

LOVE CARE: ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

HOW CAN IT BE EVEN BETTER?

FRIDAY 3RD DECEMBER 2021



AN APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY INTO ADULT SOCIAL CARE

EVALUATION REPORT – FEBRUARY 2022

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Credits

The beautiful venue and technical support were provided by the [South West Academic Health Science Network](#). Contact events@swahsn.com if you would like to use this space. [AllTold](#) made the films we used to promote an appreciative discussion. [Stage Engage](#) enabled us to livestream the event. [Drawnalism](#) produced sketches during the event, copyright Devon County Council.

Feedback

If you have any comments on this report or would like to know more about the LoveCare programme, please email lovecare@devon.gov.uk. You can read Devon County Council's feedback and complaints policy at [Feedback and complaints | Devon County Council](#).

Get involved with LoveCare

If you have general questions about the work of Devon County Council, please email customer.relations@devon.gov.uk. We encourage you to access resources from the Appreciative Inquiry, available from the LoveCare team by completing this [resources request form](#). The form offers an opportunity to be involved in future LoveCare discussions and helps us to build our networks.

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Foreword

Phil Norrey

Chief Executive – Devon County Council

Jane Milligan


Chief Executive – Integrated Care System for Devon (ICSD) & NHS

Devon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

Our intention is to create a sufficient and valued adult social care workforce that meets the care needs of now and in the future. LoveCare is a transformational programme designed to achieve the fundamental and lasting change with and for our adult social care workforce that is needed to make this possible locally and to contribute to thinking regionally and nationally.

On 3rd December 2021 Devon County Council and the Integrated Care System Devon collaborated with the South West Academic Health Science Network to host an “Appreciative Inquiry” into adult social care. Learning from this event is now being incorporated into a Prospectus for Change which will be published in the coming weeks.

We want to thank everyone who has contributed to this work so far and hope you enjoy reading this report. We are keen to hear your feedback and to working with you in the future as we deliver this important programme



Phil Norrey

Chief Executive

Devon County Council



Jane Milligan

Chief Executive

*Integrated Care System for Devon
(ICSD) & NHS Devon Clinical
Commissioning Group (CCG)*



About LoveCare

Devon County Council worked hard throughout 2021, through its LoveCare programme and with a range of national, regional, and local partners to find new ways to address the workforce challenge facing adult social care. This includes adults of working age with mental health needs and/or disabilities, and older people with increasing frailties.

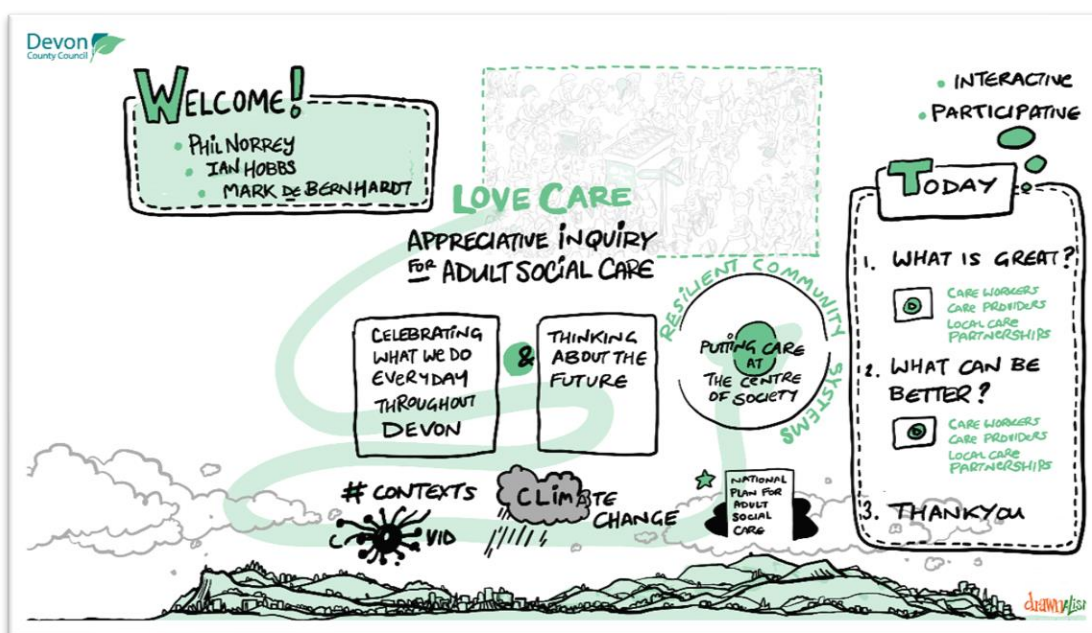
The programme has been co-produced with our independent sector partners, our colleagues in the NHS and with the wider local government family in the county.

