London Neonatal
Operational Delivery Network

Psychology annual report 2024

Development of psychologically informed care in neonatal units

We are aiming to deliver equitable, compassionate, safe care, wherever a baby is admitted; and for all staff to be able to respond appropriately to families coping with a distressing environment and situation. Work in 2024 aimed to enhance knowledge and skills related to psychologically informed care across our units, benefiting all. Activities have included:

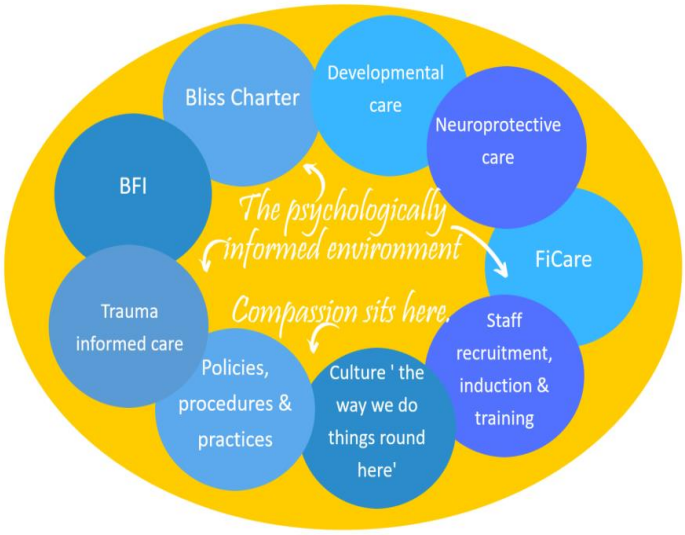
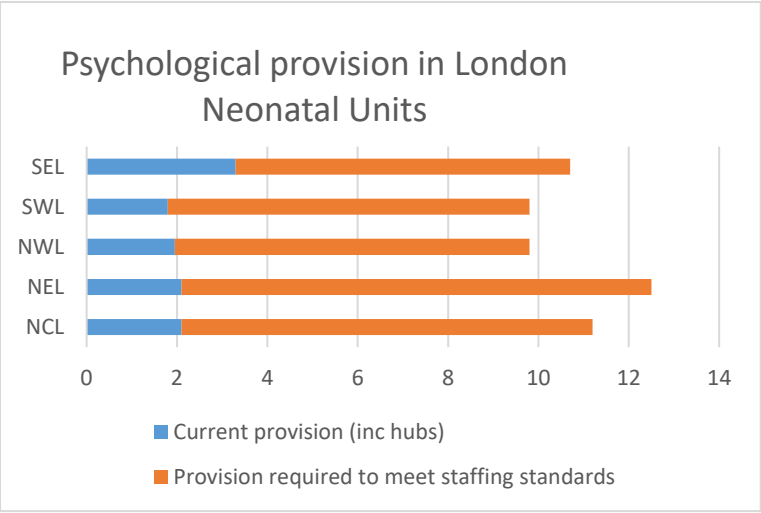


Figure 1: Psychologically informed neonatal environment (PINC)

- New Hub psychologists, covering NC & NE London (Dr Kirsty Abbas) and SE & SW London (Dr Alanna Gallagher).
- Delivery of trauma informed care to 35 neonatal professionals (this is in addition to the 31 professionals trained in 2023).
- Delivery of many training sessions and trained on FINC, ENNP & aQIS courses.
- Led a study day on bereavement & palliative care.
- Offer of Trauma Risk Management (TRIM) training for teams, which continues into 2025.
- Completion of first phase of the psychologically informed environments project via visits & audit.
- Increased psychology presence at perinatal workstream meetings and LMNS meetings & events.
- Re-launch of the Communities of Practice offer to staff supporting families.
- Nationally, we submitted evidence to the pre term birth enquiry as well as contributing to the BAPM response to the 10 year plan.
- We are unable to resource his provision (training, the community of practice and the PIE project) in NWL as we have no hub psychologist recruited there.
- Whilst funding for the hub posts is excellent, all are currently under staffing recommendations.

Provision of high quality, specialist psychological support for babies, families & staff on our units



Provision remains at a quarter of what it should be across London, with huge gaps against staffing standards in every sector. The average WTE is 0.4, or 2 days a week, many units have less than this. Across 2024 there were 50 psychological professionals who had some input into neonatal care in one of our 27 hospitals, either directly or through their supervision and management of neonatal posts.

Figure 2: Gaps in psychological staffing by sector

In 2024 the lead psychologist:

