Warmth as recognition: A trust-wide *wellbeing initiative* delivering 453 fleece jackets to resident doctors

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1 WYE VALLEY NHS TRUST ; 2 SANDWELL AND WEST BIRIMINGHAM NHS TRUST

THE PROBLEM

40%

of UK doctors in training reported burnout to a **high or very high degree** - GMC National Training Survey 2024.[1]

Sustained real-terms pay erosion and post-industrial-action disengagement have created a need for **practical, trust-level interventions** that foster belonging and recognition, not just psychological support programmes in times of crisis.

AIM & CONTEXT

Alongside other initiatives, to deliver a **free Patagonia Better Sweater fleece** to every resident doctor working at SWBH, across all training grades, funded entirely by accumulated and otherwise-expiring institutional funds.

- One of the largest resident doctor cohorts in the West Midlands
- New MMUH building reported as persistently cold, with no local temperature control
- £70,274 in unallocated funds, required to be spent before financial year-end

TAKE-HOME MESSAGE

Underutilised institutional funds are a practical, budget-neutral resource for meaningful wellbeing work. The model of a democratic mandate, bulk procurement, volunteer-led distribution and formal outcome measurement, is **transferable across NHS trusts and workforce groups.**

WHAT WE DID

1 — JUL – DEC 2024

Mandate & preference survey

Democratic vote (n=216; **95.8% in favour**), followed by a bespoke survey capturing 83 colour & size combinations, with an auto-quota tool to prevent over-ordering of jackets.

2 — DEC 2024 – FEB 2025

Procurement

453 jackets ordered via the Patagonia European Industry Program, securing a **40% institutional discount**. Individual substitution was arranged for ~15 items that sold out since the surveys were sent out.

3 — MAR – MAY 2025

Sorting & logistics

453 jackets across ~70 randomly-packed boxes hand-sorted by colour, fit and size with the help of volunteers. **24 volunteers** recruited and allocated across collection days.

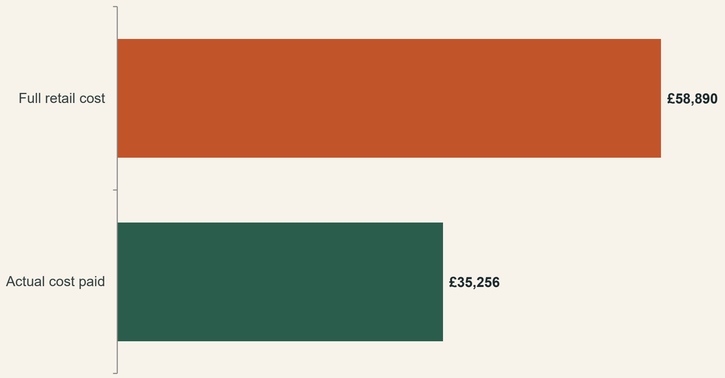
4 — JUN – JUL 2025

Distribution & reallocation

Four structured collection days organised by colour, fit, and size with proxy-collection logging. Uncollected stock reallocated via a secondary process (**86 applicants**).

BULK BUYING

453 jackets · Per-unit £130 → £77.83



Saved & redirected to further wellbeing initiatives **£23,634**

RESULTS

Feedback survey · n = 84

98.8% felt **more valued** by their workplace

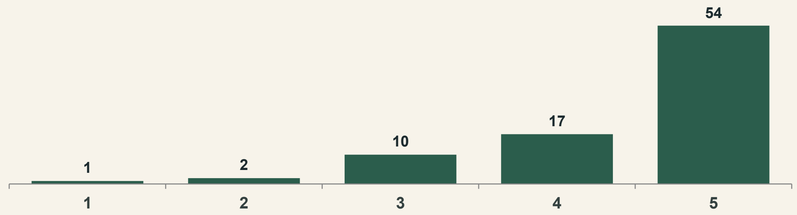
98.8% reported a **positive impact** on morale & wellbeing

100% would **recommend** similar initiatives

4.44/5 mean **unity & togetherness** score

UNITY SCORE SPREAD

"Sense of togetherness" (1–5)



FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Track longer-term burnout & retention outcomes via surveys
- Publish a replicable toolkit for other NHS trusts on the BMJ
- Review funds to consider any further wellbeing initiatives
- Extend the model to other staff groups (nursing, AHPs, admin)

> *It made us feel valued in a way that is rare in such a large system.*
>
> — RESIDENT DOCTOR, FEEDBACK SURVEY

Ethics approval not required, no patient data