



Growing Occupational Health and Wellbeing (GOHWB) Together

Stakeholder Progress Update
January 2026



Health at Work Network



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Introduction

Collaboration and co-design are at the heart of achieving the NHS Growing Occupational Health and Wellbeing Together strategy (GOHWB). In this spirit, this update is a collaboration between [NHS Employers](#), the [NHS Health at Work Network](#) and [NHS England](#), showcasing a sample of the insights, work, and impact from across our healthcare organisations and ICSs who are driving forward local change to implement GOHWB. This update is for everyone with a responsibility for the health and wellbeing of our NHS workforce.

We know that by caring for the health and wellbeing of our NHS people, we strengthen their ability to be productive and deliver safe, high-quality care for patients. The national [NHS Growing Occupational Health and Wellbeing Together](#) (2022) strategy created our foundation for this, detailing a more preventative and proactive approach to improving staff health and wellbeing across the NHS, underpinned by four improvement drivers:

1. To grow the strategic **culture and identity** for OHWB
2. To grow our OHWB **services across systems**
3. To grow our OHWB and wider **workforce**
4. To grow OHWB **impact, ROI, and evidence-based practice**

Early growth toward implementation was achieved through progressing work against this set of underpinning improvement drivers, and is detailed in the first [GOHWB look back, look forward report](#) (2023-24).

This update builds on progress since this last publication. Since the launch of the GOHWB strategy in 2022, organisations have made significant strides in transforming workforce wellbeing.

“To create good working environments, we must prioritise the health and safety of our people. The work delivered so far has redefined the impact of OHWB services - making a real, sustainable difference.”

Jennifer Gardner, Assistant Director for Staff Experience, NHS Employers

“The launch of the NHS [OHPRAS awards](#) has showcased the commitment of OH and wellbeing teams nationwide. Their response to the GOHWB strategy’s four improvement drivers has been inspiring. Together we remain committed to collaboration, learning, and celebrating success as we shape the NHS of tomorrow.”

Dr Charles Goss, Chair of the NHS Health at Work Network

The newly published [NHS 10-Year Health Plan](#) places strong emphasis on our need to improve workforce health and employee experience, to increase productivity and deliver better patient care. Central to the NHS 10-Year Health Plan are three strategic shifts:

- from **hospital to community**
- from **analogue to digital**
- from **sickness to prevention**

These shifts align to the ambitions within GOHWB to ensure that our NHS workforce is healthy, supported, and empowered to thrive. As we look ahead to the ambitions of the NHS 10-Year Health Plan, OHWB teams and our wider HR and OD people functions are central to building a resilient, future-ready workforce.

“I am delighted to see such progress at system and organisational level toward local implementation of the Growing Occupational Health and Wellbeing Together strategy, and the Return on Investment in doing so. Progressing GOHWB is essential to meeting the 10 Year Health Plan commitments for improving staff health, reducing sickness, and increasing productivity, which go hand-in-hand with our NHS role in [Keep Britain Working](#). This makes progressing implementation of Growing OHWB Together an imperative, to keep our people well, productive, and contributing to good patient care.”

Dr Adam Turner, Head of Health, Wellbeing, and Flexible Working, NHS England

This update highlights a sample of the achievements since GOHWB was launched and increasingly how our combined work is already demonstrating impact toward the NHS 10 Year Health Plan ambitions, split into:

1. Research Insights
2. Organisation Case Study Examples
3. Summary and Next Steps

1. Research Insights

The following section outlines a variety of research and insight building activities, sharing high-level knowledge created by these to support advancing GOHWB in practice.

1.1. Health and Wellbeing Leads Competencies and Development

Strategic Drivers Alignment: Workforce

Background: NHS England commissioned a review into the role of health and wellbeing leads across NHS organisations. Acknowledging this as a new leadership role, bringing together leadership between HROD and Occupational Health and Wellbeing the review focused on understanding competencies and how to better equip these leaders to create impactful services for NHS staff.

