

Organisation Example: The benefits of creating an integrated multi-professional OHWB Team - Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust

Strategic Drivers Alignment: Workforce, Integrated Services, Identity and OHWB Culture

Background: Serving 500,000 people across Kent, Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust (DGT) employs over 3,300 staff. In response to the evolving post-pandemic landscape, DGT merged its Occupational Health (OH) and Health and Wellbeing (HWB) teams to form a unified Health and Wellness Team delivering an integrated, multi-professional and proactive approach to staff wellbeing.

‘The DGT Challenge’

- OH, and HWB teams operated independently, leading to duplicated efforts and fragmented support.
- Staff hesitated to engage with OH due to perceived links with HR and lack of confidentiality.
- COVID-19 shifted OH’s focus to sickness management, while wellbeing demands grew.

Approach and Intervention

- OH and HWB were merged into a single Health and Wellness Team/Service.
- A functional matrix was conducted to clarify roles, eliminate duplication, and identify service gaps.
- There was a rebrand from “wellbeing” to “health and wellness” to better reflect the team’s scope.
- Quarterly team development days and away days were introduced to foster collaboration and trust.
- Confidential self-referrals, including direct access to mental health support was initiated.
- Established a partnership with Reset Health for a staff weight-loss and lifestyle programme.
- Self-care initiatives like reflexology and nature-based retreats were piloted, treating them as planned leave.

Outcome and Impact

- Stress & Anxiety Absence: Halved from 1% (Sept 2021) to 0.5% (Sept 2022)
- Staff Survey: Top quartile nationally for health and wellness indicators.
- Reset Health Programme:
 - 20% increase in staff reporting no anxiety after 12 weeks.
 - 30% increase in staff reporting no depression.
 - Average 10kg weight loss per person after one year.

- Cultural Shift: Staff now feel safer and more comfortable accessing support confidentially.
- Retention and Engagement: Improved transparency and trust in wellness services.

Key Takeaway

Integrating wellbeing and occupational health services into a single, multi-professional and trusted team, supported by strategic planning, a single service 'identity' and cultural sensitivity, and staff-led design, can transform staff experience and embed wellness as a core organisational value.

How this demonstrated Growing OHWB Together

This demonstrates the benefits of breaking down professional silos and creating integrated and multi-professional OHWB service to strategically and operationally improve the health of the workforce. It illustrates the importance of getting the OHWB 'brand identity' right to enable staff to engage positively