NHS Lothian Charity

Impact Report

Investing in staff breaks, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

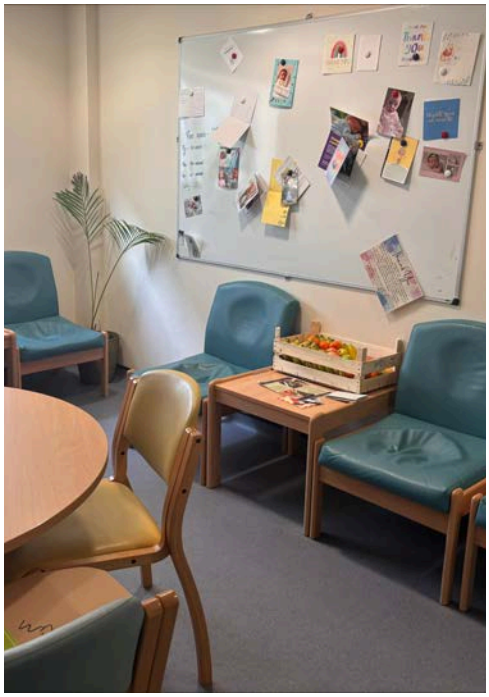
NHS Lothian Charity awarded a grant of £7,000 from the Gill Mitchell Fund, one of the Charity's Specific Funds, that supports staff wellbeing initiatives in line with donors' wishes. The funding was used to support staff working in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh (RIE) by improving their break room with new comfortable seating, dining table and chairs, shelving, a mounted TV and dining cutlery. NICU is a specialist regional service caring for around 850 babies each year and providing 24-hour care for some of Scotland's most vulnerable patients and their families. Working in such a highly specialised and emotionally demanding environment can place significant pressures on staff so supporting wellbeing is vital.

How this project supports staff wellbeing

Evidence indicates that many NHS staff, especially nursing staff, struggle to take adequate breaks during their working day due to workload and staffing pressures. The Royal College of Nursing's (RCN) 'Nursing Under Unsustainable Pressure' report found that 61% of nursing staff were unable to take the breaks highlighting the challenges staff face in accessing time and space for rest and recovery. Furthermore, a survey by Unison found that 31% of staff reported having no dedicated space for breaks, with staff often taking breaks in offices, cars, corridors, store cupboards or other non-designated areas. This project helps remove practical barriers by enabling staff to take comfortable breaks in a dedicated space within the unit.

> "Now that there are more seats in the coffee room I feel more likely to have my full break and not leave early to give someone else a seat when busy."
>
> - Staff Nurse, NICU

> "It now gives me a comfortable space to have breaks to recharge before my starting my shift again."
>
> - Staff Nurse, NICU

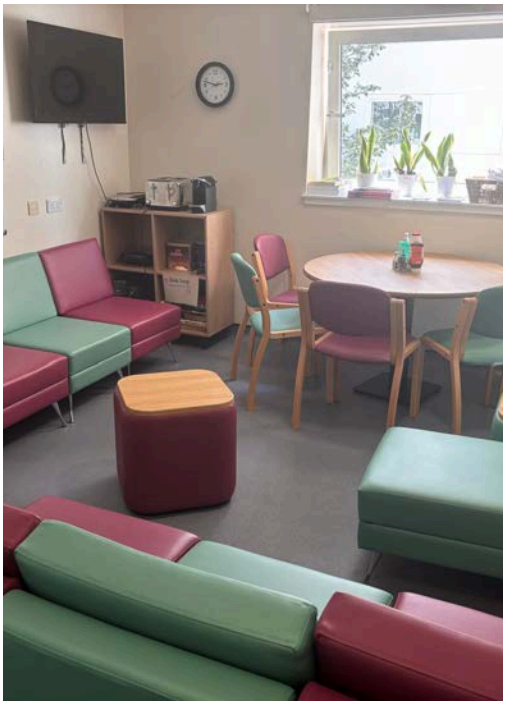


Staff break room, NICU - before

Staff were asked to rate their satisfaction with the break room out of 5.
(1 = low, 5 = high).

On average staff rated:

Before	After
2	4

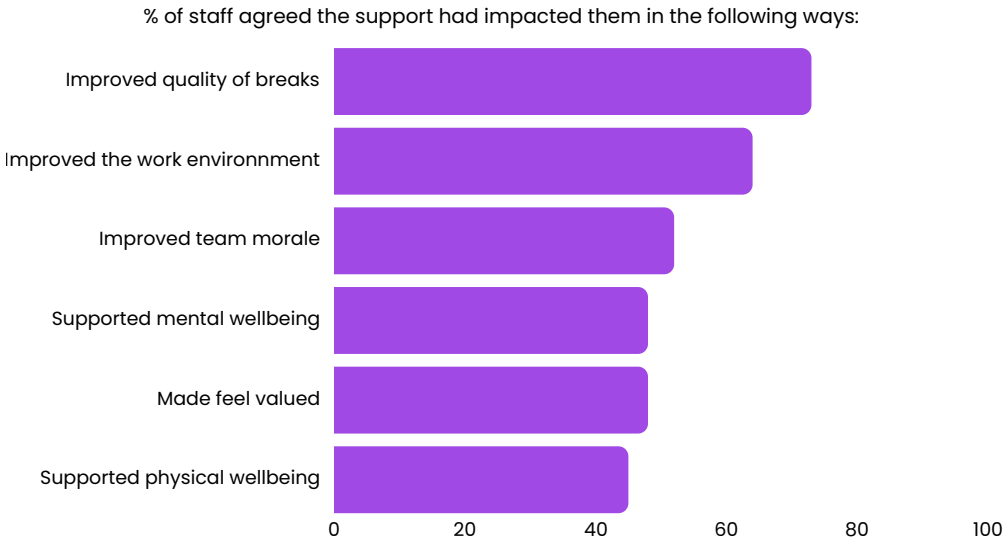


Staff break room, NICU - after

NHS Lothian Charity

Impact Report

Impact on staff wellbeing



"I think the changes have been really positive and makes you feel more valued."

- Staff Nurse, NICU

"It's nice to use an area that is fully equipped and have different areas to go to in the space."

- Staff Nurse, NICU

"The environment is more welcoming and relaxing for recuperating throughout my shifts."

- Staff Nurse, NICU

"Our coffee room has improved considerably and feels much more welcoming. It is now a nice space to relax."

- Charge Nurse, NICU

"Area is now much more enjoyable to sit in. Space feels better with more space for staff to enjoy their breaks."

- Charge Nurse, NICU

"The new seats are very welcome much more spacious seating to relax in."

- Staff Nurse, NICU

Staff reflections and suggestions

While overall feedback was positive, staff shared comments on the limited size and comfort of the break space and a small number of staff felt the refurbishment had made little difference to their wellbeing or experience. NHS Lothian Charity have shared the full findings from the survey with the senior nursing team from the unit.

"I don't think the space looks comfortable or cosy, I think that is quite basic looking and not overly comfortable."

- Staff Nurse, NICU

"Room is way too small overcrowded not a relaxing space if you do manage to get a break."

- Staff Nurse, NICU

"Don't honestly feel too affected."

- Staff Nurse, NICU

Report compiled by
Rebecca Caulfield, Evaluation Manager, NHS Lothian Charity.

Thanks to the Neonatal Team for supporting this evaluation. Find out how NHS Lothian Charity can support staff wellbeing initiatives.