Comisiwn Bevan Commission

Clinical Influencers

Evaluation & Impact Report

Cohort 4

Bevan Commission – June 2026

Executive Summary

The Clinical Influencers Programme was developed in response to feedback from clinicians to strengthen their ability to influence transformational change across NHS Wales. It moved beyond traditional leadership development to build practical influencing capability across systems, organisations and teams.

Medical Directors were invited to nominate individuals from their organisations who they felt would benefit most from the programme. Designed around identified needs and feedback, the programme comprised four interactive workshops where participants developed a shared understanding of influence as a relational and behavioural capability, grounded in communication, credibility, trust and self-awareness rather than positional authority. The programme combined evidence-based learning with practical application through real-world case studies, behavioural science, systems thinking, engagement with senior leaders, and the development of personal agendas for change. It also provided a valuable space for clinicians to connect, reflect and learn from others in similar roles across Wales.

Evaluation findings demonstrate that the programme achieved strong outcomes. By the end of the programme, almost nine in ten participants (88.9%) reported having the knowledge, skills and confidence to influence transformational change, representing a substantial improvement from baseline, where only around one-third felt they possessed the necessary capability. Participants also demonstrated increased recognition of the importance of influence, with all respondents agreeing it is a critical component of delivering transformational change.

Despite ongoing operational pressures within clinical services, attendance and engagement remained consistently high throughout the programme. Overall, the findings indicate that the programme successfully addressed key capability gaps, enhanced clinicians' confidence to influence change, and established a strong foundation for sustained leadership and transformational improvement across NHS Wales. Importantly, participants expressed strong enthusiasm for continuing to build on these connections through future collaborative opportunities, bringing together clinicians, managers and wider professional groups to share learning, address system challenges and support collective action for improvement.

> "The course gave me confidence to challenge a health system that isn't delivering. It was in equal parts frustrating and empowering to hear about other people's struggle with the system. Knowing the challenges and barriers that others faced was useful when thinking how to break these down or circumvent them. Hearing stories from exceptional individuals is inspiring and helps to show what can be achieved. It has given me a better understanding of the wider structures within the NHS and how to exert influence at different levels.

Clinical Influencers Programme
Cohort 4: Evaluation & Impact Report

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1. Introduction

Effective clinical leadership is *critical* to the future of health and care in Wales. National policy increasingly recognises the importance of clinicians leading improvement, innovation and system-wide transformation to address growing challenges across NHS Wales.

The Welsh Government sponsored Clinical Influencers Programme brings together clinicians across Wales to support a bottom-up approach to transformational change. *The programme offers a distinctive opportunity to develop clinicians as influential leaders of change.* Rather than focusing solely on traditional leadership skills, it is uniquely designed to build the confidence, competence and influence needed to drive transformational change across teams, organisations and systems. By equipping participants to shape decisions, inspire others and turn ideas into action, the programme helps to strengthen Wales' capacity for sustainable improvement and innovation.

> ***"Influence is often called a 'soft' skill, but the impact can be massive - both positively and negatively. It's so important for leaders to be able to understand this aspect of leadership.***

2. Programme Overview

Programme objectives:

1. Identify clinicians interested in driving change.
2. Build a supportive community of practice.
3. Develop shared understanding of change and its complexity.
4. Strengthen *knowledge, skills and confidence* to influence others.
5. Explore and adapt new ideas for wider adoption.
6. Grow networks and future leaders to foster a culture of transformation across Wales.

The programme is delivered over 12 months with four in person workshops designed around the following learning areas:

1. Transformational change – what, why and how?
2. Our role in leading transformational change: how can we take action and support others?
3. Making a difference – changing behaviour and engaging others.
4. Review, revise, refocus – sustaining the momentum for change.

Measuring Programme Impact and Success:

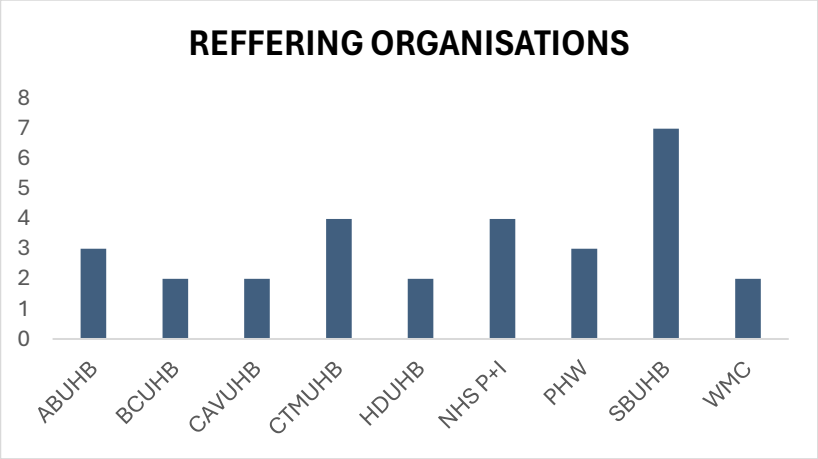
Programme success is assessed through:

1. Achievement of programme objectives.
2. Completion of all four workshops.
3. Participant engagement, including attendance and task participation.
4. Feedback from workshops.
5. Pre- and post-programme surveys demonstrating increased knowledge, skills, and confidence in influencing change and any outcomes achieved.

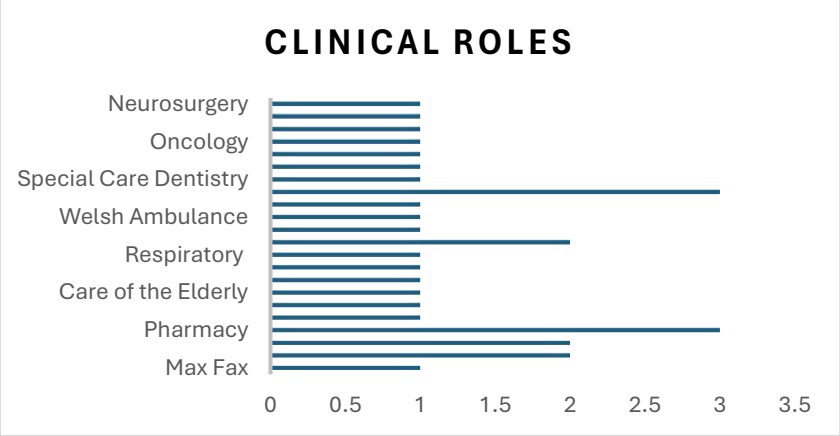
3. About Cohort 4

Cohort Selection and Characteristics, August-September 2025 (Objective 1)

In August 2025, clinical nominations were sought from NHS Wales medical directors.

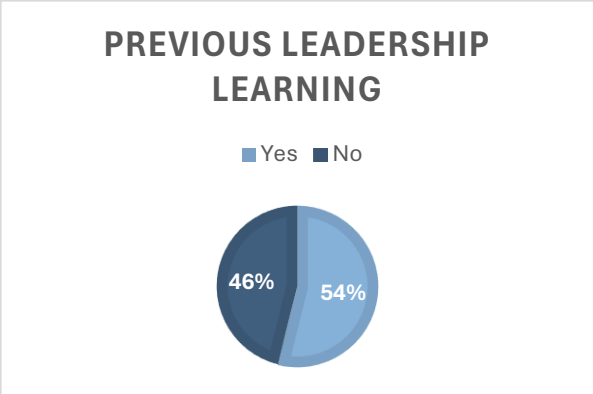


The clinicians held national, clinical leadership and consultancy roles, representing a diverse range of clinical specialties and healthcare settings across Wales.

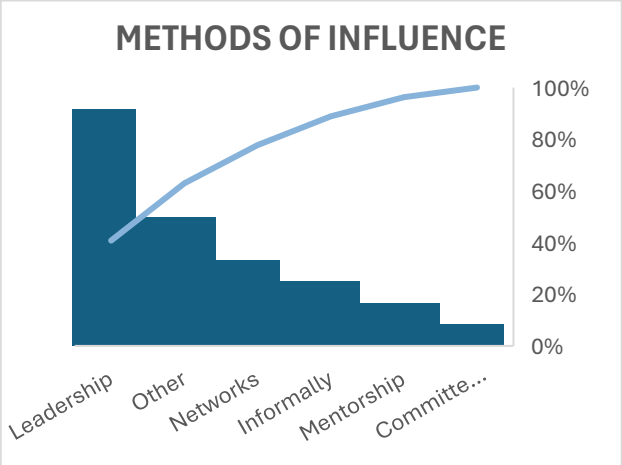


Preliminary Survey Findings

Interestingly only 54% of the cohort had attended a previous leadership development programme. Half of the cohort possessed experience primarily in leading teams and the other half in leading services and initiatives.



The majority of participants used their leadership roles to influence practice and outcomes.