The first phase of development for the LoveCare programme involved building connections with national, regional, and local influencers and leaders. The Appreciative Inquiry provided an opportunity to close this initial phase and provide a foundation for future work. This report provides an evaluation of the event and its outputs.

An Appreciative Inquiry into Adult Social Care

The Appreciative Inquiry event celebrated the incredible work of our 30,000 adult social care workers, who do so much every day to support thousands of vulnerable people across Devon. It raised awareness within our system and across our wider public of the serious challenges faced by the adult social care sector. Commitments to action were made to help to secure and improve its future by better supporting the workforce.

The Appreciative Inquiry on 3rd December 2021, brought those people together to explore how they could contribute to the next phase of transforming the adult social care workforce.



Why an appreciative inquiry?

We wanted to change the narrative and find new approaches, fuelled by positive energy and relationships. Appreciative inquiry is an approach for creating and sustaining change that focuses on what's working well and seeks to build on this, rather than focusing on problems and weaknesses.

This approach doesn't pretend that there are no real or challenging problems, but it asks participants to look at them and redefine them in a way that generates a range of positive possibilities. So instead of starting with 'what's the problem?' and looking for fixes, it starts with 'what's already working?' and how can we build on that?

Objectives

The event was designed to close the development phase of the LoveCare Programme and to inform our future work plan, building on the conversations and discussion at our System Leaders Event on 22nd April 2021 to:

1. Celebrate adult social care and show care workers how much they are valued.
2. Raise public, professional & political awareness of why change in the adult social care sector is important.
3. Unite system leaders, care worker and providers, connecting as human beings around the issues and celebrating the positives.
4. Gain commitments on steps we can take to better value adult social care and the workforce that delivers it.
5. Create resources for future use by anyone with an interest in celebrating and promoting our sector.

Event Design

The event was created around a series of filmed interviews with care providers, care workers and community (local system) stakeholders.

The films were designed to inform debate and help us to lobby for support for the sector locally, regionally, and nationally.

We wanted this suite of fabulous resources to be available for use in other settings, for wider communications purposes, to help to shape policy and to promote the work that is being done in adult social care in Devon.

Due to Covid risks, people participated on the day in different ways:

- A small number of system leaders, care workers and providers were physically present in the room
- Additional system leaders joined the in-room conversation via video chat using Teams
- Professionals and the public were able to watch the discussion via live-stream and participate live using a chat function. A facilitator read aloud their key points during the live discussion.

The event was divided into three sections:

1. What is great about adult social care, and why?
2. We could be even better if...?
3. What commitments to action can we all make?

As they watched the films, all participants used a virtual tool to create a shared word cloud and to offer insights for use in the event and afterwards. After the films, attendees discussed how the films had impacted them and this enabled discussion from participants.

Event Outputs

Relationships and Action

The Appreciative Inquiry offered a valuable networking opportunity. LoveCare sponsor, Phil Norrey, together with the Director of Adult Social Services and the Cabinet member for Care and Health wrote personally to thank the core discussion attendees for helping to make the event such a success. The letters included information about our programme direction and took practical steps to invite engagement and to affirm commitments made in the room. This provides a firm basis for future relationship management and system working.

Commitments made by stakeholders at the event are being actively followed up by the LoveCare programme team.¹

Publicity

The event was covered on television on Sunday 5th December 2021 by the BBC Politics Show, with a ten-minute segment featuring Members of Parliament Gary Streeter and Ben Bradshaw. The event was also featured on BBC Spotlight and ITV Westcountry, with interviews from care workers and care providers and well as footage from the day.

Councillor James McInnes, Cabinet member for Adult Social Care and Health Services gave an interview on BBC Radio Devon with Gordon Sparks on 3rd December. This interview also featured Dr Len Lofts (CEO) and Georgina Heath (Service Manager) from The Northam Care Trust. A segment was also on Radio Exe on November 30th.

Online activity spanned Devon County Council websites (internal and external), newsletters and social media. And the event and surrounding story was also tweeted by BBC Radio Devon and have featured in partner newsletters.

An article was published on BBC News, and further articles were also featured on online on the Sidmouth Herald and the Mid-Devon Advertiser websites.

¹ See [Appendix i: Commitments for Change](#).

A suite of films to help us tell the story

We commissioned the film makers, AllTold, to tell the story of the event. This film sets the context, provides insight into the adult social care sector and some of the challenges faced, and showcases the event and the key discussion points - ending with attendee interviews and commitments made for the future.



[Watch the event summary film](#)

This is designed to capture interest, but to get the full value of the event we encourage you to watch the [full event](#) and/or the [analysis summary](#).

Resources

The films and other resources will be used to celebrate and inform, promote debate, increase understanding and to lobby for support for care provision in Devon, both locally and nationally. The materials are a resource to be used in other settings including across the Integrated Care System Devon, through our Team Devon (local government) partners, with national, regional, and local “influencers” and with political leaders including MPs. And we are keen for you to use the materials too; [complete this form](#) and we’ll make them available to you.

