



Should I stay or should I go?

The integral nature of staff well-being enterprise for NHS retention and recruitment

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Session Overview



- The National NHS Vision
- The National NHS Reality
- Workforce Crisis
- Is Staff Wellbeing the Solution?
- Implications for Psychologists

The National NHS Vision



Nationally there is clear consensus across the health service that the NHS workforce faces a range of issues and the NHS People Plan (2021) contains a national ambition to make the NHS the best place to work and clearly outlines the actions required to keep all NHS staff safe, healthy and well.

The actions for employers fall under three areas:

- health and safety
- physical and mental health and wellbeing
- flexible working.

The National NHS Vision



Supporting staff wellbeing must be a top down strategy, organisations need to proactively promote mental wellbeing by ensuring that it is embedded in overall business strategies, of organisational policies and practices.

Organisations which do well with regards to staff wellbeing adopt a preventive and proactive strategic approach.

The National NHS Reality



- Mental health problems quadrupled in NHS staff during the first wave of the COVID-19.
- However multiple factors that pre-date the pandemic have also been cited in contributing to an increase in mental health problems and an exodus of the workforce away from the NHS.
- These include; the removal of nursing bursaries, introduction of university fees, poor working conditions, under-resourcing of healthcare services, unmanageable workloads, learned helplessness of clinical risk, bullying, a culture of incivility and blame and sometimes, a lack of basic staff needs being met.

The National NHS Reality



“NHS workers across the country have spoken to us about feeling overstretched, undervalued and struggling to get support in a chaotic system,” (Julian McCrae, Engage Britain’s director).

“I think people generally feel overworked and undervalued in the NHS. There are problems with recruitment and retention of staff. Some vacancies are unfilled for more than a year. The stress levels on staff in under-resourced teams is massive and it’s a major contributor to them struggling with their mental health and wellbeing. Ultimately, people make the decision to leave, or to take early retirement, or seek other careers.”

The National NHS Reality



- Risk of suicide especially high among GP's, psychiatrists and trainee doctors (estimated to 2-5 times the rate of the general population).
- Evidence indicates doctors are at considerable risk of work-related stress and mental health problems such as depression and anxiety compared to the general population.
- Rates of depression among graduate doctors estimated at about 30%.
- Doctors are unlikely to disclose poor mental wellbeing.



The National NHS Reality



Nurses are an at-risk group for unhealthy lifestyle behaviours.

- Over 50% of nurses surveyed did not meet public health recommendations for physical activity, indicating a need for intervention to establish healthy physical activity levels.
- Nurses who work 12-hour shifts are two and half times more likely to experience symptoms of burnout than those working shorter shifts.
- Nurses have consistently reported higher levels of anxiety and depression during the pandemic.

Workforce Crisis



- For the first time in history there are now more people leaving, than joining the NHS. Analysis of NHS Digital figures report that a record number of at least 400 staff/week, in England are leaving, citing to improve their work-life balance as the primary reason.
- Around 50 in every 10,000 staff working in hospital and community health services in June 2021 left the service within the next three months, citing work-life balance as the reason. This was also new record.

Workforce Crisis



- Despite claims from the NHS that progress has been made, the situation is worsening, and research from the Nuffield Trust has predicted that unfilled vacancies will reach 350,000 by 2030.
- Prioritising mental wellbeing is imperative for retention; a recent Mind survey found nearly 90% of NHS primary care workers claimed to be stressed, and over 20% had developed serious mental health problems as a result of it.

Workforce Crisis



- There are approximately 70 million work days lost each year due to mental health challenges, with poor mental health in the NHS equating to £1749 - £2174/employee/year. The return on investment in workplace mental health interventions is £4.20 for every £1 spent. Health Education England, (2019).
- Trusts would clearly benefit from more accessible mental health support in this area, in terms of staff retention, as well as in numerous other areas (there is a correlation between staff burnout and decreased patient safety).

Is Staff Wellbeing the Solution?



