investment in pilot sites and ICSs and their learning
- Support the introduction of Health and Wellbeing Champions across the NHS and support this community at national and regional level

# Sector Specific Activity

The National HWB Team have worked with specific sectors, in particular Ambulance Trusts and maternity services to undertake collaborative work to improve the wellbeing of staff.

For Ambulance Trusts, an immediate need was identified in August 2021 as operational pressures, handover delays and the impact of the pandemic lead to high levels of sickness absence and a decline in wellbeing (evidenced by declining Staff Survey scores). This was also the point that military aid was requested to support Trusts to meet operational demand.

NHSE provided subject matter expertise, financial and practical support to enable Trusts to identify a range of measures of immediate support to staff as well as a programme of longer term programmes to support a preventative approach to wellbeing.

Immediate measures included:

- Providing wellbeing vehicles with drinks, snacks and trained volunteers at acute sites to support staff impacted by long handover delays.
- Increasing the provision of trained peer support, HWB advisors, psychological and trauma support to ensure staff had access to mental health advice and support when they needed it – for both staff on the road and in call centres.
- Increased availability of physical health activities both team sports and fitness as well as physical health checks, and additional MSK provision via Occupational Health services.

# Longer Term HWB in the Ambulance Sector

Continuing from the immediate HWB support offered, NHSE have worked closely with Trusts to support them in the implementation of longer term programmes to improve staff wellbeing. Alongside work to provide coaching and rehabilitation programmes for staff, a particular focus has been on suicide prevention.

In November 2022 the Ambulance Staff Suicide Prevention Crisis line launched providing 24/7 support to trained counsellors with specific experience working with ambulance staff. The crisis line provides both intensive support to staff experiencing suicidal ideation and facilitates counselling for other callers who are not at immediate risk.

## Ambulance Staff Crisis Phonenumber

Immediate and ongoing suicide and mental health care for all UK ambulance staff. Independent, confidential and available 24/7.

Call: 0300 373 0898 Visit: [www.theasc.org.uk/crisis](http://www.theasc.org.uk/crisis)



Run by The Ambulance Staff Charity, a registered UK charity: 1163538/SC046384.

# Maternity HWB



As part of the National Maternity HWB Taskforce, the NHSE team undertook a number of wellbeing visits to engage directly with staff from all parts of the Maternity workforce.

13 Trusts volunteered to take part and as part of the assessment a team of six NHSE colleagues spent 2 days on site listening and observing to staff from all areas including community, medical, midwifery, AHP and non clinical staff.

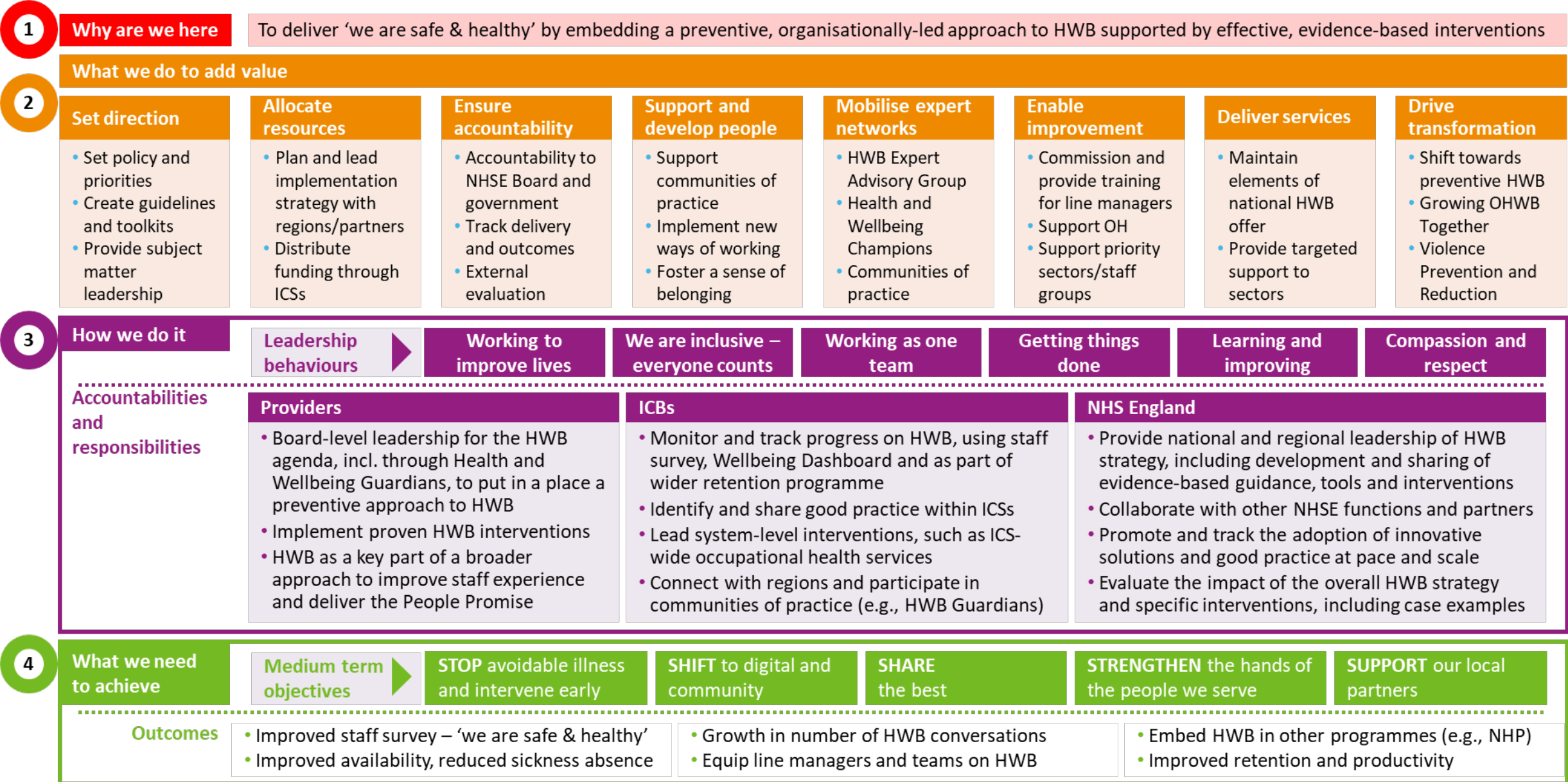
The word cloud show the responses of over 1000 staff to an anonymous survey question “what one thing would improve your wellbeing at work?”