Objective

To understand the role and competencies associated with health and wellbeing leadership across organisations and develop a framework that supports strategic, equitable, and effective service delivery – appreciating these roles span across Occupational Health and Wellbeing, HR and Organisational Development, and wider roles in many settings.

Approach / Intervention

- A regional review of health and wellbeing lead roles was conducted.
- The review identified wide variation in governance, accountability, funding, and strategic positioning.
- Disparities in role descriptions, responsibilities, and senior support was assessed.

Outcome / Impact

- A shift from operational to strategic leadership for health and wellbeing leads was recommended.
- A [knowledge, skills, and behavioural framework](#) to standardise expectations and support development was created and a clear blueprint established for NHS health and wellbeing leads

- The approach adopted supports greater consistency, equity, and strategic alignment across organisations for how to develop these roles.

Key Takeaway

- Strategic clarity and a standardised development framework for health and wellbeing leads are essential to building effective, equitable staff wellbeing services across the NHS.
- The full report can be found here: [Developing NHS health and wellbeing leads - Health Innovation Oxford & Thames Valley](#)
- The knowledge, skills and behaviour framework developed can be found here: [Developing NHS health and wellbeing leads](#)
- Outputs of this research has informed co-design work with CIPD into ways to develop the People Professions Map and associated development linked to the [Wellbeing](#) competency.

How this demonstrates Growing OHWB Together

This example demonstrates how to expand and grow the multi-disciplinary OHWB workforce into leadership roles and competencies associated with the wider people profession.

1.2. Growing our multi-disciplinary OHWB clinical workforce

Strategic Drivers Alignment: Workforce

Background: NHS England commissioned the London Centre for Work and Health to explore the evolving role of the clinical workforce, including allied health professionals (AHPs) and emerging job roles within multi-disciplinary clinical Occupational Health and Wellbeing (OHWB) teams. The study focused on how collaborative, interdisciplinary approaches can enhance workforce wellbeing.

Objective

To identify effective strategies for growing the OHWB clinical workforce, including AHPs, and assess the value of novel roles and training pathways in delivering holistic, person-centred care.

Approach / Intervention

- The impact of training Healthcare workers (HCWs) and non-HCWs without prior OH qualifications to deliver targeted OH functions was evaluated.
- Interventions within collaborative clinical teams with supervision and governance structures were embedded.
- New AHP roles - OH case managers, ergonomic/physiotherapy specialists, dietitians, sleep physiologists, menopause support workers were developed.
- Services - vocational rehabilitation, wellbeing assessments, menopause clinics were piloted
- Bespoke OH apprenticeship and preceptorship models to support AHP career transitions were created.

Outcome / Impact

- This approach encouraged cultural shift toward recognising AHP contributions in OH service delivery.
- Demonstrated clinical and cost-effectiveness of inclusive workforce strategies.
- Enabled broader access to OHWB services through diversified roles.

- Highlighted the need for strategic workforce planning that includes robust clinical governance.

Key Takeaway

Innovative multi-disciplinary clinical OH workforce models and inclusive training pathways can expand OHWB service capacity and impact provided they are supported by strong clinical governance and strategic planning.

How this demonstrates Growing OHWB Together

This demonstrates how wider clinical workforce roles including AHPs skills and expertise are critical in supporting the health of our workforce and welcomes them to grow the multi-disciplinary and integrated OHWB workforce of the future.

1.3. Review into OHWB digital and technology

Strategic Drivers Alignment: Services across systems, Impact, and evidence-based practice

Background: Technology and digital innovation are increasingly recognised as essential to delivering high-quality, future-focused, and data-driven Occupational Health and Wellbeing (OHWB) services. However, the current digital landscape within OHWB is fragmented, variable, and underutilised. Work needed to be done to start exploring this challenge.

Objective

To explore how technology and digital tools can be better leveraged to enhance OHWB service delivery, and to co-design a roadmap for future digital transformation.

Approach / Intervention

- A discovery phase to analyse the current OHWB technology ecosystem was conducted.
- 110 stakeholders and technology champions across national, regional, and local levels were engaged through workshops and interviews.
- Existing OHWB workflow and patient database systems were reviewed.
- A desired future state for OHWB digital services was co-designed with stakeholders.
- Opportunities for wider digital technology to advance clinical practice and operational efficiency were identified.

