

CIPR Excellence Awards Entry
BPS – Fund NHS Hubs campaign
Category: Not-for-Profit Campaign

Brief, objectives and budget

In December 2022, BPS members alerted us to imminent government funding cuts to 40 vital NHS Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Hubs.

Based upon a service established after the Manchester Arena bombing, a network of hubs were set up in 2021 for NHS staff dealing with the psychological impact of the pandemic.

The hubs are a vital lifeline for a workforce in crisis, helping thousands struggling with trauma, burnout, and suicide. Set against a backdrop of staff shortages, unprecedented workload pressures, and an NHS in turmoil, the mental health support provided by the hubs is needed now more than ever.

Despite this, the hubs' future was under threat, putting staff and patient care at risk. Many hubs were led by BPS members gravely concerned about the severity of psychological issues they were continuing to witness.

As the leading UK body for psychology, our brief was to draw attention to the impact of funding cuts among key decision-makers and make the case for continued investment in the services.

The BPS has had to work hard to establish connection and increased credibility with the health and care sector, to strengthen our ability to influence and deliver for our members. The campaign offered an opportunity to address this and build bridges with members, who needed to see the organisation batting for them.

Our goals were to:

- **Prevent services from closing**
- **Secure one year's ringfenced transitional national funding**
- **Highlight the devastating impact closing the hubs would have on staff and patient care**
- **Position the BPS as a credible and trusted partner in the health and care space.**

Budget: £23,000

The idea, research and planning

With hubs already closing, we had a short window of opportunity to influence decision-making. We worked with hub leads to gather data and evidence about demand and impact, alongside desk research about the workforce. We used FOI requests to gather data from NHS England, integrated care boards and local authorities.

Target audiences:

- MPs/parliamentarians
- NHS/social care leaders
- Health and care stakeholder organisations
- BPS members

To grab the attention of our audiences, we developed an integrated campaign with a clear call to action to **'Fund NHS Hubs'**,

CIPR Excellence Awards Entry
BPS – Fund NHS Hubs campaign
Category: Not-for-Profit Campaign

Aligned with the national policy context our core call to action to the government was for one year's ringfenced transitional funding to enable hubs to secure alternative longer-term funding.

We planned a series of milestones to promote continuous awareness and respond to changes in the external environment.

Strategy, creativity and innovation

It was vital we captured the attention of government ministers and constituency MPs to influence decision-making.

We built strategic alliances with leading health and care organisations, to leverage their influential voices to amplify campaign messaging, and position the BPS as a trusted partner. We led on sending a joint letter to the Secretary of State for Health and Care, signed by 14 organisations including NHS Providers and royal colleges.

We set up a tool on our website and used our member communication channels to ask members to write to their constituency MPs, creating an opportunity for them to directly contribute to the campaign and see the BPS taking action on a vital issue.

The campaign needed to appeal to hearts and minds. To achieve immediate cut-through, we reached out to public figures, including Stephen Fry - who was immediately moved to record a video in support -, Adam Kay, Alastair Campbell and Dr Hilary Jones. We developed campaign content to communicate the business case for the hubs, collaborating with leading academic experts to share their research and evidence. To communicate the moral case for the hubs, we created case study content using real-life stories from frontline staff and hub leads.

With NHS strikes dominating the media narrative, we targeted key journalists and publications to achieve high quality coverage and responded to relevant news items.

In July 2023 we adapted our strategy in response to the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan, which directed local integrated care boards to fund mental health and wellbeing services for staff. We transitioned from solely focusing on campaigning to repositioning the BPS as a source of expertise and support. We produced a report capturing key learnings to inform future service planning and influence decision-making. We partnered with Health Service Journal on a webinar to reach our target audience and support the BPS's positioning as leading authority. To build influence locally, we set up meetings with CEOs at integrated care boards.

Delivery/implementation of tactics

23 February 2023 – Campaign launch ahead of the Spring Budget

17 May 2023 - Launched our 'Write to your MP' call to action, with joint letter to minister

31 July 2023 – Media story with Medical Protection Society

October 2023 – Media story with British Association of Social Workers, and joint letter to the Minister for Social Care.

7 December 2023 - Delivered 'Learning from the NHS Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Hubs' report and webinar with HSJ.

Jan/Feb 2024 – BPS meetings with integrated care boards

Measurement, evaluation and impact

We secured **£2.3 million funding** for the hubs from NHS England in July 2023, which was a lifeline for hubs slated for closure.

Our work supported **23 out of the 40 hubs to remain open** during the 2023-24 financial year.

- More than **1,000** BPS members or interested parties wrote to their MP.
- **Ten** oral/written parliamentary questions were asked in the House by MPs
- We recruited **14** influential stakeholder organisations to amplify campaign messaging
- **2,837** views of ‘Learning from the NHS Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Hubs’ on the BPS website to date.
- Secured meetings with **16** out of 42 integrated care boards.
- **232** health and care professionals, including senior leaders from target organisations, registered to attend the HSJ webinar
- **Stephen Fry, Alastair Campbell, Adam Kay** and **Dr Hilary Jones** supported the campaign with the Stephen Fry’s posts achieving **138,602** impressions and **1,041** engagements.
- **1,458,012** impressions and **20,157** engagements on social media.
- **75** media articles between February 2023 – December 2023, including Independent, Mirror, BBC Radio 4 Today Programme, regional and trade.
 - Reach 34.2 million
 - Key message penetration:
 - Need for support – 95%
 - Government funding cuts – 91%
 - Impact of hub services – 89%
 - Call to action for funding – 18%
- BPS member emails achieved a **50%** open rate and **4.3%** CTR.

“The Fund NHS Hubs Campaign made such a difference... Suddenly, I felt like someone had my back and gave me hope...I believe our Hub would have closed without the effective campaign, and this would have meant we could not continue to support so many NHS and social care staff with burnout and mental health issues.”

Hub Lead