# Capturing emerging evidence to inform our strategy and programme

We continue to capture and reflect on emerging evidence and findings relating to NHS staff health and wellbeing, through;

- Continuing to work with our **Expert Advisory Group**
- Working with **academic partners** (literature reviews, desktop reviews, evaluations)
- Using **findings and feedback from evaluation** of the national HWB programme and our programme of enhanced HWB with Integrated Care Systems to inform future direction and to share learning and best practice
- We collect on-going staff data including indicators of staff HWB through the monthly **People Pulse**, **quarterly staff Pulse survey** and **annual NHS Staff Survey**

# NHS England Operating Framework: Health and Wellbeing





# Overview of wellbeing in the long-term workforce plan

Retention is a key strand of the Long Term Workforce Plan, with ambitious aims to support retention of staff by delivering against the **People Promise**. Staff wellbeing is an important key to delivering this.

The '***We are safe and healthy***' section of the plan focusses on specific areas for action:

- The *Growing Occupational Health and Wellbeing Together* strategy
- The case for ICSs to invest in staff health and wellbeing
- The role of the Health and Wellbeing Guardians
- The use of data and evidence
- The Health and Wellbeing Framework, including the physical work environment
- Support for staff who experience domestic abuse and sexual violence
- A reform of professional regulation

Staff wellbeing is also a key element of other parts of the plan, specifically:

- The NHS as an anchor institution
- Recognition and reward (including health and wellbeing conversations)
- The role of Integrated Care Systems

# Supporting ICSs to take on responsibly for delivery of staff HWB

ICSs and local organisations have the lead responsibility for improving staff experience and delivery of the People Promise, with NHS England supporting this strategy and taking action at a national level where it is needed:

***NHS England will work with systems and stakeholders to consider how best to complement local investment in OHWB services to keep staff well and therefore increase workforce engagement, capacity and productivity***

The NHS Staff Health and Wellbeing Programme has contributed significantly to building capacity and capability and supporting ICSs over the last two and a half years to be better placed to take on these responsibilities, using the data and evidence we have. This has included;

- Pilot funding for 34 ICSs in programmes for Enhanced HWB in Systems, Primary Care HWB, Inclusive HWB, Civility and Respect, Violence Prevention and Reduction, Enhanced OHWB
- Developing our community of practice for ICSs
- Peer mentoring
- Special interest groups in strategy development, menopause, long term conditions, men's health, suicide prevention
- Providing capacity building workshops, guidance and support for evaluation of health and wellbeing programmes at project, organisational and ICS level
- Promoting the use of data and evidence including the Model Health System, Staff Survey Dashboard – which both report at organisational and ICS level
- Investment in line manager training on health and wellbeing conversations, supported by evaluation
- The role of Integrated Care Systems in improving health and wellbeing of staff