What’s next?

The Appreciative Inquiry was an innovative and dynamic event. It enabled a productive and transformational conversation with a range of key stakeholders in the adult social care sector, which was both warmly welcomed but also secured powerful commitments for change.

After the amazing energy and commitment created by the event, it is vital that we don’t lose momentum. The event was a milestone in what will be a sustained campaign during 2022 to better reward and value our adult social care workforce and the commitments made by system leaders will drive future work.

Appendix i: Commitments for Change

Commitment	Why?	Suggested by	Expected Outcome & timeline
A review of pay and conditions with the intention to narrow or eradicate differentials with the NHS	Differentials in pay and conditions are a significant barrier to achieving parity of esteem for care workers, impacts on recruitment and retention and limits flexibility in roles. All of this impacts negatively on the outcomes we want for the public	Tim Golby <i>Locality Director – North and East, Devon County Council, NHS Devon Clinical Commissioning Group</i>	Task Group initiated and working on pay and conditions, career pathways and place-based innovation in models of care and commissioning. Report to Devon's Integrated Care System ² due in Spring 2022
Making the event a catalyst for a new approach to economic development and investment into the adult social care and health sector, including building a business case in relation to the Shared Prosperity Fund	The sector has the potential to be one of our biggest drivers of prosperity and well-being. It has a huge impact on the economy but has not received sufficient focus in terms of our strategy for economic growth, planning policy and sustainability	Keri Denton <i>Head of Economy & Enterprise, Devon County Council</i>	An economic concordat across Devon to drive investment in skills and growth by Spring 2022. This will support District Council economic strategies to be reviewed to strongly position adult social care and health in economic strategies and planning
Consider potential for a local expression of the Skills for Care national economic impact study ³	Demonstrating the economic impact of ASC to inform local economic strategy and national resource allocation which has historically been understated	Oonagh Smyth <i>CEO Skills for Care</i> Keri Denton <i>Head of Economy & Enterprise, Devon County Council</i>	Discussions actively under way between Skills for Care and Devon County Council. Form and timing of the study to be agreed by end March 2022.

² <https://www.icsdevon.co.uk/>

³ [The value of adult social care in England 2021](#)

Commitment	Why?	Suggested by	Expected Outcome & timeline
Prepare for the launch of the Shared Prosperity Fund ⁴	The levelling-up and wider economic strategy will be supported by this Fund. We need to take the opportunity to direct some of its resources to realise the potential for growth and prosperity in the adult social care and health sector	Connected to the initiative	
Extending awareness of the education, skills, and career opportunities in adult social care – including Further & Higher Education. “A Devon Care Day”	Raising awareness of the range of career opportunities available within Care to stimulate new entrants and career planning	John Laramy <i>Principal, Exeter College</i>	Refocus of European Social Fund Operational Programme, and innovative approaches by Further Education including a Devon Care Day to showcase skills and opportunities. Form and timing to be agreed by end March 2022
Providing engagement opportunities for Devon providers with central government	Informing central government colleagues through the experience of care workers and providers. Influencing the local, regional, and national debate, including in relation to the white papers on the long-term future of adult social care and integration and in future models of leadership.	Tom Surrey <i>Director of Adult Social Care Policy, Department of Health & Social Care</i>	Central government better informed and supported to evolve policy through better dialogue Local Providers have already begun to arrange engagement sessions with central government colleagues. A “deep dive” of the Devon system to be considered by the Department of Health & Social Care

⁴ The [UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#) was published November 2021, alongside the [Levelling Up White Paper](#)

Commitment	Why?	Suggested by	Expected Outcome & timeline
Expanding the LoveCare campaign (public and targeted).	There is a need for a 'shop window' on all the work going on to celebrate social care, to build understanding and encourage more people to enter the sector and stay within it to build their careers	Tony Parker <i>Head of Communications & Media, Devon County Council</i>	Increased profile and greater recognition of the value of the sector. Delivery by Autumn 2022.
Adult social care and health to be a key pillar of the Team Devon programme and the Devon, Plymouth, and Torbay County Deal	This needs to be a key part of Devon's discussions with central government about devolution.	Phil Norrey <i>Chief Executive Officer, Devon County Council</i> Cllr Bob Deeds <i>Chair, Devon Districts Forum</i>	Team Devon (Leaders and Chief Executives) – concordat to be developed with district leads in relation to LoveCare and economic/community development. Devon, Plymouth, and Torbay County Deal is still at early stage. Negotiations with Government have begun.
Build workforce transformation into Place, through embedded work with Local Care Partnerships and other partners	The workforce operates, and is substantially drawn from, local communities. It reflects community identity and will often achieve greatest impact through local networks and assets. Opportunity for innovation and change is driven by local potential as much as countywide system-level thinking.	Tim Golby <i>Locality Director – North and East, Devon County Council, NHS Devon Clinical Commissioning Group</i>	Develop a place-based test of change. Exploration phase January to March 2022

