"STAR OF YOUR STAY": AMPLIFYING THE PATIENT AND FAMILY VOICE TO IMPROVE STAFF WELLBEING

Dr Elize McMahon, Dr Asya Hamis, Dr Benita Morrissey, Dr Susie Minson

Introduction

- **Staff wellbeing** is a key driver of **high-quality care**. Engaged, valued staff contribute to **better patient outcomes**, and experience, with **fewer adverse events**[1].
- Evidence shows that workplace recognition improves staff wellbeing, morale, and retention[2].

- Initiatives like **Greatix** (learning from excellence,) used in many NHS trusts, help **improve morale** and **retention**, though these are usually completed by staff, not patients or families.

- In our paediatric short stay unit, a **wellbeing survey** (n=19) showed
  - only **53%** of staff felt recognised for good work
  - **100%** believed that **written feedback from children, young people (CYP), and families** would have a **positive impact**.

Aim

To develop and evaluate a version of **Greatix** specifically **for CYP** and **families**, to help **improve** staff **wellbeing** through **patient-led recognition**.

Method

1. We co-developed this version of Greatix through a **focus group** with **children and young people.**
   - They found the term "Greatix" unclear and suggested renaming it **"Star of Your Stay"**, drawing inspiration from "Star of the Week" in schools.

2. The initiative was piloted in our paediatric short stay unit, with **posters** (figure 1), co-designed with CYP and families, displayed in patient areas.
   - **QR code** enabled CYP and families to submit feedback easily via personal devices, which was sent directly to staff members.

3. We **tracked feedback** submissions and **repeated the wellbeing survey** after four months.

4. Semi-structured **interviews** were conducted **with nominated staff** to explore the impact in more depth.

Figure 1

Staff Interviews

Qualitative feedback from staff revealed three core themes:

Validation and Encouragement: "It is definitely validating and encourages me to keep going."

Improved Morale: "It made me feel proud of the impact I had."

Reframing Self-Criticism: "Maybe I walked away criticising everything… but that mum didn't.

Results

- Between October 2024 and February 2025, 40 nominations were submitted — representing a **3.75-fold increase** in **written feedback** from CYP and families.
- While most nominations were for nursing staff, many also recognised healthcare assistants, cleaners and other staff.
- Families often highlighted kindness, clear communication, and emotional support as most **impactful**.

- In the follow-up survey (n=20), 75% of staff had received a nomination, of those:
  - **87%** felt **more positive** with **improved wellbeing**
  - Those who felt **recognised** increased from 53% to **75%**
  - Those who felt **valued** increased from 53% to **80%**

- Limitations of this study included:
  - Small sample size
  - Feedback forms only being available in English

Conclusion

This project demonstrates how co-designed, patient-led recognition can powerfully influence staff wellbeing.

Star of your stay is a **simple**, **low-cost**, and **scalable** model that **amplifies the voice** of CYP and families whilst fostering a **culture of recognition**. This approach shows exciting promise for wider implementation across children's services.

Recognising excellence in health care settings doesn't have to be complex—a few words from a child, young person or parent can make all the difference.

References

1 = Bragge, Peter et al. "Relationship between staff experience and patient outcomes in hospital settings: an overview of reviews." BMJ open vol. 15,1 e091942. 7 Jan. 2025, doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2024-091942
2 = Staff recognition framework. NHS England; 2023. Available at: https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/staff-recognition-framework/ (Accessed 4.9.25)