

## CASE STUDY

Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust

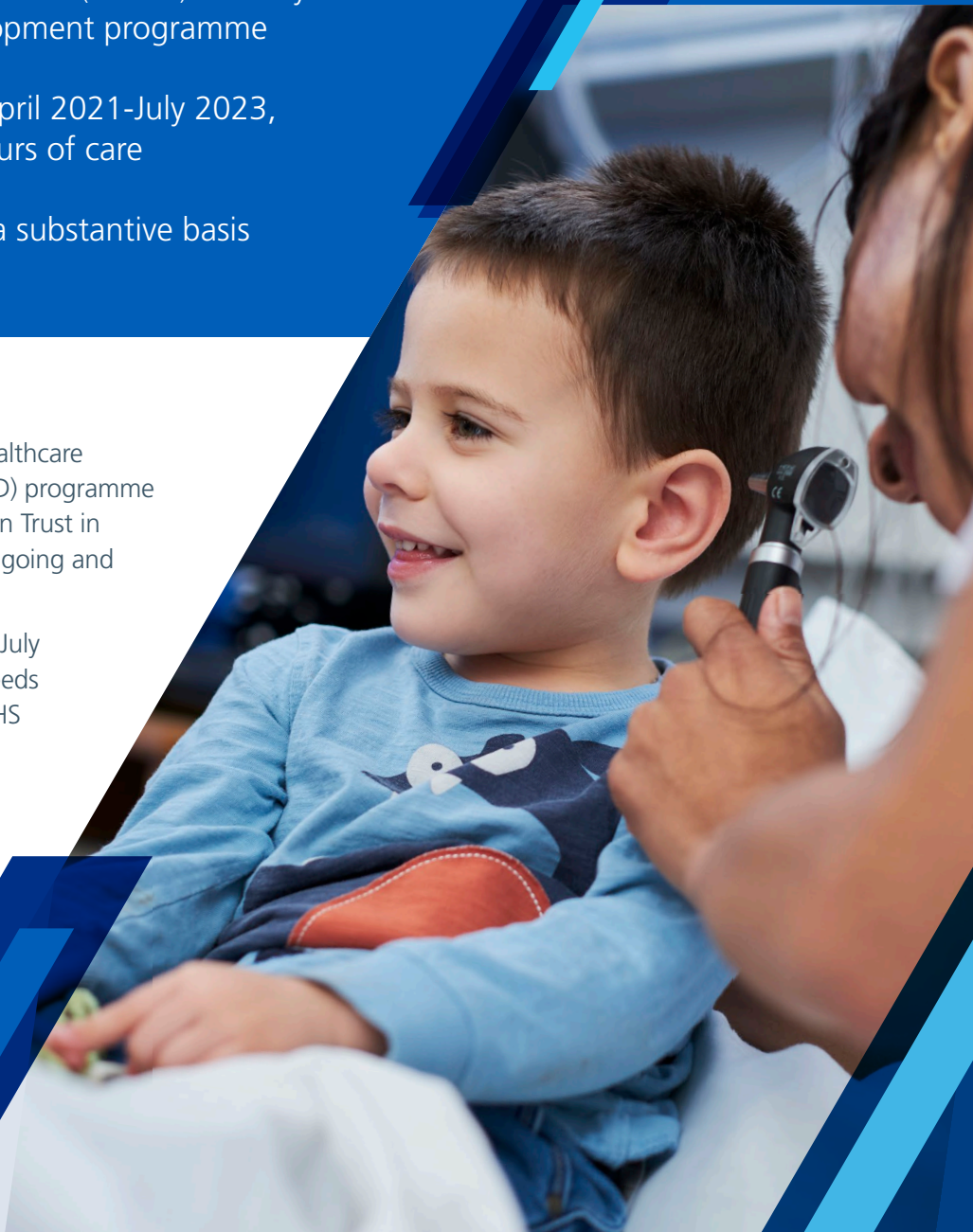
# Upskilling Bank Members closes support worker gap

- ✓ 0% healthcare support worker (HCSW) vacancy achieved thanks to development programme
- ✓ 63 HCSWs placed from April 2021-July 2023, providing over 40,000 hours of care
- ✓ 20 HCSWs employed on a substantive basis

### The Situation

NHS Professionals first launched its Healthcare Support Worker Development (HCSWD) programme at Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust in 2016. Since then, it has become an ongoing and successful service at the Trust.