Ranked Leadership Qualities for Driving Transformational Change

Clinicians ranked the following *evidence-based qualities* in order of perceived importance (from highest to lowest):

1. Strong communicator
2. Ability to inspire others
3. Knowledge and awareness
4. Team player
5. Integrity
6. Creative thinker
7. Risk taker

Clinicians placed the *greatest importance on interpersonal and relational qualities*, with *strong communication and the ability to inspire others ranked as the two most important attributes* for influencing transformational change. *Knowledge and awareness were also highly valued,* suggesting that influence is perceived to require both credibility and expertise. Teamworking and integrity were ranked above creative thinking and risk-taking, indicating that respondents viewed *collaboration, trust*

and authenticity as more important than innovation or challenging established approaches. Overall, the findings suggest that clinicians perceive transformational influence to be driven primarily by effective relationships, communication and personal credibility rather than positional authority or risk-taking behaviour.

Clinicians highlighted a combination of *interpersonal, reflective and leadership qualities* as essential for being *influential in practice*. Key characteristics included *strong listening skills, empathy, emotional intelligence, kindness and the ability to build trusting relationships*. They also emphasised the importance of integrity, leading by example, openness to feedback and self-reflection. *Courage, resilience and determination were viewed as critical for navigating challenges and sustaining change,* while the *ability to engage others, manage differing perspectives, build consensus and empower teams was seen as fundamental to influencing practice* and achieving shared goals.

Self-Reported Knowledge, Skills and Confidence to Influence Change

Clinicians overwhelmingly recognised the importance of being able to influence transformational change, with 98% rating this as either highly important (44%) or extremely important (54%). This demonstrates a strong appreciation of the role influence plays in driving improvement and transformation within healthcare.

However, self-assessments of capability were more moderate. Just over one-third of clinicians (33.3%) felt they possessed the skills needed to influence change, while the majority (55.6%) reported only partial confidence in their skills and 11.1% expressed low confidence. Similar patterns were observed for knowledge and confidence. Only 25.9% believed they had the necessary knowledge to influence change, with 63.0% reporting moderate levels of knowledge and 11.1% reporting low levels. Likewise, 37.0% felt confident in their ability to influence change, while 51.9% were only somewhat confident and 11.1% reported low confidence.

Taken together, these findings suggest a strong recognition of the importance of influence in transformational change, but a perceived gap in the knowledge, skills and confidence required to do so effectively. This highlights a potential opportunity for targeted development and support to strengthen clinicians' ability to influence and lead change across the healthcare system.

Areas Clinicians Wanted to Influence

Clinicians identified a broad range of areas where they wished to exert greater influence, spanning individual, organisational and system-wide levels. Many respondents highlighted a desire to influence *senior leaders, executives, health boards, NHS Wales organisations and Welsh Government*, recognising that meaningful transformation often requires engagement with decision-makers and policymakers.

At an organisational level, clinicians wanted to influence *service development, strategic prioritisation, funding decisions, workforce culture, productivity, morale and management structures.* Several respondents emphasised the importance of influencing both *vertically and horizontally* across organisations, including peers, multidisciplinary teams, senior leaders and executive teams.
A strong theme was the desire to improve *patient care and service delivery,* including enhancing care pathways, strengthening prevention, improving medicines management, developing mental health services, addressing health inequalities and racism, and creating more integrated, person-centred care

across organisational boundaries. Respondents also highlighted opportunities to influence the adoption of *quality improvement approaches*, innovation and collaborative working across NHS Wales. Overall, the findings suggest that clinicians view influence as extending far beyond their immediate teams, encompassing the ability to shape culture, policy, service design and strategic decision-making at local, regional and national levels. This reflects a recognition that achieving transformational change requires influence across multiple layers of the healthcare system.

4. Programme Delivery & Evaluation

Workshop Engagement and Learning (Objectives 3,4,5)

Engagement with the programme was *consistently high* across all four workshops, with attendance rates of 90%, 83%, 83% and 72% respectively. Participation remained strong throughout the programme despite the significant operational pressures faced by clinicians. Where participants were unable to attend, this was primarily due to unavoidable circumstances such as urgent clinical commitments, illness or planned leave. The sustained level of engagement demonstrates both the relevance of the programme and the commitment of clinicians to developing their ability to influence and lead transformational change within NHS Wales.

