

Psychological Professions Strategy

2021 - 2024







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- Increased external focus and involvement of psychological expertise in partnership working
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- Training opportunities for staff, service users, experts by experience and key stakeholders



Introduction

This strategy was on the verge of publication, when the pandemic struck. And for the last year, we have all been responding to an unprecedented crisis which has had significant physical, psychological and social impacts. During this time health inequalities have become starker, and the demand for mental health services, which was already significant has further increased as a consequence of the pandemic. We have decided to publish the original strategy recognising that there is additional work to be done in response to both the physical, psychological and social sequelae of the pandemic. Indeed the fundamental themes of mental health care delivery are flexible enough so that we can be appropriately responsive. However with responsiveness, creativity and innovation around the delivery of services, comes the requirement to ensure that staff are also contained in the work by clear structures and processes, good leadership, and access to training and supervision. All this will ensure that service users and carers will receive good quality care of which we can all be proud.

The title of this strategy 'Psychological Professions' is a conscious attempt to align with a national movement which recognises as a network the professional groups whose practice is informed by the disciplines of psychology and psychological therapy. Working together enables us to maximise the benefits which these professions bring to NHS funded healthcare. This is the first strategy that has been written for the organisation for many years. It has been developed to support the delivery of the Trusts' strategic priorities and objectives, which is underpinned by the ambitions set out in the national Five Year Forward View for Mental Health (FYFVMH, 2016), The Long Term Plan, The Interim People Plan, The NHS Mental Health Implementation Plan 2019/20- 2023/24 (July 2019); Transforming Care for people with learning Disabilities and the Leeds Mental



Health Framework. It also takes into account the requirements of the organisation's Quality Plan which is informed by the latest evidence base and best practice. As a professional group, our contribution to the ambition of providing outstanding specialist mental health and learning disability services, can only be met if we embrace both our ability to deliver NICE concordant therapies but also provide clinical and systems leadership, supporting a culture of evaluation and learning. This function, alongside further developing our role in the training of staff to enhance the psychological capacity of the workforce to deliver compassionate, safe and effective care has to be held as priorities.

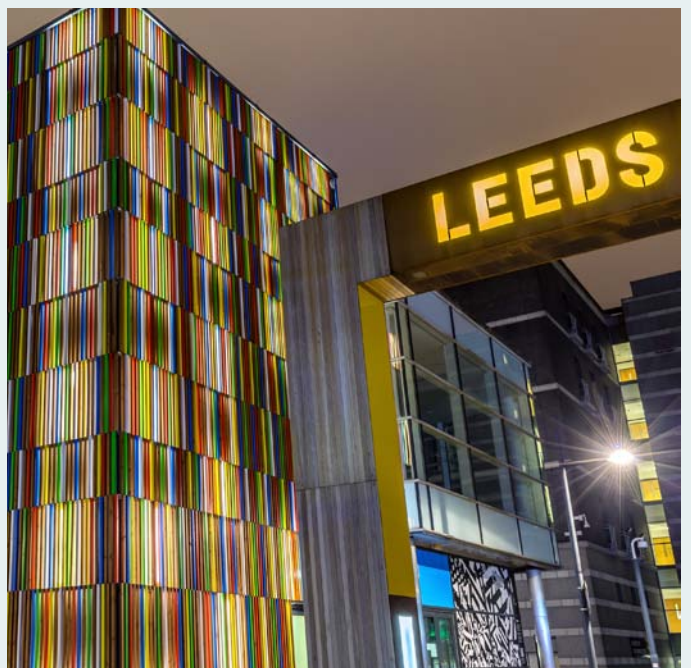
We already know that prior to the pandemic there was an increasing demand for access to psychological therapies, with service users wanting safe and effective services that provided a choice of treatment and support. Three times as many people with mental health problems state that they would prefer a talking therapy to medication. In 2013, the We Need to Talk Coalition, a group of mental health charities found that many more people wanted access to talking therapies and psychological help than could access it. This was despite the significant advances, nationally, in the expansion of psychological therapy services. It is important that service users have access to evidence based, good quality therapy provided by appropriately trained practitioners. We need to be able to provide therapies which are accessible to all our service users, which means not only providing culturally competent interventions but also therapy which considers the importance of power differentials in human relationships and the contribution of this to mental distress. However, psychological therapy is only one of many functions provided

by the Psychologists and Psychotherapists within the organisation: across the different services we also provide training, consultation and supervision; supporting and enhancing the psychological capacity of workforces both internal and external to the Trust. With a growing enthusiasm and support for evaluation and research, psychological practitioners have become the most research active discipline within the Trust. Finally, a number of staff within the organisation are national experts within their field contributing to special interest and clinical reference groups. There is a lot to be proud of.