Outcome / Impact

- This exercise mapped the current digital capabilities and gaps within OHWB services.
- It highlighted practical ways to optimise existing systems and integrate new technologies.
- This informed strategic planning and investment priorities for future OHWB technology improvements.
- It fostered collaboration and shared vision among stakeholders for digital transformation.

Key Takeaway

Digital innovation is a critical enabler for modern OHWB services. Harmonisation between OH and wider HR digital systems are essential to ensure a joined-up approach. Strategic stakeholder engagement and ecosystem analysis are key to shaping a future-ready, tech-enabled OHWB infrastructure.

How this demonstrates Growing OHWB Together

This work highlights the challenges and opportunities in integrating digital technologies to support the health of our workforce and the need for integrated IT and digital systems.

2. Organisational Case Study Examples

This section details a variety of ICS, organisational, and primary care case studies that demonstrate a sample of how GOHWB is being adopted in practice and showing strong Return on Investment (ROI).

2.1. Integrated Care System (ICS) Example: Collaborative OHWB Service Expansion - Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICS

Strategic Drivers Alignment: Services across systems, Workforce, Impact

Background: Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICS, one of England's largest ICSs, had a strong foundation of collaborative working and strategic relationships among NHS organisations. Building on their response to the NHS People Promise, leaders saw an opportunity to expand their Occupational Health and Wellbeing (OHWB) programme to expand OHWB into preventative, early intervention, and treatment services across the system.

Objective

To align and enhance OHWB services across the ICS, improving access, impact, and strategic integration - particularly around Musculoskeletal (MSK), menopause, neurodiversity, and burnout staff support services.

Approach / Intervention

- OHWB was embedded as a core workstream within the ICS Health and Wellbeing programme.
- MSK services were expanded to be accessible to all the workforce locally, to reduce travel-related barriers and increase access.
- Direct referrals from OH teams were enabled for faster MSK care.
- New services: menopause clinic, burnout support, and neurodiversity/disability advice were launched.
- Funding was secured for further programme development.

Outcome / Impact

- **GP visits:** 70% of staff avoided GP visits due to new services.
- **Retention:** 84% reported improved health that helped them stay in work.
- **Financial savings across the ICS:**
 - £326,340/year in avoided **sick pay**.
 - £364,000/year in avoided **recruitment** costs.
 - £155,350/year saved in **GP appointments**.
 - ROI of £3 saved for every £1 invested (**ROI 3:1**).

Key Takeaway

Strategic alignment of integrated OHWB diagnostic and treatment services across an ICS can deliver measurable health outcomes for the workforce, and financial benefits while reinforcing a culture of proactive staff support.

How this demonstrates Growing OHWB Together

This demonstrates how expanding OHWB into wider system-wide needs-driven and integrated staff treatment and early intervention services creates strong return on investment, and wider economic impacts across the system in achieving this.

2.2. Organisation Example: Transforming Musculoskeletal Services - Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust

Strategic Drivers Alignment: Services across systems, Workforce, Culture

Background: As the Northwest trailblazer for the National NHS Growing Occupational Health and Wellbeing Together Strategy (2023), Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust (MFT) launched a three-phase initiative to improve musculoskeletal (MSK) health for its 29,000 staff -many in physically demanding roles. The goal was to reduce MSK-related absences, enhance wellbeing, and improve patient care.

Approach / Intervention

Phase 1: Digital Access & Onsite Clinics

- Introduced a digital self-referral system for rapid physiotherapy access.
- Established onsite clinics across Trust locations for convenience.

Phase 2: Absence Support Service

- MSK absences were linked to OH systems for real-time triage.
- OH, physiotherapists were able to contact staff within four days of absence.
- Fast-tracked treatment or self-management advice was achieved.

Phase 3: MSK Education & Culture Change

- Organisation wide training on back care, chronic pain, and long-term conditions was delivered.
- HR, clinical, and operational teams were engaged to embed a 'work-fit' culture.