To address a specific workforce gap in July 2021 and meet Alder Hey's training needs as a children's Trust, the Trust asked NHS Professionals to tailor the HCSWD programme to include bespoke children and young people care certificate training.



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### Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust

#### The Solution

Working in partnership with the Trust and its head of education, we redesigned and tailored training modules to create a tailor-made children and young people HCSWD programme.

The HCSW role for Alder Hey typically involved the delivery of care to babies, children, young people and their families under the supervision of a registered paediatric nurse. The programme was designed to include family-focused communication and to be delivered as part of a multi-disciplinary team, recognising unpredictable situations and the age-specific health needs of children.

Specific paediatric content also included:

- the differences between caring for adults and children and young people
- an understanding of mental health and identifying risk
- effective communication
- working as part of a paediatric multi-disciplinary team
- identifying changes in a child or young person's condition and appropriate escalation
- nutrition and making feeds
- contributing to health promotion to minimise risk – for example, accident prevention

*“The HCSWD programme has been a great opportunity for both the ward and professionals coming into the team. The cohort of HCSWs have brought a freshness and they have the motivation to learn and develop in their roles.”*

**Emily Hargreaves, Ward Manager, and Leah Birrell, Practice Educator Facilitator, Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust**

- safeguarding, consent and advocacy
- medication management
- clinical observations: recognising the sick child early warning signs
- moving and mobilising
- personal and professional characteristics when caring for children and young people

The training delivery was carefully planned to work around staff rotas, especially with the challenges of winter pressures. This meant developing a hybrid model with predominantly face-to-face learning supported by some online elements, which offered flexibility and ensured the best outcomes for the programme.



**Vaisakh Jyothikumar, Healthcare Assistant/Care Support Worker**



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#### The Outcome

The children and young people's HCSWD programme has led to a newly trained and engaged HCSW workforce to meet the Trust's unique needs. Thanks to the strong collaboration and our ability to adapt our HCSWD programme, the Trust has worked towards a 0% HCSW vacancy and upskilled Bank Members.

From April 2021 to July 2023, we supplied 63 healthcare support workers to the Trust, delivering a total of 44,472 hours of care. In addition to retaining dozens of our HCSW Bank Members, around 20 have gone on to be employed at the Trust on a substantive basis.

This upskilling opportunity also provided HCSWs with professional development opportunities, equipping them with the training to confidently deliver care for children and young people at specialist Trusts. The Trust also now runs a Band 3 competency programme alongside the HCSWD programme.

“The HCSWD programme continues to be a resounding success and our partnership with NHS Professionals in delivering this programme has been essential. It has not only helped us to achieve 0% HCSW vacancy, it has also built up our Bank with suitably experienced and qualified people. The ward teams are fully engaged in supporting the trainees through their care certificate attainment and we are also now running a Band 3 competency programme alongside the care certificate delivery. We have great lines of communication with NHS Professionals and the programme has resulted in our HCSW staff filling our existing vacancies as well as supporting our temporary staffing requirements, specifically around one-to-one nursing. Our HCSWs have filled a significant number of unregistered shifts and now and play an integral role in our staffing plan.”

**Phil O'Connor,**  
Deputy Director of Nursing,  
Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust



**Dorothy Madu,**  
Healthcare Assistant/Care Support Worker

**Julie Cookson,**  
Healthcare Assistant/Care Support Worker

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