This strategy is the start of an iterative process involving various stakeholders including service users, carers, commissioners, operational management and third sector partners. We hope that this document provides a template for further discussion and engagement.

Sharon Prince

Deputy Director Psychological Professions





Our Psychological Professions Workforce

Applied psychology is one of the central disciplines in mental health. In order to understand service users' mental health problems holistically and optimise outcomes, we need a bio-psycho-social approach. Psychological professions contribute to this by providing specialist assessments and interventions; as well as working with colleagues through training, clinical supervision and consultation to promote psychological understanding and interventions across pathways. Psychologists and other psychological practitioners are also skilled in service development, facilitation of change, service evaluation, clinical audit, research and development.

There are currently over 100 Psychologists and Psychotherapists working within the organisation. We have a range of practitioners with different training backgrounds and professional accreditation requirements. Clinical Practitioners employed as Psychologists or Psychotherapists within the Trust must be either registered or accredited by the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC), UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP), British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP). This standard of accreditation is commensurate with the complexity and high level of skill required to work within a specialist mental health and learning disability Trust. The current range of practitioners includes:

Clinical Psychologists

A three year doctorate training, through which practitioners apply psychological theory and evidence to healthcare (in both physical and mental health settings). Their core training enables them to work with individuals and teams, provide training, consultation and conduct research.

Counselling Psychologists

Practitioner psychologists with a three year doctorate degree training, specialising in talking therapies.

Forensic Psychologists

Practitioner psychologists with doctoral level training, specialising in applying psychological knowledge usually in forensic settings such as courts, prison and forensic health care as well as in the community.

Adult Psychotherapists

Have undertaken an accredited training course to deliver specific therapies to individuals or groups within a specific therapeutic model (for example, psychodynamic psychotherapy, cognitive analytic psychotherapy, group analysis)

Systemic Family Therapists

Systemic psychotherapists have undertaken four years of training to deliver therapy for families, couples and other relationships.

Cognitive Behavioural Psychotherapists

Are required to have a core mental health qualification (e.g mental health nursing, social work or clinical psychology) and have undertaken accredited training in the provision of cognitive behavioural therapy.



Specialist Counsellors

Practitioners who have completed a professional training within a recognised counselling framework (for example person centred counselling). Counsellors work therapeutically with people to help them to explore and resolve confidential or painful issues.

Assistant Psychologists

These are graduates with a Psychology degree who work within a scope of practice which is supervised by a qualified clinical psychologist. They are not registered practitioners.

Within the workforce we also support a number of students; undergraduate psychologists and postgraduate Trainee Clinical Psychologists and Psychotherapists.

Our psychological professions workforce are a dedicated group of individuals committed to providing high quality psychological care which supports the recovery of our service users and

those who care for them. It is an important principle that psychological practitioners are embedded within teams, enabling the most value from genuine multidisciplinary working and the contribution of psychological perspectives to all aspects of the pathways. We need to ensure that psychological practitioners maintain the skills, energy and enthusiasm for providing and supporting the provision of outstanding mental health and learning disability services. To do this we need to live the Trust Values; ensure the health and wellbeing of staff, be committed to being a learning organisation and having service users at the heart of everything we do.