- Productivity
 - Satisfaction
 - Absenteeism
 - Presenteeism
- One in two staff members have attended work despite feeling unwell because they felt pressure from themselves, colleagues or managers.
 - Work related stress significantly impacts on staff health and wellbeing, with 1 in 3 of NHS staff reporting they have felt unwell due to work-related stress.

Is Staff Wellbeing the Solution?



- Turnover and retention

- The evidence base is strong and the facts are simple; poor staff health and wellbeing decreases levels of employee satisfaction and increases rates of staff turnover.
- Staff shortages are the main driver of worker burnout.

Is Staff Wellbeing the Solution?



- The future workforce belong to a different generation to their seniors, with values that are markedly different.
- It has been formulated that policy leaders are failing to understand what is important to the younger workforce generations, who have a different perspective to what has traditionally been attractive.
- The NHS will need to adopt practices and systems which match the aspirations, values and motivations of the millennial generation, if they are to remain as proactive members of UK healthcare.

Is Staff Wellbeing the Solution?



Millennials value;

- security
- work-life balance
- time with friends and family
- their personal health and wellbeing

Millennials carry significant personal financial burdens.

- Evidence suggests that millennials gravitate towards wellness and prevention as opposed to treating issues as they arise and are also much more open to talking about mental health.
- In recent years, meditation and mindfulness have become increasingly popular and this is now becoming a significant industry that is attracting the younger generation.

(Patel & Chakravorty, 2020)

Is Staff Wellbeing the Solution?



- The NHS People Plan (2021) sets out a key ambition to have more people, working differently, in a compassionate and inclusive culture.
- This ambition is a priority in the People Directorate and National Retention Programme (2020) and stipulates that retaining staff is one of the most important factors for the NHS to deliver care in the forthcoming years.
- There is recognition that the NHS must improve the retention of staff already working in the service, given high levels of burnout and significant numbers intending to leave.

Is Staff Wellbeing the Solution?



- Only 51% of line managers feeling comfortable to talk generally in the workplace about mental health issues.
- 70% of managers say there are barriers to them providing mental health support.
- Key factors affecting mental wellbeing; fear of being judged, stress, lack of confidence and stigma (66% v/s 52% staff would seek support for musculoskeletal over mental health).

NHS staff wellbeing needs

Staff wellbeing is a top priority for all NHS organisations. This resource highlights the importance of the basic needs all staff need to help our NHS people feel healthy at work.

3. SELF-FULFILMENT NEEDS



I am achieving my full potential



- Inspire and support others
- Deliver excellent patient care
- Able to develop in my role/career



I am thriving and love where I work

2. PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS



I can freely voice my concerns and I am heard



- Regular wellbeing conversations/team check ins
- Sense of belonging
- Freedom to speak up
- Voice is heard and counts
- Rewarded and recognised for my hard work
- Compassionate leadership
- I have a comprehensive PDP

I feel respected and supported by my colleagues including my superiors



1. BASIC NEEDS



It's the little things that make the biggest difference



- Nutrition
- Hydration
- PPE/comfortable clothes and shoes
- Toilet/shower facilities
- Sleep
- Healthy work-life balance
- Safe working conditions
- Regular breaks and rest areas

I can regularly take my break and have space away from where I work to rest



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Back to basics

for a healthy working environment

HYDRATION



Keeping hydrated is essential, particularly for those in safety critical areas. Dehydration can lead to decreased cognitive function and heat stress.¹



Being dehydrated impairs attention, psychomotor and memory skills by 2%.²



0.8% - 2% dehydration affects mental function by 10%.³

NUTRITION

Digestive problems are common in shift workers, due to disruption of the internal body clock and poor diet.⁴



2 out of 3 of core medical trainees worked at least one shift without eating a meal.⁵

SLEEP



207,000 working days are lost in UK every year to insufficient sleep.⁶



Power naps at work improve performance by 34% and alertness by 54%.⁷



Putting in boundaries at specific times of the day that are free of social media can reduce anxiety and aid better sleep.⁸