Workshop 1 – Transformational Change: What, why and how? December 2025

The opening workshop established the foundations for the Clinical Influencers Programme by exploring the *role of influence in driving transformational change within NHS Wales*. Participants considered the meaning and purpose of transformation, reflecting on why change is necessary and the unique contribution clinicians can make in shaping services, systems and outcomes.

Through facilitated discussions and shared experiences, clinicians explored the people and experiences that had influenced them throughout their careers and identified the personal characteristics associated with effective influencers. The workshop highlighted that influence is not solely derived from positional authority but is built through credibility, relationships, communication, trust and a clear sense of purpose.

Participants examined practical approaches to influencing others, including strategies for winning hearts and minds, understanding different perspectives and engaging stakeholders with differing priorities. These concepts were reinforced through discussions with senior healthcare leaders, who shared real-world insights into leading and influencing change at organisational and system levels.

The workshop was significant in establishing a shared understanding of influence as a core leadership capability. It encouraged participants to recognise their own potential to influence change, challenged traditional notions of leadership, and laid the groundwork for developing the skills, confidence and behaviours needed to lead transformational improvement across healthcare settings.

> “Excited to get stuck in!
> Thank you very much for this opportunity!

Workshop 2 - Our Role as Leaders for Transformational Change: What can we do ourselves and how can we help others? February 2026

Workshop 2 built on the foundations of clinical influence by focusing on *how change is created, shaped and sustained within complex health systems.* The day began by exploring the importance of narrative in driving transformation, with participants examining how compelling stories and real-world examples can help mobilise support for change.

Participants then considered the *barriers to change,* including organisational "rules" and constraints, and reflected on how clinicians can *influence and challenge processes that may not support effective care*. This was followed by a deeper *exploration of NHS systems planning*, helping participants understand how decisions are made across regional and organisational structures and where influence can be most effectively applied.

A significant focus of the workshop was on self-awareness and intent, with participants reflecting on who and what influences them, and identifying the areas within their own scope of practice where they most want to create change. This personal framing was then linked to wider system influence through a dedicated session on *influencing policy*, supported by senior national and international leaders who shared insights into shaping healthcare at strategic levels.

Overall, the workshop strengthened participants' understanding of how influence operates across multiple layers of the system—from local practice to national policy. It reinforced that effective influence requires not only strong relationships and communication, but also an understanding of systems, narratives and policy levers. *The learning was directly aligned to the programme's purpose of equipping clinicians to move beyond awareness of change into active and effective influence within NHS Wales.*

> "It's been really interesting to be amongst colleagues expressing similar frustration - helps reduce feelings of isolation. Also, sharing ideas and making contacts has been great.

Workshop 3 - Making a Difference: Changing behaviour and engaging others. April 2026

Workshop 3 focused on deepening participants' understanding of how to *achieve and sustain transformational change* by *combining practical leadership insight with behavioural science approaches.* The day opened with a session on achieving change goals, encouraging participants to reflect on the clarity of their own objectives and the importance of maintaining focus and persistence when driving improvement in complex systems.

A key feature of the workshop was the exploration of real-world case studies demonstrating how local clinical initiatives can be scaled to national impact. This highlighted the importance of credibility, persistence and relationship-building in translating frontline innovation into wider system change. Participants were also encouraged to consider how they personally move mindsets, with facilitated discussions examining the psychological and cultural factors that influence openness to change.

The introduction of behavioural science provided a structured framework for understanding why people behave the way they do and how this insight can be applied to influence practice more effectively. This helped participants *connect influence not only to communication and leadership, but also to evidence-based approaches for shaping behaviour at individual, team and organisational levels.* Expert dialogue sessions further reinforced the complexity of transformational change, drawing on perspectives from system leaders, clinicians and patient experience. These discussions emphasised the importance of empathy, shared understanding and collaboration in achieving sustainable improvement.

Overall, the workshop *strengthened participants' capability to translate intent into action* by integrating leadership, behavioural insight and real-world system learning. It reinforced the programme's core aim of developing clinicians who can effectively influence change across local and national healthcare systems.

> "Great networking opportunity, cross department learning and understanding.

Workshop 4 - Review, Revise, Refocus, June 2024

Workshop 4 focused on consolidating learning from across the programme and translating it into *practical plans for ongoing influence and action.* Participants were encouraged to reflect on their personal agenda for change, *identify their priorities*, and consider how they could realistically achieve their goals within their spheres of influence. This created an opportunity to bring together insights from previous workshops into a coherent and actionable direction.