Outcome / Impact

- **Absence Reduction:** 2,900 fewer FTE MSK absence days annually (Jan 2021–Jan 2024)
- **Financial Savings ROI:** Demonstrated **£1 million annual cost savings** in MSK-related costs, with ROI of £3 saved to £1 invested (**ROI 3:1**).
- **Staff Experience:**
 - 5.5% rise in positive health and wellbeing feedback (2023 Staff Survey).
 - 2.2% drop in MSK issues linked to work.
 - 80% said MSK access helped avoid external treatment-related absences,

- o Accelerated returns to work by 25%.

Key Takeaway

Strategic, phased MSK treatment service transformation, combining digital access, early intervention, and education, can significantly improve staff wellbeing, reduce costs, and foster a healthier, more resilient workforce.

How this demonstrates Growing OHWB Together

This example demonstrates a clear return on investment for expanding OHWB services into treatment, early intervention, and preventative services for common causes of sickness absence, to increase productivity, health of the workforce and patient care.

2.3. Organisation Example: Showing We Care About You (SWCAY) Programme for Staff Wellbeing - Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust

Strategic Drivers Alignment: Integrated services, Impact and evidence-based practice, Culture, and identity of OHWB

Background: Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust created and delivered a comprehensive staff support programme 'Showing We Care About You (SWCAY)' for its 23,500 employees. Funded by the Guy's and St Thomas' Charity, SWCAY includes occupational health services, health promotion activities, and psychological support under the "5 Ways to a Healthier YOU" wellbeing strand.

Objective

To provide accessible, high impact, need driven and integrated health and wellbeing services that improve staff mental and physical health, enhance productivity, and deliver measurable value across the organisation.

Approach / Intervention

- Self-referral pathways for physiotherapy and psychological support were created.
- Staff Wellbeing Psychology Service offered therapy via OH and clinical group referrals.
- Trust-wide support activities were delivered across multiple sites.
- Maudsley Learning and South London & Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust conducted an independent evaluation.
- Services included:
 - Monthly webinars
 - One-to-one consultations
 - Specialist helplines for medication queries

Outcome / Impact

- **Psychological Therapies ROI:** £8.64 saved per £1 spent (**ROI 8:1**).
 - 966 of 1058 appointments attended (91% attendance rate).

- o 55% strongly agreed service improved their wellbeing.
- o Reported reductions in stress and increased productivity.
- **Physiotherapy ROI: £24.44 saved per £1 spent (ROI 24:1)**
 - o 2410 of 2698 appointments attended (89% attendance rate).
 - o 78% agreed expectations were met.
 - o Improved physical capacity and job effectiveness.
 - o Some staff reported limited improvement, highlighting the need for tailored follow-up which contributed to service improvement.

Key Takeaway

A sustainably resourced, multi-professional, integrated health and wellbeing service, grounded in equity of access and driven by staff feedback, can deliver high engagement, measurable health outcomes, and strong financial Returns on Investment, while reinforcing a culture of care across the organisation.

How this demonstrates Growing OHWB Together

This demonstrates putting staff need at the heart of creating integrated services, which cover both preventative and treatment aspects of staff health, leads to strong financial return on investment.

2.4. 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 / 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 / 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 demonstrates 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.

2.5. Organisation Example: Embedding Staff Engagement Across a Diverse Workforce to Drive a Wellbeing Culture - Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust

Strategic Drivers Alignment: Culture and Identity

Background: Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (MPFT) provides integrated physical and mental health, learning disability, and social care services across a wide geography. With over 10,000 staff and 1,500 temporary workers, the Trust faced the challenge of unifying staff experience and increasing wellbeing following a merger in 2018 and navigating the pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Objective

To build a healthy organisational culture and improve staff experience and wellbeing through a strategic, inclusive, and digitally enabled approach to engagement and wellbeing across a wider workforce and OD strategy.