Shift workers often turn to stimulants such as coffee or cigarettes to keep them awake and sedatives such as alcohol or sleeping pills to help them sleep.⁹

BREAKS



59% of survey respondents said they did not get to take sufficient breaks on their last shift.¹⁰



65% of all respondents said they worked additional time, on average almost one hour extra.¹¹



69% of nursing staff do not take breaks, compared to 56% of hospital staff.¹²



NHS staff are entitled to a minimum break of 20 minutes if working longer than 6 hours.¹³



8+ shifts carry an increased risk of accidents with twice the risk of accidents at around 12 hours compared to 8 hours.¹⁴



Breaks should be uninterrupted, away from the workstation, not taken at the start or end of the working day.¹⁵

FACILITIES



Junior doctors report a shortage of rest breaks, and a lack of facilities for resting, learning and engaging with their team.¹⁶



Suitable and sufficient sanitary conveniences and washing facilities should be provided at readily accessible places and workers should be able to use them without unreasonable delay.¹⁷

1. Welfare facilities for healthcare staff
2. Hydration-Best Practice Making a difference NHS National Patient Safety Agency
3. Hydration-Best Practice Making a difference NHS National Patient Safety Agency
4. Shift workers more likely to report poor health NHS
5. Being a junior doctor Royal College of Physicians
6. Why sleep matters - The economic costs of insufficient sleep Rand Corporation
7. The importance of sleep NHS Employers
8. Sleep in the Time of COVID-19 Advice for NHS Staff
9. HSE, Managing shift work
10. Safe and Effective Staffing Nursing Against the Odds
11. Safe and Effective Staffing Nursing Against the Odds
12. Safe and Effective Staffing Nursing Against the Odds
13. Working time and breaks
14. Fatigue and sleep deprivation - The impact of different working patterns on doctors (2016)
15. Welfare facilities for healthcare staff



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Staff Wellbeing Interventions



Before

After

Milton Keynes University Hospital have enhanced staff health and wellbeing services with a focus on stress and musculoskeletal conditions, enhanced leave and flexible working packages and local gym memberships. The next phase is to include lease cars and looking at childcare provision. Improved retention rates have been reported.

Implications for Psychologists



- During COVID the need for the psychological intervention for healthcare staff was recognised and identified as a primary need.
- Post COVID there has been a surge of services and newly developed psychologist roles to lead and develop psychologically informed health and wellbeing support for healthcare staff.
- These services are increasingly being recognised as integral to Trust's retention strategies.
- The launch a new quarterly staff survey to better track morale offers opportunities for psychologists to identify areas for wellbeing development, and provide upskilling to other professionals.

Implications for Psychologists



- More broadly, the NHS People Plan, stipulates that all NHS staff should have a health and wellbeing conversation, to discuss their individual health and wellbeing needs (and flexible working requirements and equality, diversity and inclusion).
- As increasing numbers of psychologists are line managers, these conversations will be an integral part of psychology roles.
- However, health and wellbeing is an organisational responsibility and should take a collaborative and multi-disciplinary approach to maximise the reach and success of interventions.

A Vision for the Psychological Professions

To transform lives and communities by extending and embedding psychological knowledge and practice across the whole of health and care



What can Psychological Professionals do in response?



- Workplace culture – “It is imperative staff have the opportunity and the confidence to speak up... needs to be matched with a culture in which organisations demonstrate that they are not just listening to, but also acting on, staff feedback”.
- Workload – (People Plan 2020/21): Strategies for 22/23 aim to embed a more preventative approach to the health and wellbeing of staff, tackle inequalities, lock in beneficial changes and new ways of working, and boost efforts to attract and retain more people.

What can Psychological Professionals do in response?