A key feature of the workshop was exploring influence through communication channels, including media and professional platforms. This highlighted the importance of clear, compelling messaging in shaping understanding, building credibility and extending reach beyond immediate organisational boundaries. Facilitated input from senior clinical leaders further supported participants to refine how they communicate their ideas effectively and purposefully.

The session then moved into *structured planning discussions, focusing on what could be improved collectively across the system* and how participants could continue to influence change beyond the programme. Emphasis was placed on sustaining momentum through networks, relationships and ongoing collaboration, reinforcing that influence is an active and continuous process rather than a single intervention.

Overall, the workshop served as a capstone to the programme, enabling participants to *integrate learning from all sessions and translate it into practical next steps.* It reinforced the central message of the programme: that clinicians can and do play a critical role in shaping change, and that effective influence requires clarity of purpose, strong communication and sustained engagement across systems.

> “Insightful, good opportunity to network.
> The programme has helped me to regain my passion and re-establish resilience in a very challenging financial landscape. The journey has been mostly a personal one.
> The programme has opened doors to meet people who have influenced and can guide on who to speak with to influence change/hear your voice and ideas.

Summary of Programme Delivery

Over the course of the programme, the Bevan Commission *engaged clinical influencers from across NHS Wales* and brought together senior clinical leaders and subject matter experts to support delivery. *Four in-person workshops* were delivered, each incorporating interactive learning, group work and applied influencing tasks.

To sustain engagement beyond the workshops, *communication channels were established* via Microsoft Teams and WhatsApp, alongside a dedicated Clinical Influencers webpage outlining participants and their areas of interest. Participants were also provided with *access to curated resources* to support the development of their influencing skills and practice.

Overall, the programme *combined structured face-to-face learning with ongoing digital connectivity* and practical application to support the development of a network of clinical influencers across Wales.

5. Programme Impact

A Comparison of Pre- and Post-Programme Findings

To assess the impact of the programme, participants were invited to complete a follow-up survey after the fourth workshop.

The survey explored changes in clinicians' perceptions of:

- The qualities and characteristics required to influence transformational change.
- Their knowledge, skills and confidence to influence change.
- The importance of influence in driving transformational change.

Participant Perceptions of Key Influencing Qualities and Characteristics

Participants were asked before and after the programme to rank the qualities they considered most important for influencing transformational change. While many of the core attributes remained important throughout, there were some notable shifts in emphasis following participation in the programme.

Most significantly, *knowledge and awareness* moved from third to first place, becoming the highest-ranked characteristic by the end of the programme. This suggests that participants increasingly recognised the importance of expertise, understanding and evidence-informed practice as foundations for effective influence. *Strong communication* remained highly valued, moving from first to second place, reinforcing its role as a critical mechanism for engaging others and building support for change.

Similarly, *the ability to inspire others* remained a key characteristic, ranking second before the programme and third afterwards. Together, these findings indicate that participants viewed influence as requiring a combination of credibility, communication and the ability to motivate others towards a shared vision.

Another notable change was the rise of *creative thinking,* which moved from sixth to fourth place. This may reflect a growing appreciation of innovation, adaptability and problem-solving as important capabilities for influencing change within complex healthcare systems. In contrast, *teamwork* and *integrity* remained important but were ranked slightly lower following the programme, although both continued to feature among the most highly valued qualities.

Risk-taking remained the lowest-ranked characteristic both before and after the programme. This suggests that participants largely perceived influence to be achieved through collaboration, expertise, communication and trust rather than through challenging convention or taking significant risks.

Overall, the findings suggest that the *programme strengthened participants' appreciation of the role that knowledge, evidence, creativity and systems understanding play in influencing transformational change*, while reinforcing the continued importance of communication, inspiration and collaborative working. These findings align closely with the programme's focus on developing clinicians who can influence change through expertise, evidence, relationships and systems thinking rather than positional authority alone.

Table: Changes in Perceived Influencing Qualities

Rank	Pre-Programme	Post-Programme
1	Strong communicator	Knowledge and awareness
2	Ability to inspire others	Strong communicator
3	Knowledge and awareness	Ability to inspire others
4	Team player	Creative thinker
5	Integrity	Team Player
6	Creative thinker	Integrity
7	Risk taker	Risk taker

The most notable change was a shift away from individual attributes such as inspiration towards more collaborative and system-oriented characteristics, including teamwork, integrity, communication and knowledge. This aligns strongly with the programme's emphasis on influencing through relationships, credibility and collective action rather than authority alone.

