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Progress with the NHS Mental Health Workforce

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Mental Health Workforce Commitments

July 2016 ‘Implementing the Five Year Forward View for Mental Health’

July 2017 ‘Stepping Forward to 2020/21: The Mental Health Workforce plan for England’

Ambition by 2020/21:
21,000 new posts
19,000 new staff

2019 ‘NHS Mental Health Implementation Plan’

Ambition by 2023/24:
27,000 additional staff

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Diversifying roles with more MDT working

Traditional Roles	New Roles
Psychiatrists	Peer Support Workers
Nurses	Nursing Associates
Psychologists	Assistant Practitioners
Social workers	
Allied Health Professionals	

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Mental health staff increased from 118,000 To 127,000 FTE between 2010/11 – 2020/21 but mental health nurses fell from 40,000 To 38,000 FTE over the same period.

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Nurses and health visitors and clinical support staff are the largest staff groups in the mental health workforce

Source: NHS Digital

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Indicative Workforce Profile by Staff Group

Additional staff (cumulative)	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Staff group	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Psychiatrist - consultant	10	60	180	340	470
Psychiatrist - non consultant	2	10	40	70	80
Pharmacist	20	60	100	200	280
Paramedics	0	230	350	460	580
Nursing	190	690	1,690	3,010	4,220
Psychologist	110	470	1,050	1,840	2,520
Psychotherapists and psychological professionals	180	620	2,300	3,970	5,610
Occupational Therapists	10	70	160	320	470
Physician Associates	8	30	50	100	140
Support to clinical staff / other therapists	250	1,200	2,300	4,320	6,090
Social worker	40	110	230	430	610
Admin	80	280	670	1,200	1,670
Peer support worker	530	1,300	2,120	3,520	4,730
Total	1,430	5,130	11,230	19,790	27,460

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Skill mix of additional mental health workforce by 2023/24

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Change in registered nursing workforce by work area (index 100 = June 2010), June 2010 - June 2020

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Source: NHS Digital, NHS HCHS monthly workforce statistics – June 2020 (2020)

Registered FTE nurse vacancies by service area in England, percentages* and overall total, June 2017–June 2020

	Jun-2017	Dec-2017	Jun-2018	Dec-2018	Jun-2019	Dec-2019	Jun-2020
Overall total*	**38,328**	**35,934**	**42,587**	**39,685**	**44,195**	**38,740**	**37,821**
Acute	74%	73%	74%	74%	73%	70%	68%
Ambulance**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community	5%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Mental health	19%	20%	21%	21%	22%	24%	26%
Specialist	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%

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Source: NHS Digital. NHS Vacancy Statistics England April 2015–June 2020 Experimental Statistics – June 2020
*The first row provides the absolute total number of FTE registered nurse vacancies
** These numbers are less than 0.5% after rounding

Age profile of nurses and health visitors in NHS England by work area, 30 June 2010–30 June 2020 (headcount*)

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Source: NHS Digital, NHS HCHS
*The data for this chart are available only as headcounts, hence we provide them for headcounts only and not for FTE nurses

Activity projections by service area, projected vs. historical average

Area	Actual historical (2009/10–2018/19)	Projected growth (2018/19–2030/31)	Difference (percentage points)
Outpatient	4.10%	1.40%	-2.6
A&E	1.60%	1.00%	-0.6
Non-elective	1.80%	2.60%	0.7
Elective	2.40%	2.30%	-0.1
Maternity (births)	-0.40%	-0.30%	0.1
Primary Care	0.90%	1.40%	0.5
Community prescribing	2.30%	1.30%	-1
IAPT*	16.60%	0.20%	-16.4
Other mental health**	0.80%	0.70%	-0.1
Community care	-0.90%	2.20%	3.1
Social care***	-0.60%	1.90%	2.4

*2012/13–2018/19; **2011/12–2018/19; ***2015/16–2018/19

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Source: REAL Centre calculations. The difference may not exactly match due to rounding of numbers.

Additional mental health referrals arising from the COVID-19 pandemic

Referrals	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Annual average
Low	240,000	690,000	220,000	40,000	300,000
Point	370,000	1,080,000	370,000	60,000	470,000
High	550,000	1,590,000	640,000	130,000	730,000

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Source: Strategy Unit analysis.

Mental Health and staff wellbeing

- Overall NHS sickness absence rate 4.6% in June 2021
- 28% of all sickness absence for anxiety / stress / depression / other psychiatric illness.
- 2019 staff survey found that 40.3% of respondents reported feeling unwell as a result of work-related stress in the last 12 months, up from 36.8% in 2016.
- The most recent survey, where fieldwork took place during the pandemic, found that 44% of respondents reported feeling unwell as a result of work-related stress in the last 12 months.

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