Commitment	Why?	Suggested by	Expected Outcome & timeline
Achieving change through provider collaboration and increased voice of the care workforce	Potential to achieve greater impact through collaboration between independent sector providers and with NHS and DCC providers	<p>Devon County Council's Provider Engagement Network Co-Design Group</p> <p><i>represented by:</i></p> <p>Ann Woolway – <i>General Manager Devon Care Homes Collaborative</i></p> <p>John Powell – <i>Director Unicare</i></p>	<p>Increase care worker voice Develop a provider & Care Worker voice influences all the developments in our Prospectus, enabled through a new forum to support co-design. Spring 2022</p> <p>Provider collaboration to be tested throughout the programme activities.</p>
Explore the potential for housing solutions to support the workforce, following identification of need by the adult social care and health sector	<p>Housing is identified as a key enabler of workforce sufficiency</p> <p>Devolution and Team Devon potential.</p>	<p>Cllr Bob Deeds</p> <p><i>Chair Devon Districts Form</i></p>	<p>Consideration by Devon Districts as Strategic Housing Authorities of potential</p> <p>Timing to be agreed</p>
Developing a new approach to innovation with a range of partners.	<p>We need to design, test and rapid prototype new ways of working.</p> <p>Timing is ideal as a new Innovation lead has been appointed by the ICSD</p>	<p>Ian Hobbs</p> <p><i>Senior Commissioning Manager, Devon County Council</i></p>	<p>Embed workforce outcomes as a priority for a new approach to innovation and support programme delivery.</p> <p>Encourage the conditions for innovation to thrive</p>

Commitment	Why?	Suggested by	Expected Outcome & timeline
Working with IMPACT ⁵	A partnership with the IMPACT programme will be mutually beneficial, enable learning transfer and help to inform change locally and nationally	Professor John Glasby <i>Director, IMPACT Centre</i>	Basis for collaboration agreed by February 2022 and shared action throughout 2022. Potential for Devon County Council to pitch to become a demonstrator site.

These commitments will all be supported by “system stewardship” (building the programme into wider ICSD governance) and our established Proud to Care programme⁶, which includes new focus on international recruitment, transport and targeting of vulnerable economic sectors and a pilot to test recruitment using the NHS brand.

⁵ The UK Centre for Evidence Implementation in Adult Social Care [IMPACT \(bham.ac.uk\)](https://impact.bham.ac.uk)

⁶ [Home - Proud to Care \(proudtocaredevon.org.uk\)](https://proudtocaredevon.org.uk)

Appendix ii: Co-Design Context

The event was drawn together with the collaboration of our social care providers. It was designed in close collaboration with our Provider Engagement Network, with key input from the provider co-design group. Special thanks to:

Len Lofts

*Chief Executive Officer
The Northam Care Trust*

John Powell

*Director
Unicare Devon Ltd*

Ann Woolway

*General Manager
Devon Care Homes Collaborative*

George Coxon

*Director & Owner
Classic Care Homes*

Jacquie Blackmore

*Managing Director
Caraston Hall*

Paul White

*Director
Essence of Exeter CIC*

Ruth Wells

*Chief Executive Officer
Headway Devon*

Members of the project team represented Devon County Council's Adult Social Care Commissioning, Economy, Organisational Change, Market Management and Communications teams, as well as the South West Academic Health Science Network.

Special thanks go to our interviewees:

Chris Watson

*Senior Care Assistant,
Unicare Devon Ltd*

Georgina Heath

*Service Manager,
The Northam Care Trust*

Sophie Scholz

*Care Assistant,
Unicare Devon Ltd*

Ruth Wells

*Chief Executive Officer,
Headway Devon*

Cathy Rant

*Registered Manager,
Cranford Residential*

Kishori Jaikur

*Deputy Manager,
Cranford Residential*

Dr Barry Coakley

*GP,
Claremont Medical Practice*

John Powell

*Director,
Unicare Devon Ltd*

Jacquie Blackmore

*Managing Director,
Caraston Hall*

Chris Cruise

*Community Services Manager,
Eastern Community Health & Social
Care Team*

Nina Parnell

*Head of volunteering & Community
Support, Westbank*

Zoe Harris

*Divisional Director Community
Services, Royal Devon & Exeter NHS
Foundation Trust*

Appendix iii: Feedback

- 89% of feedback felt that the event effectively celebrated the work being done by care workers to support vulnerable people.
- 80% of feedback felt that the event effectively raised awareness of the acute challenges faced by Adult Social Care today.
- 61% of feedback agreed that the event effectively identified recommendations which they think will make a difference.