Skills, Knowledge and Confidence - Impact of the Programme on Perceived Influence Capability

The pre-programme survey revealed a strong recognition of the importance of influence in driving transformational change, with 98% of clinicians rating it as highly or extremely important. However, this was accompanied by more moderate levels of self-reported knowledge, skills and confidence, indicating a gap between recognising the value of influence and feeling equipped to exercise it effectively.

By the end of the programme, there was a marked improvement across all three areas. Almost nine in ten participants (88.9%) reported that they possessed the knowledge, skills and confidence required to influence transformational change, with only 11.1% remaining unsure of their ability. This represents a substantial increase in perceived capability compared with baseline findings, where only one-third felt they had the necessary skills, one-quarter felt they had the required knowledge, and just over one-third reported confidence in their ability to influence change.

The programme also strengthened participants' recognition of the importance of influence. The proportion rating influence as extremely important increased from 54% to 63%, (those rating it as highly important moved from 44% to 38%), resulting in universal agreement that influence is a critical component of transformational change.

Taken together, these *findings suggest that the programme not only reinforced the importance of influence but significantly enhanced clinicians' perceived capability to apply it in practice*. The results indicate that the programme successfully addressed the gap identified at baseline, increasing participants' confidence and readiness to influence change across their teams, organisations and the wider healthcare system.

Intended Application of Learning in Practice

Participants identified a range of behaviours and approaches they intended to adopt as a result of the programme, demonstrating a clear commitment to applying learning within their clinical and leadership roles.

Several themes emerged. Clinicians highlighted the importance of building relationships and engaging with a wider range of stakeholders, including seeking out new connections, identifying key influencers and understanding different perspectives. *Many also described plans to become more persistent and proactive in pursuing change,* maintaining a long-term focus and pushing beyond traditional organisational boundaries.

Behavioural science was a particularly influential aspect of the programme. *Participants reported intentions to apply behavioural science principles and behaviour change models to* better understand stakeholder needs, frame messages more effectively, use data and evidence persuasively, and respond constructively to resistance. This reflects an increased appreciation of evidence-based approaches to influencing change.

Notably, several participants identified a greater willingness to take calculated risks, challenge established ways of working and act with increased confidence. This is particularly significant given that risk-taking was ranked as the least important influencing characteristic in both the pre- and post-programme surveys. While participants may not view risk-taking as a defining attribute of effective influence, the findings suggest the programme increased their confidence to step beyond perceived boundaries and take purposeful action to achieve change.

Overall, the intended actions demonstrate a shift towards more strategic, collaborative and evidence-informed influencing behaviours. These are highly relevant to clinical practice, where successfully delivering transformational change often depends on engaging stakeholders, navigating complex

systems, building consensus and maintaining momentum in the face of competing priorities and organisational pressures.

> “ Exposure to excellence and leaders has been invaluable.
> The programme has helped build inspiration, skills, confidence, strategies and networking.

6. Conclusion

The Clinical Influencers Programme demonstrated clear value and impact, successfully achieving its aim of strengthening clinicians' ability to influence transformational change across NHS Wales. Participants reported increased knowledge, skills and confidence in influencing change, alongside a stronger appreciation of the role that influence plays in enabling improvement within complex healthcare systems.

The programme's impact was evident not only through increased confidence and readiness to influence, but also through a clear shift towards more strategic, collaborative and evidence-informed approaches to change. Participants identified tangible opportunities to apply their learning within service improvement, workforce challenges, pathway redesign and organisational development. They highlighted intentions to strengthen relationships, engage more effectively with stakeholders, use behavioural science approaches to understand and influence others, and communicate messages in ways that build support for change. Importantly, many participants described a greater willingness to challenge existing ways of working, take purposeful action and operate beyond traditional organisational boundaries.

A key strength of the programme was the opportunity it created for clinicians to come together, learn from experienced leaders and build connections across professional and organisational boundaries. Participants valued the dedicated space to share experiences, explore common challenges and develop a collective understanding of how influence can be used to address complex system issues. There was strong enthusiasm for maintaining and extending these connections through future collaborative forums that bring together clinicians, managers and other professionals to work collectively on the challenges facing health and care services.

The programme has therefore established more than individual capability; it has created the foundations for a growing community of clinical influencers who are equipped to connect people, challenge conventional approaches and contribute to sustainable transformation. Continued investment in opportunities for collaboration, peer learning and cross-system problem solving will be important to translate this capability into sustained impact across NHS Wales.

Clinical Influencer Details, Cohort 4

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