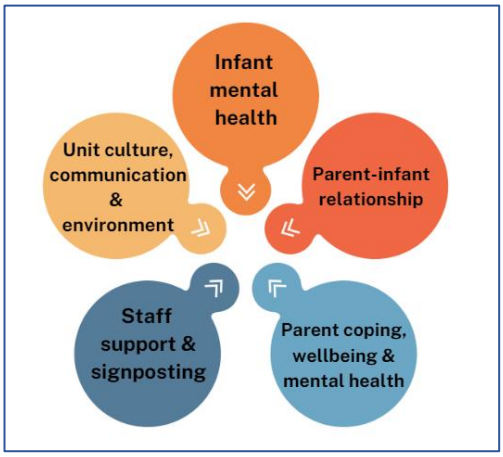


Figure 3: The role of the neonatal psychological professional

- Supported new Ockenden funded psychological professionals.
- Worked with trusts who have yet to recruit. Recruitment to some posts has been challenging.
- Is working with units to develop psychological provision via internal trust bids.
- Collected data from psych professionals to strengthen case for more psychological provision.
- Is providing regular peer supervision for the psychological profession
- Leads on bi-monthly CPD and business meetings.
- Facilitated four full day face-to-face study days.
- Provided induction for new psychological professionals where there has been a change or new post established.
- 70% of the psychological professionals took up offer of specialist psychological training funded through Ockenden underspend. Those that declined all cited lack of time as reason for non-acceptance.
- 37 places for psychological professionals on courses such as Video Interaction Guidance (VIG), Compassion Focused Therapy (intro and advanced), Newborn Behavioural Observation (NBO), Compassion Focused Staff Support and infant mental health training.
- Nationally, we have put in a bid to WTE (formerly HEE) to fund a package of training for psychological professionals.

2025 plans

Focus on continuing to work towards a sharing of psychological knowledge and wellbeing in order to make services safer and more compassionate for families and staff. Projects will include:

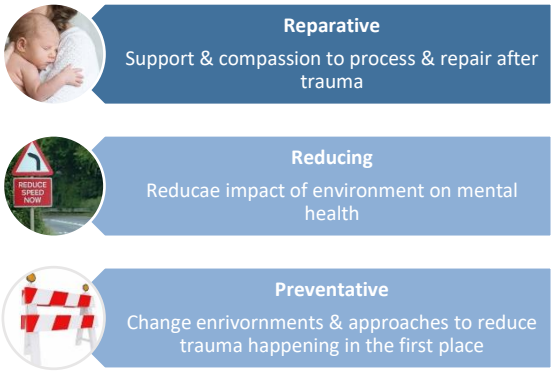


Figure 4: Trauma informed care

- Trauma informed care courses for medics, nurses, admin/clerical staff, and follow up days for entire MDT.
- Research bid to NiHR looking at the lived experience of families whose voices are seldom heard in order to improve patient experience and safety.
- Psychologically Informed Environments Phase 2 – meeting units to think together about strengths and needs.
- Workforce event to support recruitment and succession planning.
- Improving data quality.
- Developing best practice guidance for record keeping for psychological professionals
- TRIM managers course.
- Compassion focused staff support training for psychological professionals.
- Discussing some work with Bliss to support their mental health project.
- Community stakeholder events to connect up psychological provision across the perinatal period
- Investigating introduction of Schwartz rounds to the network.
- Ongoing training offers for the nursing workforce via FINC, AQIS and the nurse wellbeing programme.
- Nationally, publish psychology outpatient staffing standards in line with new guidance to move care into communities.
- PETR/Debrief training.

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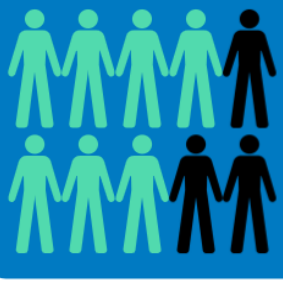
37%
Increase from 2021 levels in provision with Ockenden funding

12%
Funded vacant posts

26%
Current provision against standards

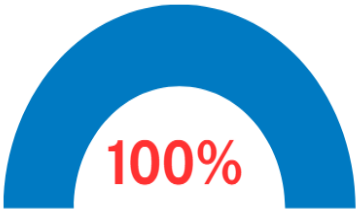
Funding required to full staffing standards
£3,427,102

Skilled workforce: Accessing training

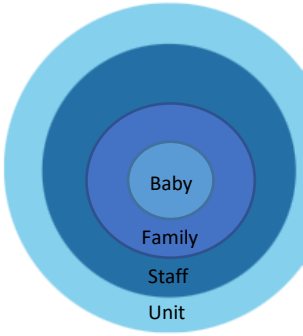


70%

70% of the neonatal psychological professionals in London received funding to attend an externally facilitated expert course in areas which directly skill them up to work with staff and families



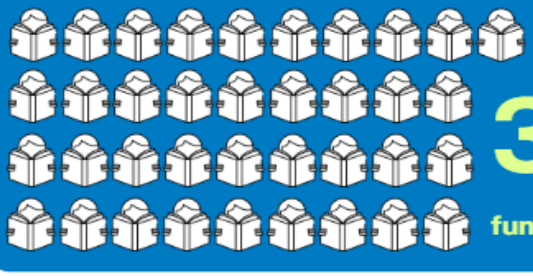
100%
27 Units with inadequate psychological provision



London Neonatal Psychological support in 2024

5 Units with no psychological provision

Skilled workforce: course places



37
funded places

- **5** Trauma informed care training days
- **4** Conference presentations on the work of neonatal psych
- **3** 3 Accelerated QIS and 3 ENNP sessions delivered
- **2** Neonatal Psychological professionals study days
- **1** National neonatal psychology conference

- Realise: The prevelance of trauma and its impact
- Recognise: The signs of trauma in babies, familes & staff
- Respond: Integrating knoweldge into policies, proceedures & practice
- Resist re-traumatisation: For babies, families & staff

Three F2F Trauma informed care training days; 7 planned for 2025