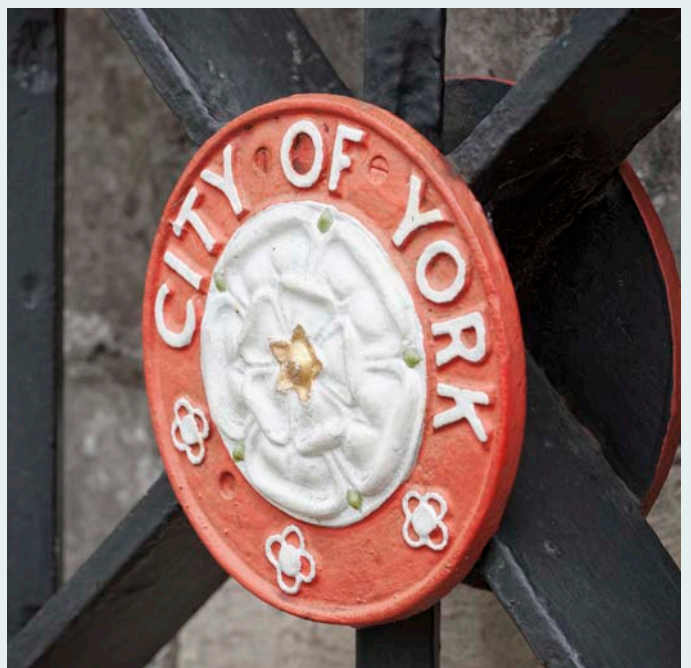




Figure 1: Elements of Care and Treatment Delivered by the Psychological Professions

(ref: Delivering Expansion in the Psychological Profession)







Psychological Professions Governance Structure

The Professional Leads report to the Deputy Director Psychological Professions.

Deputy Director Psychological Professions

- In conjunction with professional leads, the Deputy Director Psychological Professions will be responsible for monitoring quality assurance of psychological practice across the psychological professions to create an evidence-based psychologically minded culture, which embraces the complexity of people's lives and provides compassionate, authentic and meaningful services.
- Is responsible for the co-ordination, delivery and development of both formal and informal psychological practice within the context of an integrated transdisciplinary workforce.
- Working with or supporting colleagues to work with commissioners at a local and regional level to commission psychological and psychotherapeutic services, ensuring that psychological services are accessible, responsive and appropriately meet the complex needs of individuals and the systems within which care is provided.
- Ensures that national and international innovations in the provision and development of psychological therapies are implemented to the benefit of both staff and service users of the Trust and wider community.

- Works in partnership with commissioners, the local authority, public health, third sector and other systems leaders to think about the psychological wellbeing of the citizens of Leeds, York and other regions we serve across the life course and the different pathways which may lead to requiring support from secondary care services.

The Professional Leads Psychological Professions

To provide professional leadership for staff within care groups specifically:

- To provide assurance to the Deputy Director Psychological Professions on the professional practice of practitioners (i.e. do they meet professional practice standards?)
- To provide assurance to the Deputy Director Psychological Professions on the competence of clinical practice of practitioners (i.e. is their practice appropriate, safe and effective?)
- To work with the management team and clinical governance groups to deliver operational requirements whilst ensuring that the above two functions are effectively delivered
- To advise on workforce requirements that ensures delivery of (i) operational requirements, (ii) governance standards, and (iii) professional/regulatory requirements.
- To support staff development and ensure adequate succession planning within the profession





Vision and Ambition

We have integrity

We treat everyone with respect and dignity, honour our commitments and do our best for our service users and colleagues.

- We are committed to continuously improving what we do because we want the best for our service users. We consider the feelings, needs and rights of others.
- We give positive feedback as a norm and constructively challenge unacceptable behaviour.
- We're open about the actions we take and the decisions we make, working transparently and as one team with service users, colleagues and relevant partner organisations.

We keep it simple

We make it easy for the communities we serve and the people who work here to achieve their goals.

- We make processes as simple as possible.
- We avoid jargon and make sure we are understood.
- We are clear what our goals are and help others to achieve their goals.

We are caring

We always show empathy and support those in need.

- We make sure people feel we have time for them when they need it.
- We listen and act upon what people have to say.
- We communicate with compassion and kindness.

Our vision as an organisation is to provide outstanding mental health and learning disability services as an employer of choice. This means supporting our service users and carers, our staff and the communities we serve, to live healthy and fulfilling lives where we can also achieve our personal and professional goals, and live free from stigma and discrimination.

Psychology as a discipline is key to our understanding of psychological well being and distress, with psychological theory and models informing many aspects of mental health care including prevention, intervention and service delivery models. It is important that psychological practitioners use this expertise to support the ambition of our Trust to offer outstanding mental health and learning disability services, working with service users, staff, the local community and wider system.

The high level objectives of the psychological professions' are outlined opposite:

All service user and carer contact across the organisation is psychologically informed.

