

Supporting wellbeing, development and staff voice improved workforce experience, retention and team effectiveness.

Building on Strong Foundations: Transforming an Audiology Workforce Through Compassionate Leadership.

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Background

In August 2024, the Adult and Paediatric Audiology department underwent a change in leadership with the appointment of a new Head of Service.

A key priority during the transition was to **support staff wellbeing** and **professional development**, whilst ensuring service continuity, maintaining **high operational performance** and **promoting staff retention**.

Approach

Building on a **strong foundation**, a programme of incremental service developments was implemented following leadership transition, guided by **staff engagement** and long-term **workforce strategy**. Key initiatives included:

- 🧠 Expansion of scientist-led models of care designed to enhance service quality, sustainability and professional fulfilment.
- 🔗 Workforce development through equitable access to training across all levels.
- 🛡️ Implementing a Just and Learning culture to develop psychological safety
- 📋 Increased recognition of staff contributions through a wide range of streams, maintaining a culture of appreciation.

Key Actions

To implement the initiatives the following actions have been introduced and importantly **sustained**:

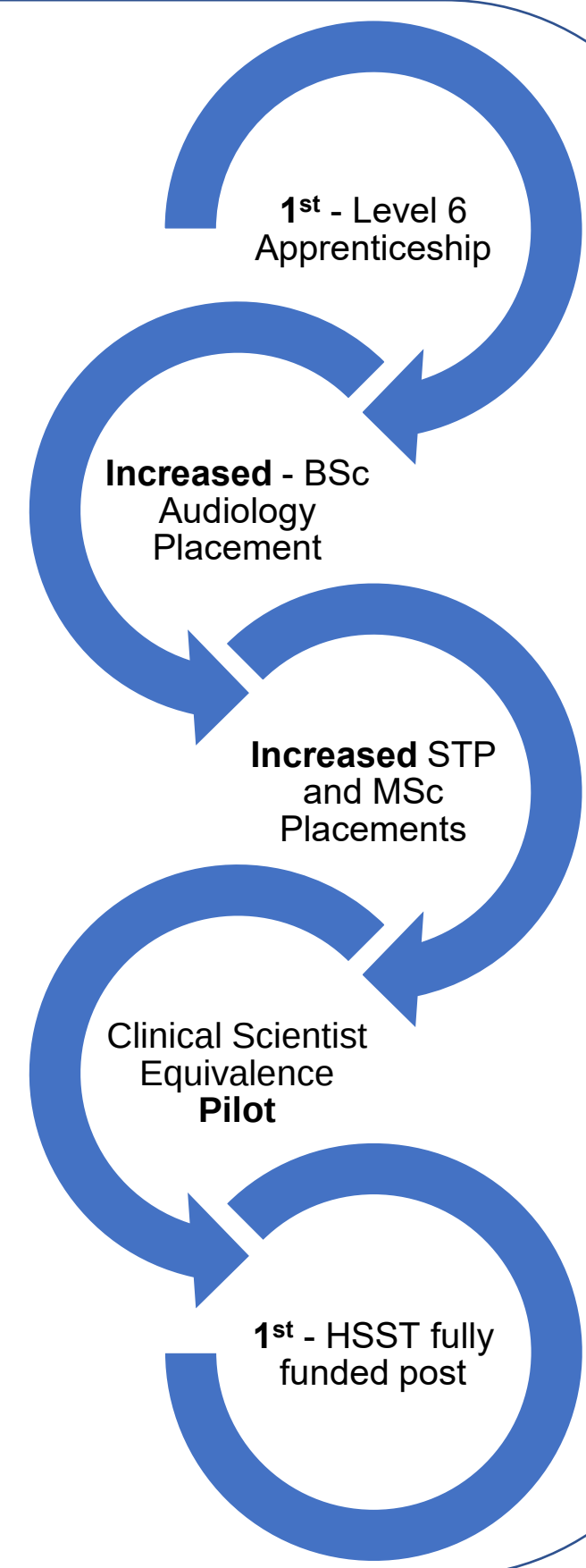


Results – Workforce Development

Training is now provided across all levels of the workforce, with a focus on tailored development for all bands, including senior leaders.

All clinical leads completed Catalyst, a 9-month senior Healthcare Science leadership programme.

In the past 2 years, there have been **12 internal promotions**. Including **7 band 5s**, recruited into **band 6 or STP roles**.



Results – Staff Satisfaction

Comparison of the NHS Staff Survey results pre/post key actions demonstrated improvements across: Staff engagement, wellbeing, teamworking, recognition, involvement in decision-making and retention intention.



Vacancy Rate
2.2%



Turnover Rate
↓ 4.1% reduction

🚀 **Higher Staff Engagement**
📈 +13% staff looking forward to work

💬 **Greater Staff Voice**
📈 +10% opportunities to show initiative

🤝 **Stronger Team Working**
📈 +22% shared team objectives

💪 **Improved Wellbeing**
📉 Work-related stress reduced by 13%

🌱 **Better Retention**
📈 +15% increase in staff not considering leaving

Highlights include: Greater autonomy, improved recognition, lower workload pressure, presenteeism reduced.

Lessons Learned

Leadership transitions can present challenges for both staff and services. A **phased** and **supportive approach** focused on staff wellbeing, professional development and engagement can facilitate a successful transition.

Incremental change was associated with **enhanced workforce development**, strengthened **quality assurance** processes, **improved staff satisfaction** and sustained operational performance. These findings highlight the value of compassionate leadership in supporting organisational change.



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