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Respondent

24

Anonymous

813:39

Time to complete

Title and contact details

1. Title of Initiative (please ensure this is a good description of your initiative in no more than 90 characters) *

Promoting Excellent Physical Wellbeing for CTM Staff – Step Challenge Success

2. Name of organisation and region (please state context, ie general practice, community care etc) *

Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board

3. Name of person or team involved in the self-care initiative *

Employee Experience and Wellbeing Team

4. Timeframe and dates of initiative *

2023 onwards

5. Contact name for entry *

Heather Lloyd-Jones

6. Contact email for entry *

Heather.lloyd-jones@wales.nhs.uk

About your self-care initiative

7. Describe the problem you were facing and your objective(s) in tackling this. (1200 characters max) *

In 2022, CTMUHB Public Health Team conducted a Health Needs Assessment (HNA 2022) and found that the healthy life expectancy for the CTMUHB region falls below the Wales average (61.4 years for males and 62 years for females). In addition, our community falls behind Wales in terms of healthy behaviours with 64% of adults regarded as being overweight or obese. Furthermore, our CTM Employee Wellbeing Survey 2022, showed only 15% of our staff engage in the recommended levels of exercise. As 85% of our staff live within our health board region, this population data is likely to reflect the state of health of our staff. Physically inactive employees are more likely to take sick leave and suffer from major health problems. This is likely to put further pressure on NHS Staff as these conditions may result in staff absence. Our objective is to provide a holistic and multi-layered approach to support staff to improve their physical wellbeing strengthening the link between emotional and physical wellbeing. We also want to encourage staff to adopt healthy lifestyle behaviours to improve physical and emotional wellbeing and ultimately patient care.

Please enter at most 1200 characters

8. Outline your initiative, explain your planning and execution of the project. (1200 characters max) *

Our initiative provides a holistic and multi-layered approach to support staff to improve their physical wellbeing. The key components to this approach are: - Physical Wellbeing Webpages. The pages are targeted for our staff, but also encourage involving families and friends thus supporting the wider population health agenda. <https://ctmuhb.nhs.wales/staff/employeeewellbeing/physical-wellbeing/> - Healthy Lifestyles Course: Psychologically informed group course designed to help staff understand and address their lifestyles behaviours. (100% reported an increase in self-esteem and a decrease in psychological distress.) - Barriers to Exercise workshops and short videos (available on demand): These apply psychological principles to help overcome these perceived barriers such as motivation, time, boredom and desk-based working as well as providing simple tips. - Hosting a step challenge: To provide staff with motivation towards healthier habits, in May 2023, we launched our first Big Team Challenge; a virtual team activity which saw participants set out to walk, run, or cycle the virtual route. Further challenges were held in February 2024 and April 2025.

Please enter at most 1200 characters

9. What were the challenges and how did you overcome these? (1200 characters max) *

In response to the demanding nature of NHS roles, and clinical demand prevent staff from attending courses, we introduced on-demand workshops, allowing staff to access wellbeing resources anytime, from any device. To further promote self-care, we launched the Big Team Challenge Step Challenge, becoming the first Health Board in Wales to do so. Initially aiming for 100 participants in 2023, we were thrilled to have attracted 396 staff. By 2025, participation had grown to 1,042, demonstrating the enthusiasm for accessible, team-based wellbeing initiatives. Using staff feedback, we have tailored the challenge to suit all levels of physical activity, from beginners to those already active. While the leaderboard motivated many, some found it discouraging. Therefore, we adapted our messaging and guidance to help staff choose the right challenge and introduced "Monday Motivation" messages to promote personal goal-setting and providing Friday shoutouts for the most improved teams and winners of our photo competition. This initiative has empowered staff to take ownership of their wellbeing, embedding self-care into everyday routines in a way that is flexible, inclusive, and sustainable.

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10. Did you collaborate with other local partners, if so, who and why were they chosen? *

To deliver our step challenge, we partnered with Big Team Challenge, a platform designed to help organisations create and run their own bespoke physical activity initiatives. Its intuitive interface and flexible customisation options made it an ideal, cost-effective solution for engaging our workforce in healthier lifestyle behaviours. It also aligned with our sustainability values. Through a partnership with Ecologi, Big Team Challenge plants one tree for every 10 active participants. Over the past three years, this collaboration has resulted in the planting of 321 trees, reinforcing our commitment to both staff wellbeing and environmental sustainability. By choosing Big Team Challenge, we were able to support our staff in becoming more physically active while also contributing to improved emotional wellbeing.