Some participants fed back on what they took away from the event:

- “The warm collaboration that is happening”.
- “The passion, commitment and care shown for those in the adult social care setting.”
- “The need to act now to bring vital social care to all those who need it.”
- “Truly inspirational and hopefully the beginning of genuine change.”
- “I thought the event was absolutely wonderful. So energising and I’m excited – I think you’re going to do great things and would love to stay involved.”
- “Let’s hope that this will be the start of great things for Devon and put them on the map as to leading the way in the country and pushing boundaries to make things better for the vulnerable adults that live in our communities.”
- “I return to the coal face energized, full of hope and that’s because of everyone in the room. I can see a commitment to change. I see light.”

Appendix iv: Lessons Learned

The team met for a debrief one month after the event. Here are our findings:

Planning

It was useful to have advice and challenge from people outside the project, e.g., Communications, Organisational Change and South West Academic Health Science Network, Public Health, Democratic Services, IT Adoption & Change Team.

People followed up challenging conversations with caring responses. We reflected on the need for honest conversations to be held as early as possible and to maintain an openness to fresh perspective on design so as not to become too normalised as a group. We learned the importance of continually ensuring trust and confidence to challenge constructively and be open to that challenge, built upon relationships and always assuming that people make their contribution with the best intentions.

Having a clear understanding of the message we were trying to get across was important. We achieved strong media coverage, and this was a good example of cross-communications work. Greater clarity of scale would have helped Communications at an earlier stage, and they would have resourced differently (although this changed as we progressed). Next time we will make sure we link in with wider engagement arrangements, working with our Involvement Team.

Investing in quality technical solutions enabled participation from a wide range of stakeholder groups and members of the public. The technical issues encountered with combining virtual with in-person means that in future we would use an ear piece and a person to manage the Teams meeting for the facilitators. We could have used the live sketch artist more on the day.

We avoided focusing on negatives because culture and scope was clearly set so participants understood the principles were working from in terms of appreciation.

It would have been better if we had started planning much further in advance; this might have enabled us to better draw on the experience of others who had run similar events. This would have allowed us to identify the right venue at an early stage and recognise the technical complexity of a hybrid event. In future we would start testing the format earlier, including attention to inclusion. We should have planned the post-event work in advance.

Teamwork

Key learning was that we need to appoint a project lead at an earlier stage. Programme documents to make clear the actions/schedule were invaluable when available. We could have communicated the purpose of the event and better-defined roles within the team at an earlier stage.

Playing to team members' strengths reduced stress. It meant that everyone knew what their role was and were trusted to be the expert within their field. Having experienced event managers on board helped. Getting to know each other to have a good relationship gave a great foundation for managing the complexity and challenge of the event.

It helped to have leadership style that is inclusive and open to honest conversations. Strength in relationship-building was invaluable.

Define the responsibilities of each person earlier (e.g., facilitation). Honestly reflect on individual strengths & where people can/want to add value. Identify the team roles we need and make sure we have the right people to fill them. Ensure resources are sufficient. Be honest about what we can and can't influence/deliver.

Stakeholder management

Intensive preparation before the event was critical to success of the day. Building relationships with the "core group" of participants took a full year – we understood their perspectives, concerns, and priorities. Preparing and putting the resource pack together for participants and welcoming people set a good tone. Creating a robust health & safety assessment was essential to the event being held. In future we would pay greater attention to equality impact assessment to ensure accessibility and relevance and we would consider ways to include service users and unpaid Carers in the planning group.

Feedback from livestream – people weren't clear about the commitments and outputs from the day in the final session – we could have had somebody to type commitments up on the screen as they were made to ensure visibility in the moment.

