

Psychological professions vision for England 2019-24

1. Purpose and development

The purpose of this document is to maximise the collective impact of the psychological professions to deliver the objectives of the NHS Long Term Plan. It has been developed by the Psychological Professions Workforce Group at NHS England and NHS Improvement and Health Education England, supported by the involvement of 30 stakeholders in psychological healthcare including eight professional organisations¹, experts by experience, senior higher education institution and service leads. We have built on the [Long Term Plan](#) and the [NHS Mental Health Implementation Plan](#).

We are now seeking wider feedback through a short survey [here](#). It would be especially helpful to know to what extent stakeholders agree with the content of each section, and what stakeholders think we should put in or take out. But we are happy to hear all feedback! The consultation period will run from 19 December 2019 to 31 March 2020.

¹ Association of Child Psychotherapists, Association of Clinical Psychologists, Association for Family Therapy and Systemic Practice, British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies, British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, British Psychoanalytic Council, British Psychological Society, UK Council for Psychotherapy.

2. The psychological professions

This vision relates to the 12 psychological professions in NHS commissioned healthcare. These are:

Psychologists	Psychological therapists, psychotherapists and counsellors	Psychological practitioners
Clinical psychologists	Cognitive behavioural Therapists	Psychological wellbeing practitioners
Counselling psychologists	Counsellors	Children's wellbeing practitioners
Forensic psychologists	Child and adolescent psychotherapists	Education mental health practitioners
Health psychologists	Adult psychotherapists	
	Systemic family therapists	

Within these occupations there are many types of work - with couples, families, groups and teams - as well as individuals, and multiple types of therapy and intervention delivered. Many other occupations also make important contributions to psychological healthcare but are either already represented by another professional leadership structure in the NHS (e.g. art, drama and music therapists) or are primarily employed outside NHS-commissioned healthcare (e.g. educational psychologists). There are a number of recognised modalities of psychotherapy which are delivered by staff with a variety of core psychological or other professions.

3. Vision

To improve people's lives by extending evidence-based psychological practice across the whole of healthcare.

4. Mission

- To expand access to evidence-based psychological therapies and interventions widely to those who can benefit from them across all areas of health and social care
- To innovate, and evaluate innovation, in psychological healthcare
- To increase access to psychological healthcare for those groups that have traditionally had poorer access
- To enable all NHS-commissioned health services to deliver psychologically informed care that increases the wellbeing of service users, carers and families
- To use psychological knowledge more widely to prevent avoidable distress and illness
- To create joined-up professional leadership of the psychological professions
- To enable psychological professionals to work with other health and social care professionals to make the most positive outcomes for service users, carers and families

5. Principles

- To work together as 12 psychological professions to create greater impact for patients, carers and families than we can working in isolation
- To embed psychological professions activity across all areas of mental and physical healthcare
- To achieve and report measurable outcomes for patient recovery
- To make an impact on overall quality and experience of care and treatment across settings including inpatient, community and primary care
- To tackle inequality of access and outcomes, enabling more people to benefit from psychological healthcare, regardless of background
- To recruit a more diverse psychological professions workforce that better represents the communities we serve
- To make the psychological professions a great career choice with more integrated training and career path
- To ensure the inclusion of a diverse range of service users, carers and families through collaborative decision-making in treatment, meaningful involvement in service design, development and delivery, and training for the psychological professions

6. Key result areas

6.1 Five Year Forward View

To complete the 2021 trajectory expansion requirements of the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health to deliver greater access to psychological therapies and interventions. This requires delivery of an additional 6,425 psychological professionals in an expanded mental health workforce during the period 2016 to 2021.

6.2 Long Term Plan

To deliver on the ten key areas of the Long Term Plan that require significant psychological professions expansion and maximise benefits for patients in seven other areas where there is significant potential for impact:

Expansion areas

For each of the areas below we will expand the psychological professions in line with the indicative expansion requirements by 2024 in the Mental Health Implementation Plan, as well as the learning disability and autism requirement in the Long Term Plan:

- 6.2.1 Perinatal Mental Healthcare (LTP Section 3.16) – Indicative expansion by 210 posts for psychologists and up to 280 therapists
- 6.2.2 Children and Young People’s Mental Health Services (including eating disorders, crisis and access for 0-25 years) (LTP Section 3.22–3.30) – Indicative expansion by 1,350 posts for psychologists, 2,550 posts for psychotherapists and other psychological professionals, and up to 780 other therapists
- 6.2.3 Adult Common Mental Health Problems (LTP Section 3.90–3.92) – Indicative expansion by 2,860 posts for psychotherapists and psychological professionals
- 6.2.4 Adult Severe Mental Illness (LTP Section 3.93–3.94) – Indicative expansion by 750 posts for psychologists, 210 posts for psychotherapists and other psychological professionals, and up to 3,930 other therapists
- 6.2.5 Mental Health Crisis Care and Liaison (LTP Section 3.95–3.101) – Indicative expansion of psychological professions - up to 580 therapists
- 6.2.6 Therapeutic Acute Mental Health Inpatient Care (LTP Section 3.102) – Indicative expansion by 160 posts for psychologists and up to 450 other therapists
- 6.2.7 Suicide and Bereavement Support (LTP Section 3.103–3.106) – Indicative expansion of psychological professions - up to 60 therapists