11. Would you describe your initiative as "innovative", if "yes" please tell us why. (800 characters max) *

Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board proudly became the first health board in Wales to integrate a step challenge as part of its wider physical wellbeing initiative. This innovative approach not only encouraged staff to become more active but also fostered a sense of community and motivation across the organisation. Our success has sparked interest across Wales, with several other Health Boards reaching out to learn from our experience. Through open collaboration and knowledge sharing, one Health Board has now successfully launched its first Big Team Challenge, inspired by our model. This highlights the impact and scalability of our approach.

Please enter at most 800 characters

12. Did you use any of the Self-Care Forum's free resources as part of your initiative? Provide details *

No. All resources have been developed in-house.

Impact, outcomes, and evidence

13. Who was the initiative directed at and what were the benefits to the targeted group or individuals? (1200 characters max)

Promoting Excellent Physical Wellbeing is open to all Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB staff—around 13,500 people across 20+ sites. The initiative supports staff in becoming more physically active by offering guidance, motivation tips, and links to free NHS exercise videos, local leisure centres, and walking routes as well as tips on how to make small adjustments to incorporate activity into day-to-day life. We aim to reach staff at all stages of their physical activity journey. While the Big Team Challenge main target audience is staff who are new to physical activity or want to increase the level of activity they are undertaking, it is open to everyone. Being active together boosts motivation and staff feedback supports this as over the last three years, between 77% and 81% of participants report team building and morale as one of the key reasons for taking part.

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14. Please quantify the impact of your initiative. (e.g. cost improvement, numbers of people helped, time saved) ((1200 characters max))

Since hosting the first Big Team Challenge in 2023, we have attracted over 2110 participants and have covered 441,327 miles. 98% of participants would recommend the Big Team Challenge to others. Furthermore, in 2025, 87% of participants reported having found ways to overcome perceived barriers. Directly linking participation to reduced sickness absence, in the short term, is difficult due to the complex causes of absence in healthcare. However, in the long-term, evidence suggests physically active employees are less likely to take sick leave, suffer from major health problems such as coronary heart disease and are less likely to have an accident at work (Bending et al., 2008). In addition, daily physical activity has been found to improve sleep, energy levels and cognitive functioning in staff which further contributes to performance in work (Cheng & Li, 2023). 64% percent of adults in CTM are overweight and 27% of adults are obese (CTM, 2021) and being overweight or obese increases the likelihood of experiencing major health issues as outlined above. Improving staff physical health can reduce the risk of serious conditions and in turn lower sickness absence.

Please enter at most 1200 characters

15. Do you have formal or anecdotal evidence of success? (e.g. qualitative, quantitative, informal feedback?) (1200 characters max)

We measure the impact of our step challenge through pre- and post-challenge questionnaires. Using our 2025 results, 65% of participants were new to the challenge. After taking part, 51% reported doing over 4 hours of exercise per week, up from 31% before. Encouragingly, 88% said they were likely to maintain this level, and 80% felt they would increase their activity in future. Additionally, 47% reduced car use for local journeys. The challenge also had a strong wellbeing impact: 90% reported improved emotional wellbeing and 91% noted a positive effect on physical wellbeing. Staff feedback included: "The team, with varying fitness levels, were all motivated to contribute – every step counted. Great for team morale!" "Would definitely say to anyone to take part – it motivates you and your team to get moving." "Brilliant challenge and fantastic app. Really has motivated the team and organisation to be more active. Keep up the good work, see you next year" Our Dietetics team also reported improved team cohesion and now promote physical activity in their sessions with families, extending the challenge's impact to patient care

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Learning and sustainability

16. What was the cost of this initiative in time, money, and other resources? Please be as specific as you can. (1200 characters max) *

The Physical wellbeing initiative is not considered to be a short-term initiative but is a long-term program which supports the Population Health Agenda. Through hosting the Big Team Challenge Step Challenge, supported by our workshop and course and our comprehensive web pages, we have provided staff with the opportunity to adopt healthier lifestyle behaviours for themselves and those close to them. Hosting each challenge requires planning which often starts 3 months before the start of the challenge. The time required to host decreases year on year as we have become more experienced. We have a team of approximately 4 people working part time on the project with a project sponsor overseeing progress. We use in-house resources to produce comms and engagement content. The challenge cost £3.24 per participant and the evaluation shows it has a significant impact on physical and emotional wellbeing