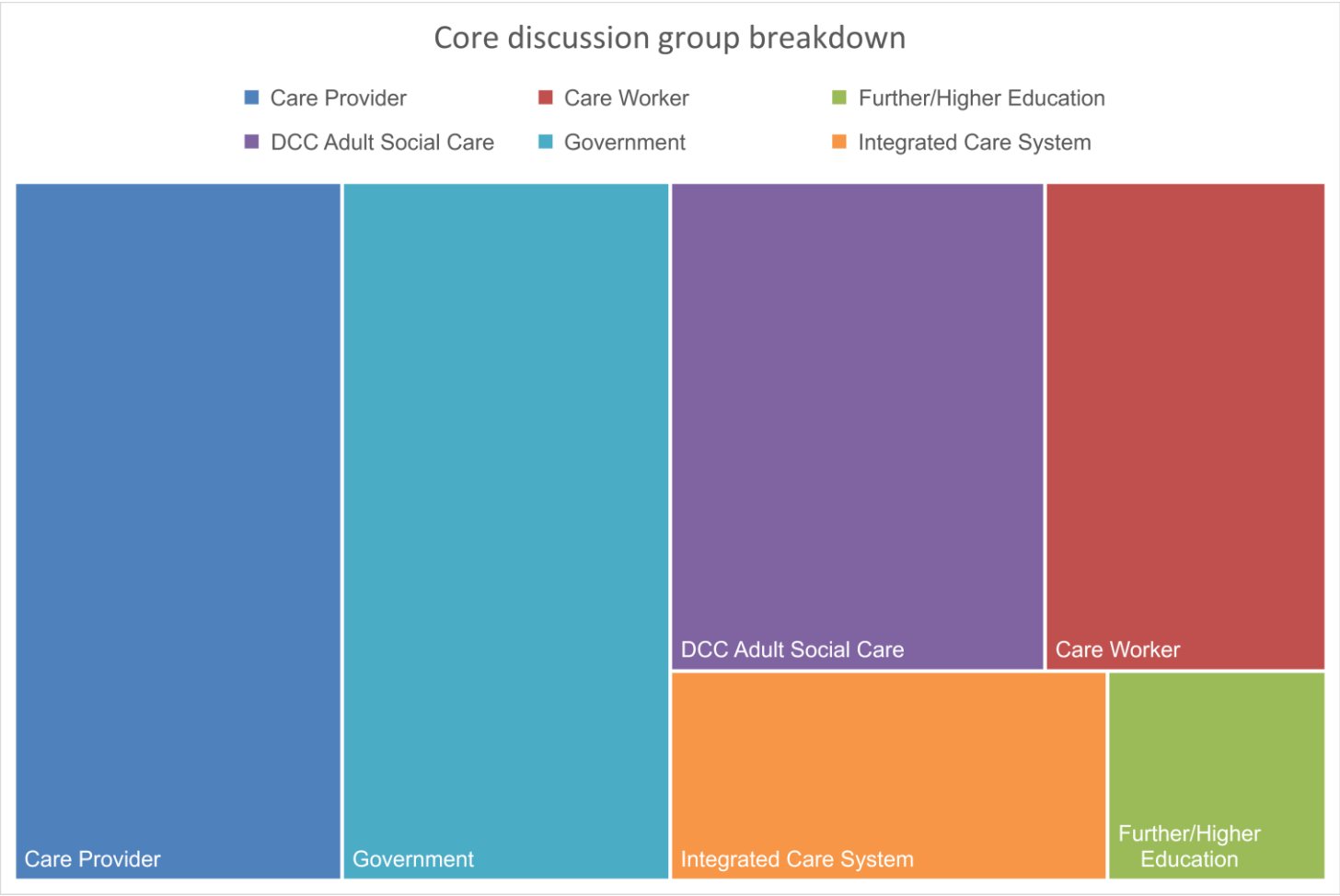
Our dedicated live-event facilitator brought the view of the live stream audience into the event well. For future events, we will consider ways of involving people attending the live stream more directly – though difficult with time and technology. Would inclusion of graphs and stats have better communicated our message to people who respond best to facts & figures? We would think about learning styles of the core stakeholders more deliberately.

In the days afterwards, we wrote thank you letters to all participants, also capturing their commitments. This has helped us to continue relationship building.

