

Background

There is a high rate of burnout in Emergency Medicine and *staff wellness* is a growing area of concern. Most strategies to improve wellness consist of advice on balancing workload and positive lifestyle choices including mindfulness.

Fun and laughter have documented health benefits. Fun works in a similar way to mindfulness as it encourages individuals to be in the present.

We used timetabled activities incorporating fun and creativity to explore the effect on staff wellness.



Method

Nine “Wellness Days” were held in February 2018 for our Emergency Department (ED) staff. These were facilitated and involved playing games and fun creative tasks. 110 multidisciplinary staff attended, aged 21-60, including nursing, medical and admin.

Staff completed a survey based on the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale: a validated scale covering aspects of positive mental health.

Results & Discussion

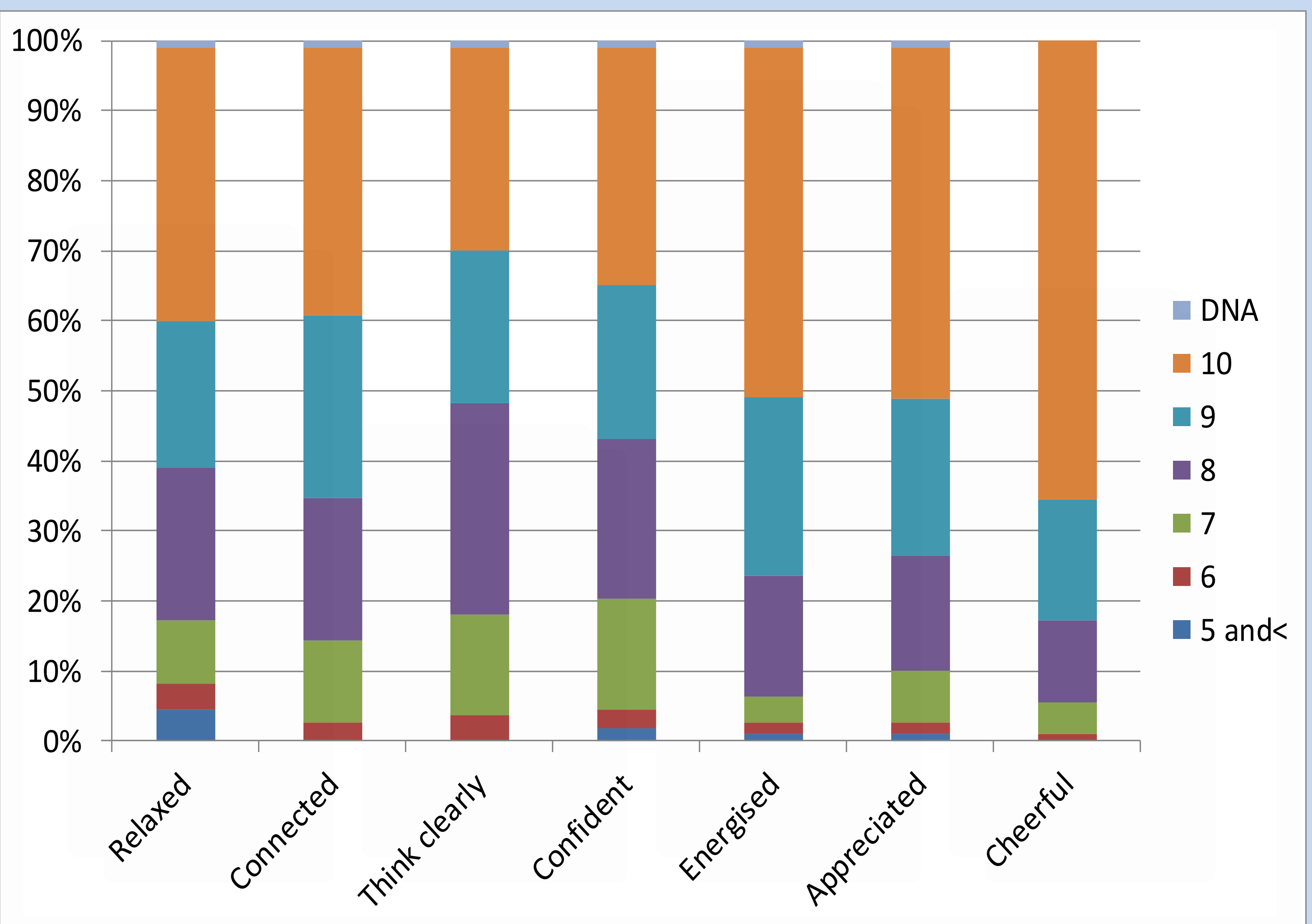
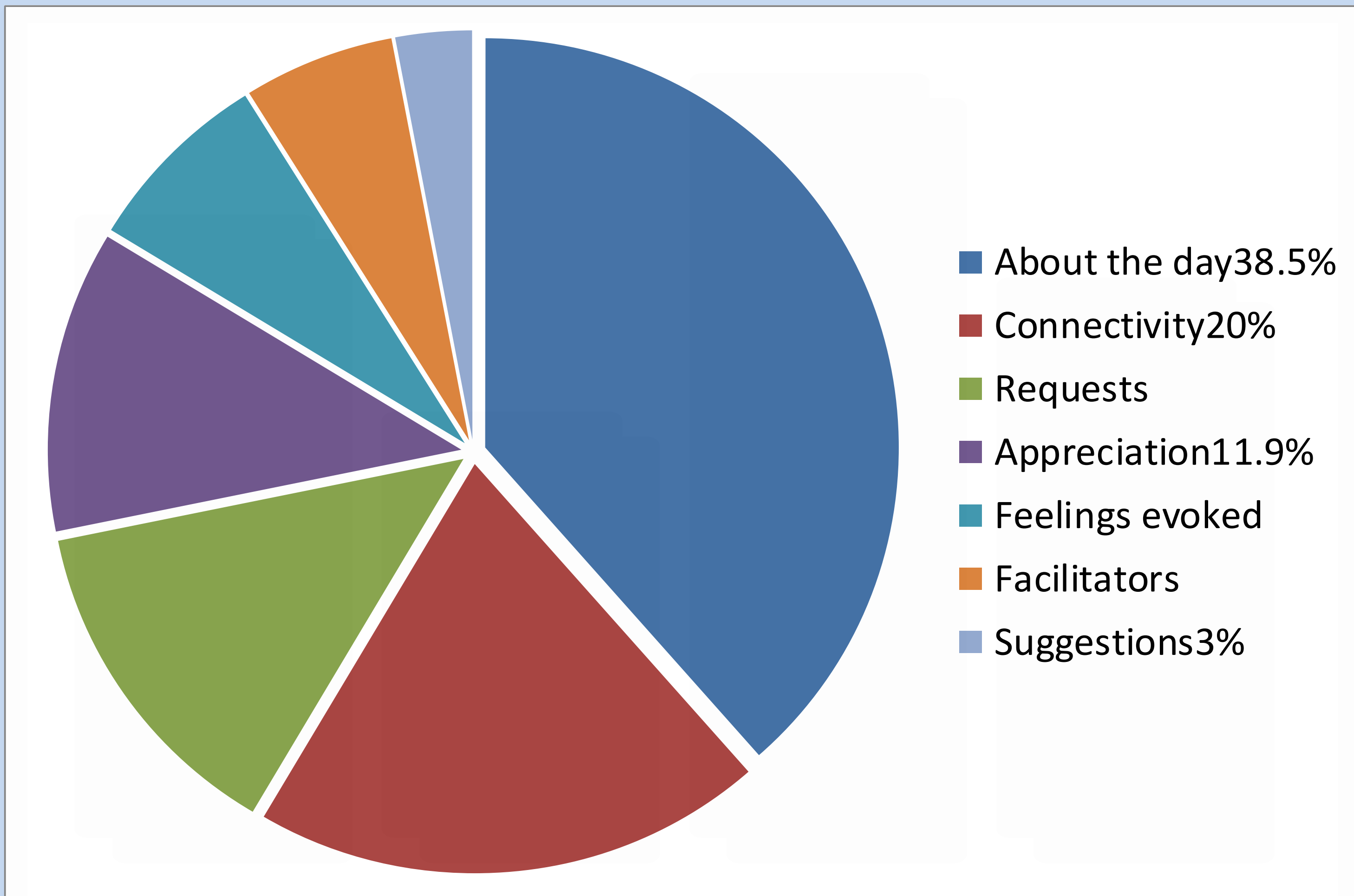
The days were popular with 95% answering ‘they really enjoyed the day’ and 94% wanting more.

81% felt that their wellness was important to ED; 85% answered 8 or above when asked how important they felt these events were.

Based on the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing scale, over 75% of staff scored themselves 8 out of 10 or above across seven domains (see graph to right).

70% of staff also provided comments. All 135 comments were positive and covered 7 different themes including building connectivity and connections within the team and feelings of appreciation (see chart below).

The day succeeded in providing dedicated time and space for staff to focus on their wellness using games and creative exercises to promote a different focus and mind-set, and staff scored highly on a validated measure of wellness.



Conclusion & Perspectives

Wellness days appear to be associated with immediate feelings of positivity, however, we have not yet measured long-term effects.

There were reported improvements in connections and relationships amongst the team, and dedicating time to wellness led to feelings of being valued and appreciated.

We suggest that fun and creativity are beneficial to staff wellness and team working, and help to create a positive culture in the ED. Investing in scheduled time for staff wellness could be of great benefit.

Further work will look at measures of long term effects including staff turnover and sickness rates.