Psychological theory and models are fundamental to understanding mental distress and wellbeing, and as such, it is important that the care provided across the organisation is psychologically informed. This entails ensuring that psychological practitioners use their knowledge and skills to influence and support the activity of others; sustaining and improving the quality of care through a wide range of processes including assessment, bio-psycho-social formulation, psychological interventions and therapies, training, consultation, supervision, scaffolding and contribution to service improvement and transformation.

It is important to hold on to the principle that 'Psychological care is everyone's business'. There are already good and well established examples of this across the organisation with staff offering both training and supervision in



cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) and Cognitive Analytic Therapy (CAT). Psychological practitioners also provide training in clinical supervision, case formulation and more recently trauma informed practice across the Trust. The recent emphasis within the former Leeds Care Group on the integration of psychological practitioners is essential if we are to further influence psychologically informed practice. Co-working in the form of joint assessments, consultation and supervision can only add value to the interventions offered to service users and carers.

Recommendations

- To have a more systematic and co-ordinated approach to the delivery of psychologically informed interventions across the organisation enabling a more efficient use of resource and maximum reach.

Co-produced and co-delivered psychological skills group in Rehab and Recovery (R&R) inpatients service utilising Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) principles.

- Providing a psychological perspective within operational and senior leadership fora.
- A commitment to working closely with operational leaders and other stakeholders including service users and commissioners to clearly articulate the skills required and how best these needs could be met.

All psychological practice is safe, caring and compassionate, effective, cost-effective, responsive and well led.

This objective is clearly grounded in the CQC five domains. The governance of psychological practice across the Trust is a key responsibility for the psychological professions' professional leadership. Our strategy proposes the development of a multi-professional Psychological Care and Interventions Group, which would support the articulation and implementation of a co-ordinated and systematic approach to psychologically informed care and treatment across the organisation. The Psychological Care and Interventions Strategy would produce a framework which would outline levels of intervention and the competencies and skills required from different professional groups to deliver against the strategy. The group would have oversight over the governance of psychological practice within the organisation ensuring safe and effective care; improving access to evidence based therapies and supporting the development of practice-based evidence. Furthermore the development of this group would support the culture which embraces the position that psychologically informed practice 'is everyone's business'. The development of this group is even more pressing given the national priority on the delivery of psychological therapies for those experiencing severe mental illness within the community.

A continued focus on the delivery of high quality, NICE-concordant psychological assessments and therapy, with a recognition that adherence can be challenging given the complexity of service user presentations in secondary care. As a professional group we should be able to demonstrate when we are NICE compliant and when not, and the rationale for this position.



We also need to increase the provision of group therapies which is both a clinically and cost effective way of delivering therapy. Although groups are often not the preferred choice of service users, they are an extremely useful and powerful vehicle and should be provided, promoted and offered by practitioners. Offering psychologically informed groups enables collaboration with multidisciplinary colleagues, increasing both access and psychological capacity within the workforce, and offering more choice and timely access to service users.

We operate within a very diverse community and need to ensure the accessibility of psychological therapies. Developing therapies which meet the needs of minority ethnic groups should be one of our priorities over the next few years and is a direct response to feedback from both service users, commissioners and the CQC.

Recommendations

- Development of the multi-professional Psychological Care and Interventions Group and a framework to support the co-ordination of training and governance of psychological therapies within the organisation.
- Development of an action plan to improve access to and reduce drop out rates of minority ethnic group service users.
- Development of a strategy focusing on a more comprehensive offer of psychologically informed groups.
- Strengthening of the professional leadership structures for psychology and psychotherapy which will support and further embed a culture of accountability.

To focus on workforce development to ensure the sustainability of our skilled and knowledgeable staff.

We need to support the continued development of a modern psychological professions workforce with the necessary skill mix to deliver positive outcomes. Psychological practitioners depending upon their role and responsibility should be supported to work at different levels- individual, team and wider system.

We need to support staff to develop their leadership skills, resilience and flexibility. There are local and national concerns about NHS staff well being. A survey by the British Psychological Society and the New Savoy Partnership repeated annually has shown high levels of low mood, stress and feelings of failure amongst front line psychological clinicians. The organisation has made a commitment to focusing on monitoring and improving the well being of staff, and psychological leaders will commit to supporting and engaging staff with this strategy.