Appendix v: Analytics

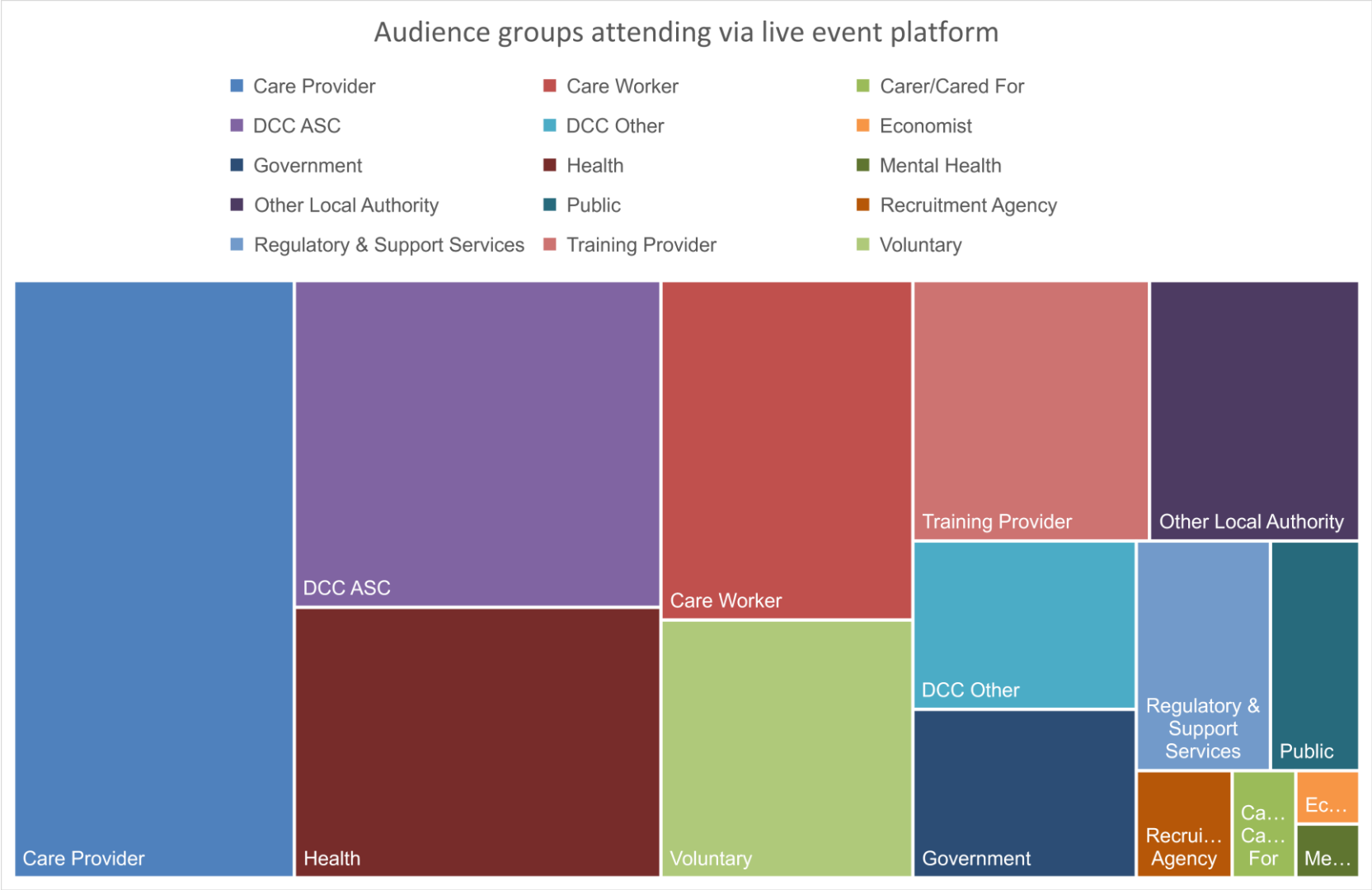
Who attended the core discussion group?

Stakeholder types attending the event in order of group size: Care providers, Government, Devon County Council Adult Social Care, Care Workers, Integrated Care System, Further/Higher Education.



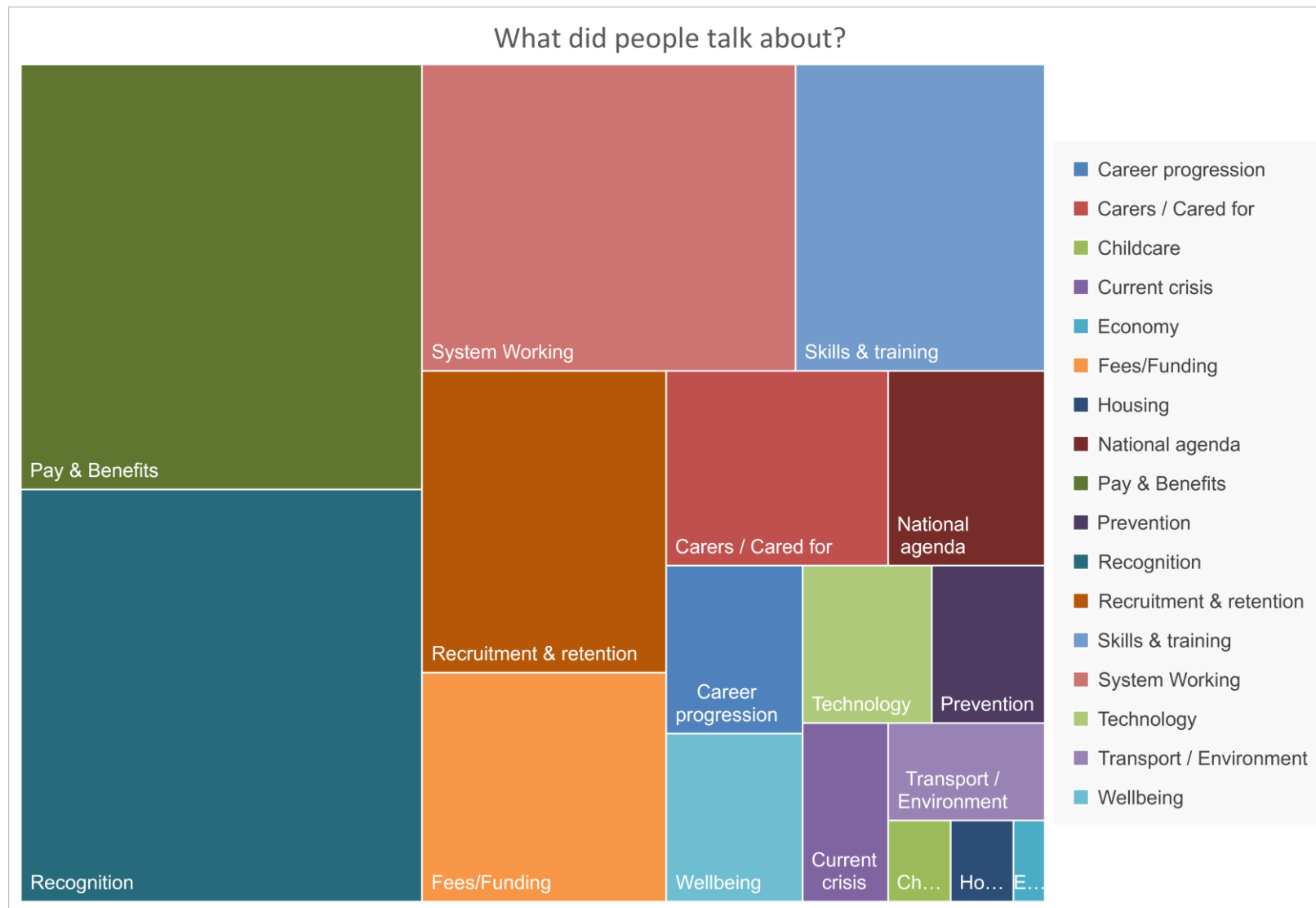
Who attended the livestream of the event?

