March 2024

Dear Colleague,

2024 National Workforce Benchmarking Survey of Psychological Professionals Employed Within NHS Commissioned Services Across England

We are writing to request your assistance in providing workforce data relating to the Psychological Professions across NHS commissioned services in England. This collection covers mental health, community, and acute healthcare services.

The Psychological Professions workforce grew by 51% between 2019 and 2023, making it one of the fastest growing professional groups in the NHS. It needs to grow further still. The NHS Long Term Workforce Plan sets out an ambition to grow this workforce by a further 24,000 - 26,000 WTE psychological professionals by 2037, almost doubling its current size.

In 2023 the NHS Benchmarking Psychological Professions Workforce Census recorded 25,406 WTE psychological professionals. The analysis has helped us to build a more detailed profile of this workforce, to understand better how it is distributed across job roles, service pathways and demographic characteristics. It has also added to our understanding of rates of retention and pay structure. These insights support planning at national, regional and integrated care board level. The 2023 national report is available here: Psychological Professions Workforce National Report 2023.

For 2024 the NHS England Workforce, Training and Education directorate have commissioned the NHS Benchmarking Network (NHSBN) to undertake a second annual census and analysis of the Psychological Professions workforce across England, following on from a successful 2023 iteration.

This second iteration of the census will provide detailed tracking of the Psychological Professions workforce across occupations, so that we can understand the extent to which we are achieving our goals for growth, as well as equality, diversity and inclusion factors. Data will be used to support workforce planning and transformation to support the existing and future workforce and improve the quality of service for patients. Further details on the project scope can be found in the data collection template attached, and on the project website here.

Alongside this work, action will continue to improve the accuracy of Electronic Staff Record data over coming years so that in the longer term ESR becomes a routine tool for accurate workforce reporting.
We would be grateful if your organisation could complete the relevant enclosed data collection template as appropriate in respect of the services that you offer that are in scope of this exercise. **To collate accurate information, data leads should work closely with Chief Psychological Professions Officers (CPPOs) to validate the return prior to submission.** If your organisation does not have a CPPO, the most senior psychological professional with overall professional governance responsibility should be asked for support in validation.

Completion of the two data collection templates within this census depend on which services you deliver:

- Adult Psychological Professions data collection template, for organisations that employ psychological professions staff involved in the delivery of adult services.

- Children and Young People (CYP) Psychological Professions data collection template, for organisations that employ psychological professions staff involved in the delivery of CYP services.

We are requesting this template is completed for the workforce as of 31st March 2024. If you require any assistance, please contact the NHSBN team (nhsbn.psychologicalprofessions@nhs.net). The data collection period for this project closes on **Friday 24th May 2024, 12:00**, and we ask that the data collection templates are completed and submitted on or before this date.

If you are not the appropriate person for coordinating the completion of this information, please share the project details with the relevant person/people in your organisation who are. To help the NHSBN team liaise with the right people about this exercise, please send any revised or additional contact details to the NHSBN team (nhsbn.psychologicalprofessions@nhs.net).

**On completion of this exercise, participating organisations will receive a bespoke submission report, illustrating their position within the context of the national dataset.**

With your invaluable support, the findings of this and future censuses will help us support the required improvements to the capacity and quality of the workforce in psychological profession services. Thank you in advance for your help with this important programme.

Yours sincerely,
Julian Emms  
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Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust /  
Chair Mental Health Reference Group, NHS Benchmarking Network

Dr Adrian Whittington  
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NHS England