Approach / Intervention

- A four-year organisational development (OD) vision focused on culture and staff experience was developed.
- The 'SOOTHE' wellbeing framework was introduced (Self-care, Open up, Others, Team, Help, Enjoy) supported by 200 trained SOOTHE buddies.
- The 'In Our Gift Ideas Hub' was launched, enabling over 3,900 staff to share ideas and collaborate on improvements.
- Targeted leadership programmes and bite-sized wellbeing content was delivered.
- Interactive dashboards for managers to track and respond to NHS Staff Survey results were created.
- Digital tools to overcome geographical barriers and foster connection were used.

Outcome / Impact

- **Staff survey improvements:** Significant year-on-year improvements in NHS Staff Survey scores across engagement and morale
 - 14.4% increase in staff recommending MPFT as a place to work

- o Highest national score for “We are always learning” and second highest for “We are safe and healthy”
- o 83% of staff say patient care is the Trust’s top priority; 89% feel their role makes a difference
- o Over 700 responses added to the Staff Survey in one year, driven by manager engagement

Key Takeaway

A strategic, inclusive, and digitally enabled approach to staff engagement, grounded in culture and wellbeing, can drive measurable improvements in morale, retention, and patient care across complex organisations.

How this demonstrates Growing OHWB Together

This demonstrates the importance of having clear strategic intent as well as co-design with staff and cultural sensitivity can lead to marked improvement in engagement, wellbeing, and retention for staff.

2.6. Organisation Example: Menopause Support to Improve Retention - London North-West University Healthcare NHS Trust

Strategic Drivers Alignment: Need-driven services, Impact, and evidence-based practice

Background: London Northwest University Healthcare NHS Trust (LNWH) recognised the impact of menopause on staff wellbeing and retention, particularly in the wake of increased mental health awareness during COVID-19. The Trust designed and launched a targeted initiative to address this gap.

Objective

To develop a comprehensive, inclusive menopause support service that improves staff experience, reduces absence, and enhances retention, especially for midlife employees.

Approach / Intervention

- A multidisciplinary Menopause Executive Taskforce was established in 2022.
- A quality improvement methodology and staff input were used to co-design the LNWH Menopause Staff Support Service.
- Key features included:
 - Monthly “Let’s Talk Menopause” webinars with expert speakers.
 - One-to-one consultations with menopause specialists (in-person and phone).
 - Pharmacy helpline for HRT and medication queries.
 - Manager training to improve menopause awareness and support.
- The Trust overcame challenges through:
 - Integration with EOPAS and internal IT training.
 - Cost-effective use of internal resources.
 - Board-level engagement using attrition data.
 - Inclusive focus groups involving male colleagues.

Outcome / Impact

- **Service Delivery (Oct 2022–Mar 2024):**
 - 33 support clinics.
 - 150 individual consultations (68 in-person, 82 by phone).
 - Monthly webinars across all hospital sites.
- **Staff Feedback (Jan–Mar 2024):**
 - 83% found the service helpful.
 - 58% avoided taking time off due to support received.
 - 92% would recommend the service to a colleague.

Key Takeaway

By embedding menopause support into workplace wellbeing as an extended staff treatment service aligned to workforce need, LNWH has improved staff retention, reduced absence, and fostered a culture of openness, setting a benchmark for inclusive staff health treatment initiatives.

How this demonstrates Growing OHWB Together

This demonstrates the benefits of using employee data to drive needs-driven and integrated OHWB services, to expand OHWB into early intervention/treatment, to improve the health of employees, their productivity, and retain their talent.

2.7. Primary Care Example: OH Services for GPs and Practice Staff - Leicester & Leicestershire

Strategic Drivers Alignment: Services across systems, including Primary Care

Background: University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust (UHL) has provided occupational health (OH) services to GPs and their staff across Leicestershire for many years and is a model that remains at the forefront of OHWB system innovation. The aim was to ensure primary care staff had equal access to OH support as those in larger NHS organisations.

Objective

To deliver equitable, high-quality OH services to primary care staff, enhance workplace safety, and foster long-term collaboration between OH professionals and the GP community.