- 6.2.8 Problem Gambling Mental Health Support (LTP Section 2.36) – Indicative expansion by 40 posts for psychologists
- 6.2.9 Rough Sleeping Mental Health Support (LTP Section 2.32) – Indicative expansion of psychological professions - up to 10 therapists
- 6.2.10 Learning Disability and Autism (LTP Section 3.31–3.36) – Significant expansion of posts for psychologists will be required to support improved learning disability care and timely autism assessment.

Impact areas

For each of the following areas we will work to support the Long Term Plan implementation by enabling the maximum impact of the psychological professions:

- 6.2.11 Major Health Conditions – Support psychological adjustment and psychologically-informed healthcare following a diagnosis of major health conditions such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, stroke, respiratory disease and diabetes.
- 6.2.12 Older Age and Dementia –Contribute psychological expertise to support ageing well and living well with frailty and dementia, including the development of Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) and community and inpatient mental health services that meet the needs of older people.
- 6.2.13 Prevention and Health Inequalities – Deploy psychological expertise to support community and public health activities.
- 6.2.14 NHS Staff – Provide staff wellbeing interventions, psychological interventions and clinical supervision and training across disciplines, including new roles.
- 6.2.15 Digitally Enabled Care – Extend the development and rigorous evaluation of digitally enabled models of psychological therapy and other technological developments to improve patient care.
- 6.2.16 Best Use of Resources – Realise the full potential of psychological healthcare to return whole system savings in health and social care and other public costs, especially in the management of long term health conditions.
- 6.2.17 Structural Change – Use Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (STPs) and Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) to embed psychological approaches across systems.

7 Enabling workstreams for 2019-21

7.1 Expanding the psychological workforce

- 7.1.1 Establish a standard taxonomy of psychological professions occupations and align NHS Digital reporting and NHS Careers to this.
- 7.1.2 Publish an integrated workforce plan for the 12 psychological professions and agreed new roles.
- 7.1.3 Establish clear principles around adopting and implementing new roles.
- 7.1.4 Ensure all psychological professional roles are appropriately governed and accredited.
- 7.1.5 Improve recruitment and retention through a programme to promote psychological professional careers.
- 7.1.6 Establish a long term sustainable funding solution for salaries during postgraduate training for psychological professional roles.
- 7.1.7 Review the mental health services data set to capture routine outcome measures and 'indirect' clinical activity for psychological professional activity.

7.2 Optimising training and career paths

- 7.2.1 Promote the involvement of service users and carers in all psychological professions training.
- 7.2.2 Align the training of psychological professionals to the competences required to deliver the NHS Long Term Plan priorities.
- 7.2.3 Review and, if appropriate, redesign workforce and training models for Adult Common Mental Health Problems and Adult Severe Mental Illness to solve challenges in supply and retention.
- 7.2.4 Determine whether deploying extra new psychologically informed roles at graduate or non-graduate entry level could support delivery of the Long Term Plan. If additional new roles are warranted, design and deliver a programme of systematic national implementation.
- 7.2.5 Maximise efficiency in the implementation of new psychological roles by ensuring meaningful alignment to existing roles, clear competences and governance.

7.2.6 Develop a more integrated and coherent psychological career path with clearer and more efficient routes of entry, progression and lateral development.

7.2.7 Scale up practitioner psychologist take up of non-medical approved clinician roles, alongside nursing, occupational therapy and social work.

7.3 The right leadership of psychological professions

7.3.1 Establish the right psychological professions leadership at all levels to enable delivery of this vision across the whole system.

7.3.2 At local level, review best practice for provider board-level professional leadership for the psychological professions and seek removal of any systemic and regulatory obstacles to this.

7.3.3 At system level, promote inclusion of psychological professional leadership within STPs and ICSs.

7.3.4 At regional level, ensure all seven regions establish a psychological professions network that supports this England vision through regional communities of practice linked to regional arm's length body (ALB) architecture.

7.3.5 At national level, create sufficient professional leadership posts to lead this programme of work across the ALBs. An options appraisal should include review of the potential benefits of a chief psychological professions officer role.

7.3.6 Across all psychological professions leadership activity, enable meaningful expert by experience involvement to shape the best outcomes for the public.

7.3.7 At all levels, enable psychological professionals to lead by acting on evidence of what works.

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