

PPN MIDLANDS BRIEFING NOTE

Developing Business Cases for NHS Workforce Growth in Psychological Professions

Purpose

This briefing signposts key evidence sources for business cases that expand, redesign, or stabilise the psychological professions workforce. It helps Psychological Professions Leads demonstrate alignment with national NHS priorities, using credible workforce intelligence.

More general resources to support with business case preparation are available from [The Health Innovation Network](#). An overview of HM Treasury's Five Case Model Methodology used by NHS organisations can be found [here](#). Detailed guidance is provided in HM Treasury's [Guide to Better Business Cases](#). Trust Programme Management Office (PMO) teams may offer additional focussed support and localised templates.

Core questions

A well-constructed business case should be explicitly framed around some core questions:

- 1. Strategic alignment:** Which national NHS priorities and policy drivers does this proposal directly support? How psychological professionals support the three shifts is outlined [here](#).
- 2. Workforce need:** What workforce gap, service pressure or demand data demonstrates the need for this proposal?
- 3. Evidence of impact:** What evidence shows that psychological professionals improve clinical outcomes, patient experience, access, productivity or system flow?
- 4. Organisation priorities:** How will the proposal support and enhance the organisation's strategic direction and agreed priorities? Incorporating, quality, safety, workforce, health inequalities, risk, performance, digital and financial considerations is key.
- 5. Value:** How will this benefit service users, local communities, existing and future workforce?

This framing helps ensure proposals are strategically aligned, data-led and evidence-based.

Strategic alignment

Policy references: The following examples may be helpful depending on Business Case Focus.

Business Case Focus	Policy/Strategy/Resource that may be relevant
<i>Expansion of psychological workforce</i>	NHS Long Term Workforce Plan and Psychological Professions Workforce Plan
<i>Digital and digitally enabled care</i>	NHS 10-Year Health Plan (analogue to digital), NHS Digital Transformation , Data saves lives (remains relevant)
<i>Community and neighbourhood care models</i>	Neighbourhood Health Framework
<i>Prevention and behaviour change</i>	NHS 10-Year Health Plan (sickness to prevention)
<i>Integrated care and multi-disciplinary delivery</i>	Medium Term Planning Framework and Long-Term Workforce Plan

It is useful to align this evidence with organisational priorities and the value (benefit) of the proposal, addressing the unique contribution of the psychological professions in health and care. Incorporating lived experience in the case for change and considering involvement, participation and co-production in the proposal development alongside any testimonials could also be considered.

Workforce need

Data that helps demonstrate workforce gaps and demand pressures can be found from a combination of national datasets, regional intelligence, and local system reporting, including:

- **National activity and access data:** For example, Referral rates, waiting times and caseload data is available from the [Mental Health Services Data Set](#) (MHSDS).
- **Population need and prevalence:** Local prevalence estimates, deprivation indices and projected mental health need is available from [Public Health Profiles](#) and ICS Joint Strategic Needs Assessments.
- **Workforce capacity and gaps:** Vacancy rates, staffing establishment data and benchmarking from [NHS Workforce Statistics](#) and the [NHS Benchmarking Network](#). Remember to incorporate any workforce inequalities data such as WRES/WDES as appropriate. Accessing local risk registers, associated incident reports and bank/agency usage can also be useful data sources as can local workforce establishment figures.
- **Workforce surveys:** Provider level NHS Staff Surveys and Pulse Surveys and National Education & Training Survey (NETS) alongside HR related metrics linked to attendance and wellbeing are helpful in building a case for change.

Evidence of Impact

The NHS England (Midlands) [Productivity and Efficiency Improvement Hub](#) provides tools, resources, guidance and peer support to help NHS organisations better understand and improve productivity and efficiency, maximising the impact of resources on patient care. It is helpful to align proposed or benchmarking evidence of impact with organisational priorities and the anticipated value of the proposal.

A suitable gap analysis approach might be as follows:

- **Current state:** Using local service, activity and workforce data (e.g. ESR, vacancy and turnover rates, caseloads, waiting times).
- **Comparator or benchmark:** Drawing on national datasets and benchmarking sources (e.g. NHS Workforce Statistics, national productivity metrics, or regional workforce overview reports).
- **Identified gaps:** Highlighting unwarranted variation, capacity constraints, productivity pressures or skills gaps.
- **Proposed response:** Demonstrating how the proposal addresses these gaps and contributes to improved productivity, efficiency or workforce sustainability.

The NHS England [National Psychological Professions workspace](#) provides access to a wide range of resources, and most senior Psychological Professionals are able to access Chief Psychological Professions Officers (CPPO) resources. A session focussed on productivity was delivered in Psychological Professions Week 2025; the slides are accessible to all [here](#).

Please email bsmhft.ppnmidlands@nhs.net if further clarification is required on this briefing note.

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PPN Midlands exists to inform, enable and influence health and care, maximising the impact of the psychological professions for the public. We do this by:

- ***Informing system leaders to enable effective workforce planning and strategic decision making.***
- ***Enabling practice through role-based and thematic communities of practice, alongside high-quality e-learning that supports psychologically informed care.***
- ***Growing the future workforce through accessible careers resources***

All of our resources can be viewed [here](#).