Approach / Intervention

- Initial outreach, where senior OH nurses visited 150 practices to assess staff and workplace risks.
- Sustained service delivery was maintained despite national commissioning changes, with local CCG prioritising funding.
- There was high engagement, with strong demand via referrals and minimal opt-outs.
- Collaboration with the national staff mental health treatment service to support GPs in practice was seen.
- The service model enabled rapid risk assessment support for primary care, contributing to national risk reduction frameworks (e.g. in crisis situations).
- There continues to be ongoing knowledge-sharing and skills transfer between OH and primary care teams.

Outcome / Impact

- Strengthened workplace risk awareness and assessment capabilities in GP practices.
- Unique insights into primary care OHWB challenges contributed to national understanding.
- Enhanced practitioner wellbeing and retention through tailored OH support.

- Research-backed evidence of improved patient outcomes via extended OH-informed GP consultations.

Key Takeaway

Long-term, locally funded interventions which ensure equity of access to OH services for primary care can drive systemic improvements in staff wellbeing, workplace safety, and collaborative practice across local systems, while influencing national policy and research.

How this demonstrates Growing OHWB Together

This demonstrates how it is possible to bring equity of access to OH services to the primary care workforce across a system, and that collaborative leadership is required to create and sustain an approach.

3. Summary and Next Steps

3.1. What have we learnt?

Insights from the implementation of staff wellbeing initiatives aligned to delivering GOHWB across multiple NHS Trusts and ICS pilots reveal consistent themes that can guide future delivery. These lessons highlight what works, what to consider, and how to build sustainable, inclusive, and effective support for our staff. These insights include:

- **Investing in Staff Health Demonstrates Strong Return on Investment (ROI):** Evidence from case studies into how GOHWB is being implemented are demonstrating strong (between 3 and 24 times) return on investment. This also includes wider impact that is harder to quantify, such as retention, staff engagement, and the wider economic impact of keeping our staff healthy, to enable them to keep the population healthy.
- **Measure ROI from the Start:** The case studies detailed in this report have been successful because they have measured impact and ROI from the start of their service transformation work. It is essential that all OHWB services adopt ways of demonstrating their ROI, linking this to productivity increases and cost savings organisational wide, or even the wider economy.
- **People-Centred, Needs-Driven Design Creates Higher ROI:** Services are more successful when they are tailored to the needs of our workforce and particular staff/groups, offering inclusivity, choice, and flexibility. By targeting interventions based on data insights, this leads to stronger return on investment.
- **Removing Variation, Increasing Equity of Access:** Case studies demonstrate that when stakeholders work together to remove variation across OHWB services and interventions, and increase equity of access to staff, these bring stronger ROI.
- **Multi-professional engagement, co-design, and delivery:** Early and ongoing buy-in from senior leaders, clinical teams, and operational staff is critical. This ensures services are well-supported, appropriately timed, and aligned with organisational priorities. Ensure the right expert is doing the most appropriate thing, including leveraging the roles of AHPs as well as managers creates more effective services.
- **System-Level Integration Delivers Economies of Scale:** System-wide OHWB models offer scale, consistency, and the benefits of economies of scale. However, they also require careful change management and senior system leaders to fully empower them to be sustainable. Transitioning from organisational to system-wide services must be thoughtfully implemented and supported both strategically and operationally, underpinned by data and staff engagement.