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17. Were there any learnings from the initiative, if so what were they? (1200 characters max) *

Every year we have asked participants to complete a post challenge survey to measure impact of the initiative but also to gather feedback of their experience. In response to this feedback, we have made the following changes: 1. Have gone from offering one distance challenge to offering 3 different routes covering a range of distances that fits in with our stepped care approach of 'I want to start my journey to become more physically active', 'I want to increase my levels of physical activity', and 'I am already physically active but want to start something new'. 2. Improved the way we have engaged with participants during the challenge with a focus on celebrating improvements and not just leaderboard placing. 3. Focus moved towards personal goal setting and celebrating personal achievements i.e. 'run your own race' 4. Encourage family and friend participation 5. Link activity with day to day working through promotion of Active Soles and active travel.

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18. Are you continuing to implement the initiative, please give details. (1200 characters max) *

We are proud to continue delivering our physical wellbeing initiative, which remains a cornerstone of our commitment to staff health. The dedicated Physical Wellbeing pages, including videos and signposting resources, remain live and accessible to all staff. Our popular Healthy Lifestyles course is running throughout the year, and we are excited to include the next Big Team Challenge in our 2026 wellbeing calendar. In addition to these core elements, we are enhancing our offer through several complementary organisational developments: Walking Route Maps: We are developing mapped walking routes across our sites to encourage staff to take active breaks during the working day. Active Soles Campaign: We continue to promote the Active Soles initiative, empowering staff to wear comfortable footwear at work and integrate more movement into their routines. CTM Healthy Travel Charter: We are launching this charter to demonstrate our commitment to supporting staff, patients, and visitors in choosing active and sustainable travel options. These efforts reflect our holistic and evolving approach to embedding wellbeing into the everyday experience of our workforce.

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And finally

19. How easy will it be to replicate your initiative and do you have top tips to share? (1200 characters max)

Our step challenge would be easy to replicate as the Big Team Challenge platform offers a ready-made, user friendly and customisable solution. Measuring impact using pre- and post- challenge questionnaires provides a clear framework for evaluating success. As previously mentioned, the initiative has already inspired other Health Boards in Wales, demonstrating that it can be adapted to different settings. Our top tips to share are: 1. Start with clear objectives and identify your target audience. This will help creating clear messaging which in turn will drive engagement. 2. Measure impact as this will provide valuable data to secure future funding and demonstrate clear benefits of hosting such a challenge. 3. Promote inclusivity that supports a diverse workforce. Highlight that all fitness levels are welcome as this will help address some of the perceived barriers staff may face in becoming physically active. 4. Celebrate success and share stories and feedback. To add another dimension to the challenge, we have also held a scavenger hunt along side the step challenge to maintain momentum. 5. Link to organisational goals. One of our strategic goals is Creating Health.

Please enter at most 1200 characters

20. Please let us know the social media addresses of those involved in the initiative.

N/A

21. Why do you think this initiative deserves to win the award? (800 characters max)

Our initiative stands out as an innovative and evidence-based approach to embedding physical and emotional wellbeing into the everyday experience of our staff. As the first Health Board in Wales to integrate a step challenge into a broader wellbeing strategy, we have inspired healthier habits with the aim of improving healthy life expectancy of our staff and wider community. As previously explained, the impact is clear. Beyond the numbers, the initiative has strengthened team morale, improved both physical and emotional wellbeing and has even influenced how staff support patients. It's inclusive, holistic and sustainable, making it a model of best practice in staff wellbeing.

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22. Do you have an image, materials or weblinks to supplement your application? Please supply no more than 2 images which may also be used to promote your application if successful. Ensure images are square (ie height and width dimensions are the same). Please email information to selfcare@selfcareforum.org including the name title of your initiative (as in Q1).

Yes, we do have weblinks and can share these with you via email. We also have logos which unfortunately are rectangular in dimension and not square..

23. Your application may be chosen to be uploaded to the "best practise" page of the Self-Care Forum website to share self-care excellence with others who might want to use the learnings in your application. We will also include your email address so that people may get in touch with you. Please confirm your preference below. *

- ☐ I am happy for the Self-Care Forum to add our entry to the website **with** my email address
- ☒ I am happy for the Self-Care Forum to add our entry to the website **without** my email address
- ☐ I would rather our entry was not included on the Self-Care Forum website

24. Would you consider becoming a self-care champion? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No
- ☐ Maybe, I'd like to know more