The psychological professions continue to enjoy a very healthy supply of applicants to the various professional trainings. Psychology is a popular undergraduate discipline with 12,000 graduating each year. Many of these graduates want to work in health and social care. It is typical for non-registered roles such as assistant psychologist posts to attract 200 applicants per vacancy, and clinical psychology training can only offer one in six applicants a training place. Historically the recruitment of psychological practitioners has not been a challenge for the organisation because of its reputation for having a group of highly skilled practitioners and specialist services.

However nationally there is a vacancy rate of 12% which has resulted in real recruitment challenges for some of our neighbouring Trusts. There is a need for further investment in the psychological professions to meet both existing demand and also the priorities identified within the Long Term Plan. This



training and recruitment challenge has to involve developing connections with policy makers, workforce planners and commissioners. To support the continued recruitment and retention of psychological practitioners the Strategic Lead is strengthening the links with regional training courses with the aim of promoting the opportunities available within the Trust and the availability of placements; considering how new roles, such as Clinical Associates in Psychology, can be utilised within the organisation to make the best use of their talents and enthusiasm and also offset the shortage of supply of other traditional roles in mental health settings; is building relationships with Strategic Leads and other stakeholders across the region and wider to consider and address these workforce challenges.

We need to continue to support a culture where the expectation is for excellence in the delivery of psychological interventions, where psychological practitioners feel engaged with the objectives of and valued by the organisation. This will be supported by creating opportunities for professional development and also succession planning and the capacity to take up leadership roles within both the Psychological Professions' Structure and the wider Trust, for example, operational management, clinical director or executive roles.

We need a coherent and consistent approach to support the development of roles early on in the professional pathway, for example, creating opportunities for Assistant Psychologists, Trainee Clinical Psychologists and Psychotherapists. And also supporting, where appropriate, the introduction of new roles such as Clinical Associates in Psychology and Multidisciplinary Approved Clinicians (MDACs).

Recommendations:

- Increasing the number of placements offered to Trainee Clinical Psychologists from across the region.
- Development of a consistent process for the co-ordination of training Psychotherapists.
- As part of our workforce strategy to consider the inclusion of Clinical Associates in Psychology.
- Development of career pathways across clinical and non-clinical domains at all levels of the organisation.
- The adoption of structured and narrative job plans which focus on the development of clinical and leadership skills.
- Utilising the expertise of our colleagues in the organisational development team to support the development of staff including the use of coaching and the NHS Leadership Academy.
- Scope out the viability of Psychological Practitioners as Multidisciplinary Approved Clinicians within the organisation.
- To update the Trust website which provides information about psychological professions, including developments and opportunities.
- Ensuring that Continued Professional Development meets the needs of the Trust's strategic and clinical priorities and staff goals.
- Liaison with Integrated Care System mental health workforce leads, commissioners and HEE mental health workforce planners to consider the ongoing training demands and recruitment of psychological practitioners.



We will identify and pursue strategic growth, research and innovation opportunities

Psychological practitioners are involved in the Trust's research programmes and profile, acting as Principal investigators and lead collaborators for NIHR portfolio studies. The doctoral level research training and skills particularly of Clinical and Counselling Psychologists are essential in this area but still under-utilised within the organisation. We would like to build on the success of the Research Dragon's Den, which was hosted to engage psychological practitioners in developing research and service evaluation ideas and have more activity in this area, especially focusing on practice-based evidence.

