

Mid Yorkshire Teaching Trust achieves a 2025 Recognition Award for its collaborative approach to improving psychological wellbeing

Recognising that the wellbeing of staff directly impacts the quality of patient care, Mid Yorkshire Teaching Trust launched the Psychological Wellbeing Improvement Project, a pioneering collaboration between the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Service (OHWbS) and the Staff Psychological Wellbeing Service (SPWS). The initiative was designed to create a joined-up approach to supporting the mental health of staff, building a workplace culture of compassion and open conversation.

A collaborative approach

Asking for emotional help can be one of the hardest things to do particularly in a high-pressure healthcare environment. The Trust's OH and Psychological Wellbeing teams recognised that fragmented or clinical approaches alone were not enough. Instead, they developed a cross-specialty model that puts people and collaboration at its heart.

All referrals are triaged through the OHWbS, and where specialist psychological support is needed, a direct referral is made to SPWS. This integrated pathway ensures that no member of staff slips through the cracks, while enabling clinicians from both teams to collaborate on tailored support and recovery plans. Working together they offer proactive, preventative and responsive interventions that meet individual and team needs, from early-stage wellbeing advice to structured psychological therapies.

Overcoming challenges to build a cohesive system

One of the project's most significant challenges was ensuring information governance and confidentiality across two services with distinct systems and legal responsibilities. Access to the OHWbS digital record system is strictly limited, as it contains sensitive health information. To balance collaboration with confidentiality, the teams developed an innovative solution: limited, permission-based access for SPWS colleagues to a single field within the OHWbS digital system.

This allowed SPWS to record outcome data and upload consented feedback while maintaining strict privacy protocols. In parallel, clinical notes for psychological therapy continued to be stored separately, in full compliance with GDPR. This carefully constructed system enabled both teams to share essential information securely whilst keeping the employee at the centre of every decision.

Creating a culture of compassion

Beyond individual therapy, the project has had a positive influence on the psychological culture of the Trust. The teams have worked tirelessly to promote open conversations about mental health, reduce stigma and normalise asking for help. Through targeted interventions and awareness campaigns, they have fostered a "listening and talking culture" that supports both individuals and teams.

One of the most visible achievements has been the creation of a network of over 200 Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA) across the Trust. These trained colleagues act as a first line of peer support by signposting help and promoting positive mental health practices within their departments. To ensure safe and sustainable delivery, MHFAs receive ongoing supervision and professional development, enabling them to “support safely” and with confidence.

Building trauma-informed practice

The project has also made major strides in embedding trauma-informed approaches across the organisation. Recognising the emotional impact of clinical incidents on staff, the SPWS team developed and delivered trauma-focused training to over 50 senior leaders and post-incident care training to 12 senior clinicians.

The approach has since expanded to four clinical divisions, with the long-term goal of creating Trust-wide practice guidance and linking post-incident support with HR-led processes. This ensures that staff receive consistent care not only after traumatic events but also during investigation or review periods.

Measurable outcomes and exceptional results

The effectiveness of the project is demonstrated by its exceptional treatment outcomes. Routine outcome measures show recovery rates far exceeding some national averages including:

- 79% of staff recovered from clinical levels of depression
- 87.5% recovered from anxiety.

These results significantly outperform the NHS Talking Therapies recovery rate target of 48% for 2024/25. Beyond statistics, they reflect real improvements in confidence, resilience and wellbeing among staff which in turn translate into stronger teams and better patient care.

Lasting impact and future ambition

The Psychological Wellbeing Improvement Project has become a model for how multidisciplinary collaboration can create tangible, sustainable improvements in staff wellbeing. By integrating OH and psychological expertise Mid Yorkshire Teaching Trust has built a system that not only supports individuals in crisis but also fosters long-term resilience.

As one clinician summarised:

“When we care for our people, we care for our patients. This project has shown what’s possible when compassion, collaboration and clinical excellence come together.”