Stakeholder types attending the event in order of group size: Care providers, Government, Devon County Council Adult Social Care, Care Workers, Integrated Care System, Further/Higher Education.



What did people talk about?

From most to least frequently mentioned, these were: Pay & benefits, Recognition, System Working, Recruitment & retention Fees/funding, Unpaid Carers / Cared For, National agenda, Career progression, Wellbeing, Technology, Prevention, Transport / environment, Current crisis, Childcare, Housing, Economy.



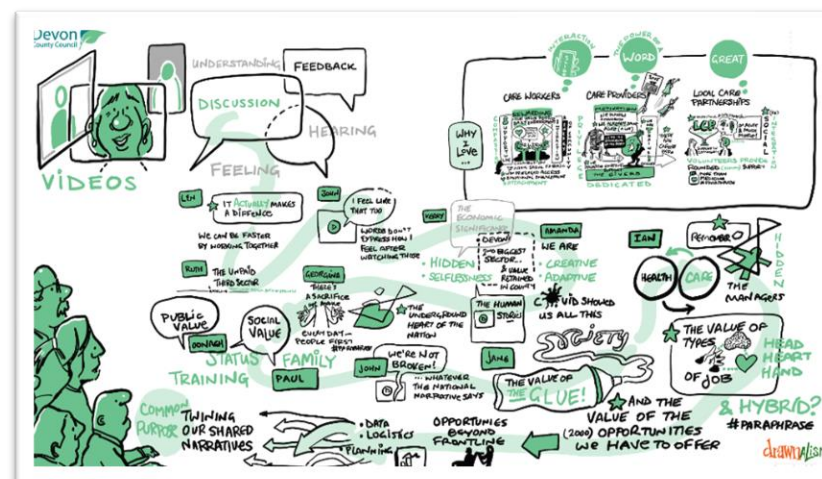
What did attendees feel when they watched the films about what is good in adult social care?



Emotional
Compassion
Inspirational
Inspiring
Essential

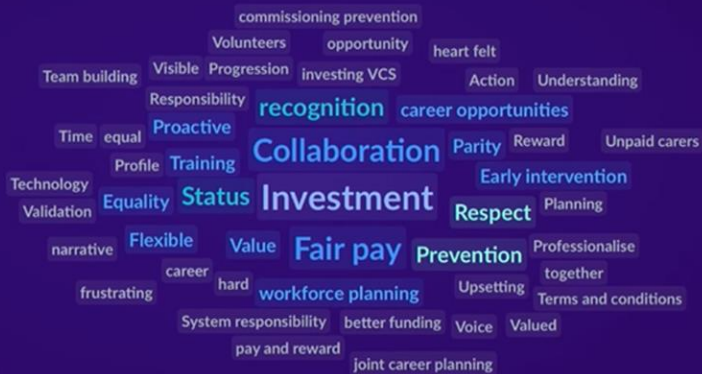
Family
Commitment
Dedication
Home
Dignity

Relationships
Powerful
Prevention
Caring
Love



What did attendees feel could make adult social care better?

What do you think would make adult social care even better?



Collaboration

Investment

Fair pay

Prevention

Respect

Recognition

Career opportunities

Workforce planning

Value

Investing VCS

Understanding

Unpaid Carers

Professionalise

Terms & conditions

Voice

Joint career planning

Pay and reward

System responsibility

Career

Narrative

Technology

Validation

Time

Equal

Profile

Team building

Understanding

Action

Professionalise

Visible

Progression

Volunteers

Heartfelt