Research Dragon's Den

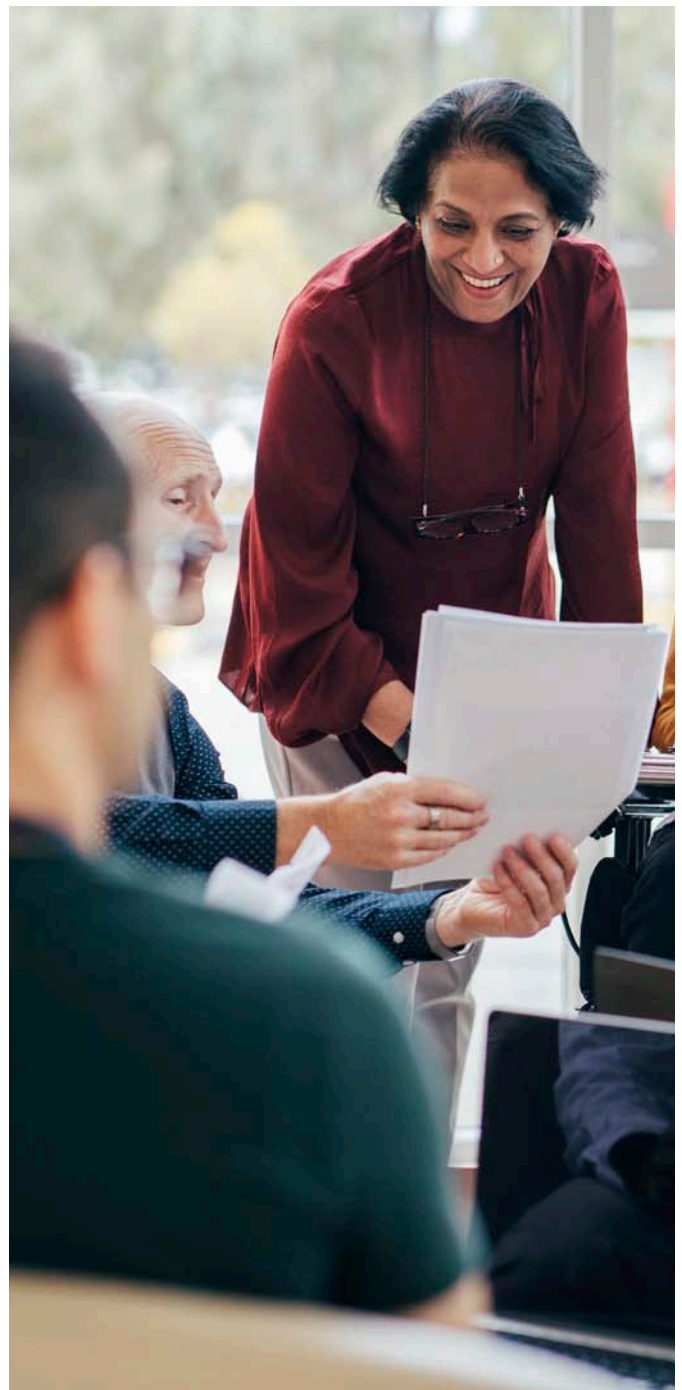
A biannual event where psychological practitioners are encouraged to pitch service evaluation or research ideas to research leads (the dragons) from local universities.

Successful candidates have been offered coaching or supervision.

Our capacity for innovation is also being increasingly recognised with the development of the Veteran's and Gambling Addiction Services. We hope that with the development of the Integrated Care System (ICS) and the Leeds Health Academy there is an opportunity for us to provide psychologically informed training focusing on risk, clinical supervision, trauma informed care and formulation.

Recommendations

- To increase the level of engagement across all services with the R&D department.
- To continue with the biannual Research Dragon's Den which has so far yielded a number of sponsored service evaluation and research projects.







Enablers

Key enablers for the Psychological Services Strategy include:

Service User Involvement and Co-production

We need to progress from consulting service users and carers or involving them in individual pieces of work, to working with service users and carers.

Embedded professional leadership, and active participation in collective leadership at all levels of the Trust

In order for our knowledge and skills to be of maximum value to service users, carers and the Trust as an organisation, psychological practitioners need to be embedded in leadership roles throughout the Trust. This includes both professional leadership roles and stepping forward to apply for roles with broader responsibilities and influence such as Clinical Director roles.

Increased external focus and involvement of psychological expertise in partnership working

In order to ensure that commissioners and partners who are making decisions about the future provision of services are well informed about the role and importance of psychological knowledge, skills and expertise we need to be participating in conversations and working groups outside of the organisation.

Measurement of meaningful outcomes

The training of psychologists equips them to assist, if not provide leadership in this area. Implementation of appropriate outcome measurement and the analysis of meaningful data should support the growth of effective interventions and the reduction/cessation of approaches which do not show benefit to service users.

Use of IT and digital technology for therapy consultations and supervision

Use of new technology offers significant opportunities to increase accessibility and productivity. Appropriately secure Skype and on line messaging are all alternatives to face to face contact. Some of these methods are used effectively in other areas of the organisation and there is good learning to be had.

Training opportunities for staff, service users, experts by experience and key stakeholders

As an ambitious organisation that is always striving for excellence, we need to ensure that we are updating our knowledge and skills across our systems. Joint development opportunities with service users and partners can be particularly productive.



integrity
simplicity
caring