- **Improvement Methodology:** OHWB services and interventions are clinical / patient facing services and by following the same improvement methodology we use to improve patient services and outcomes, this has the same impact for OHWB services.
- **Sustainability Planning:** Services should be designed with long-term viability in mind, ideally integrated with wider health, wellbeing, HR and OD, and preventative services. Setting up integrated services requires significant planning. Time must be allocated to standardise processes and align systems across multiple providers.
- **Flexible Implementation:** Plans must be adaptable to meet changing workforce needs and feedback. Milestones may need to shift to ensure all partners progress together at a sustainable pace.
- **Effective Stakeholder Engagement / Communication:** Clear, consistent messaging across all stakeholders helps manage expectations and promote awareness. Using trusted channels and engaging managers is key to boosting staff participation.
- **Robust Governance:** Clear agreements on roles, responsibilities, and outcomes such as MOUs and SOPs, help avoid confusion and ensure equitable service delivery across partners.
- **Data Sharing Protocols:** Formal data processing agreements between partner organisations support smooth collaboration and reduce operational barriers, especially across different sites.
- **Strategic Signposting for Staff:** Staff must know what is available and trust the options. A mix of digital tools, printed materials, and awareness sessions can help build visibility and confidence in the service.
- **Strong Front Door Function:** First contact is crucial. It should include needs assessment, expectation management, and appropriate referral pathways to ensure staff receive the right support from the outset.
- **Confidential Self-Referral:** Offering self-referral options protects privacy and encourages uptake, especially for staff concerned about stigma or performance assessments. Clear messaging around confidentiality is essential.
- **Inclusive and Culturally Informed Delivery:** Wellbeing support should be accessible to all, regardless of background, identity, or working hours. Designing services with cultural sensitivity and practical accessibility ensures no one is left behind.

3.2. What should leaders consider?

As we align the GOHWB strategy with the NHS 10-Year Health Plan, leaders must now act with urgency and clarity. The future NHS depends on a workforce that is not only clinically capable, but also psychologically well, physically healthy, and empowered to lead change.

NHS organisations, ICSs, and system leaders can consider the following points:

- **Consider ‘staff as patients’:** In the eyes of improving staff health, create a mindset where staff are treated as patients with the same dignity and respect. This will shift focus from staff as resource, to staff members as valued contributors who need support to keep functioning and being productive, in the value chain of providing wider population health and care.
- **Integrate wellbeing into workforce and service transformation:** Make occupational health and wellbeing a core enabler of the 10 Year Health Plan three strategic shifts; community care, digital innovation, and prevention.
- **Measure ROI and invest in high ROI evidence-based and need-driven initiatives:** Ensure all OHWB services and interventions are measuring impact and return on investment. Where ROI is high, ensure these are invested in and sustained, and where these are low, challenge / disinvest in these. Follow local workforce need and remember that just because an idea works in one area, may not mean it is suitable for your local workforce/context.
- **Foster collaboration across systems:** Evidence demonstrates we are stronger and more productive together. Push for health and wellbeing of staff to be treated as a system challenge and help remove silo-working that leads to inequality and variation.
- **Model compassionate and inclusive leadership:** Create cultures where staff feel safe, respected, and supported, especially in tackling equality, discrimination, and harassment.
- **Invest in prevention, early intervention/treatment, and flexibility:** Expand access to preventative health support, early intervention/treatment, and flexible working arrangements to proactively reduce sickness absence and improve staff productivity, experience, and retention.
- **Track progress and share learning:** Use data and lived experience to measure impact, celebrate success, and continuously improve.

3.3. Where next?

Together, we can build a healthier NHS from within, where caring for our people is the foundation for caring for our patients and communities.

This update reflects a small sample of our collective progress made across the NHS to strengthen occupational health and wellbeing as a core part of workforce strategy. The insights and examples demonstrate how local innovation, system collaboration and evidence-based practice focusing on being driven by the needs of our workforce and driven by measuring ROI, are driving measurable improvements in staff experience, productivity, cost savings, retention, and service delivery.

The lessons captured in this report offer practical insight for future delivery. They reinforce the importance of integrated working, strong governance, and a clear focus on impact. With

the right support and shared commitment, the NHS is well-positioned to build on this momentum and deliver lasting change.

NHS England, NHS Employers, and the NHS Health at Work Network remain fully committed to supporting our healthcare organisations to fully realise the Growing OHWB strategy and will continue to promote and support this over the coming years, aligned to the new 10-Year Health Plan ambitions. As we look ahead toward these ambitions, the role of OHWB will continue to evolve, supporting a modern, inclusive, productive, and resilient workforce. Continued alignment and collaboration across national partners, local systems, and frontline teams will be essential to embed sustainable models of care and ensure that staff health and wellbeing remain central to how the NHS operates.