Unite and Increase Diversity

Commit to the psychological professions becoming a united force with a strong and diverse voice, working collaboratively with other professionals of all disciplines:

- Work together, to make a bigger impact than we can alone
- Value and respect the contribution of each psychological profession and ensure all of their voices are heard
- Work with multi-disciplinary colleagues, service users, carers and families to make the biggest difference we can, together
- Make our psychological professions more representative of the communities we serve

What can Psychological Professionals do in response?



Unite and Increase Diversity

- Increase fairness of entry to, and inclusion in the psychological professions for talented people of all backgrounds, particularly Black, Asian and minority ethnic candidates
- Establish clear career paths and development opportunities for all psychological professionals
- Join up the professional leadership of the psychological professions to maximise our collective impact through a strong, influential voice
- Take care of our psychological professionals colleagues

What can Psychological Professionals do in response?



Transform and Innovate

Commit to using our evidence and expertise boldly to innovate and improve what we do.

- Be flexible, brave and open minded in adapting our methods to meet changing needs
- Continuously develop our knowledge and evidence-base through research and evaluation across therapy modalities, service models and psychological practice

What can Psychological Professionals do in response?



Transform and Innovate

- Report meaningful progress in service users' recovery and quality of life
- Tackle inequality of outcomes
- Ensure there are sufficient highly trained and experienced psychological professionals to lead and supervise the safe expansion of psychological healthcare
- Speak up, challenge, lead and support each other to deliver our vision

What can Psychological Professionals do in response?



Put People First

Commit to putting the needs and voices of people at the heart of everything we do and to treating service users, carers, families and staff with kindness, empathy, openness, respect and dignity.

- Work in genuine partnership with service users, carers and families to understand their needs and to design and deliver services that meet these needs
- Improve overall quality and experience of care and treatment across settings including inpatient, community and primary care

What can Psychological Professionals do in response?



Put People First

- Empower people to improve their psychological health and wellbeing by sharing and communicating psychological knowledge
- Encourage and support service users, carers and families to speak up and take an active lead in their care
- Ensure meaningful involvement of a diverse range of service users, carers and families in service design, development and delivery, and training for the psychological professions
- Support the psychological wellbeing of colleagues working in health and care services in good times and in bad

What can Psychological Professionals do in response?



Help Our Communities to Thrive

Commit to developing healthy, thriving communities, with a more psychologically informed public.

- Use psychological knowledge widely to prevent avoidable distress and build resilient communities
- Work with communities to make services more transparent, accessible, and responsive

What can Psychological Professionals do in response?



Help Our Communities to Thrive

- Recognise and respond to wider social factors, such as poverty, discrimination, inequality and trauma, that can impact on emotional distress
- Address national and local disparities in access to and experiences of psychological healthcare, particularly for Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities
- Work in partnership with professionals inside and outside the NHS to improve lives across the lifespan.

What can Psychological Professionals do in response?



Make all Health and Care Psychological

Commit to embedding psychological knowledge and practice across the health and care system so it is better able to meet all of a person's needs - psychological, physical and social.

- Enable all health and care services to deliver psychologically informed care
- Extend psychological healthcare across physical healthcare services and integrate care for service users

What can Psychological Professionals do in response?



Make all Health and Care Psychological

- Expand access to the range of evidence-based psychological therapies and interventions to those who can benefit
- Influence and lead improvements in psychological healthcare with courage, sincerity, warmth, care and knowledge



In Conclusion

- The NHS must focus on becoming a more attractive employer, to retain the current workforce and recruit the future workforce.
- There needs to be a greater focus on staff health and wellbeing in addition to, tackling bullying and discrimination, increased flexible working, and embedding collective, compassionate and inclusive leadership across the NHS, to create cultures in which staff want to work and build their careers.
- Psychologists have an increasing role in meeting this ambition within the NHS.
- Strategies cannot be viewed in isolation from the need to invest in, and support, the wider health and care workforce. Addressing shortages in the NHS must be in collaboration with, and not at the expense of other parts of health and care system.



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