

‘SOME OF MY TEAM WERE LIKE, “WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?”’: PROVIDING PLACEMENTS FOR CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY TRAINEES WITHIN HOMELESSNESS ORGANISATIONS

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1 BACKGROUND

- People experiencing homelessness (PEH) face high rates of trauma, mental health issues, and complex health needs.^{1, 2}
- However, they encounter significant barriers to accessing mental health services such as stigma, system inflexibility, and lack of appropriate support.^{3, 4}
- Addressing these inequalities requires stronger collaboration between the NHS and third sector. Recognising this, NHS England commissioned 4 clinical psychology doctoral programmes to develop Trainee Clinical Psychologist (TCP) placements within homelessness organisations.
- We explore the benefits of providing TCP placements for charity services.

2 METHODOLOGY

- Online semi-structured interviews with:
 - 5 staff in homelessness organisations across the South East
 - 6 Trainee Clinical Psychologists (TCPs)
 - 4 clinical supervisors
- Interviews explored the perceived benefits of TCP placements in homelessness services as part of a larger evaluation project.
- Reflexive thematic analysis was used to identify key themes in the perceptions of staff, supervisors and trainees.

3 FINDINGS



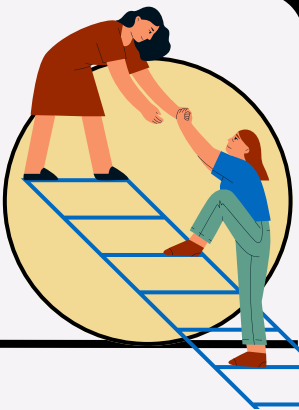
Theme 1
Bringing a psychological mindset

1a: Thinking psychologically

“It’s so vital for the teams here and the staff here to be able to learn and understand better the psychology, the psychological rigour [...] having that rigour brought into our service is really helpful.” (Placement Staff)

1b: Supporting team wellbeing

“She [the trainee] leaves a legacy of reflecting on our work, reflecting on the impact on the staff teams, the trauma and transference of trauma [...] because we work a lot in crisis and sometimes it’s hard to get a time to sit back and reflect ‘OK how has that affected us, how is that impacting on us’” (Placement Staff)



Theme 2
Breaking down barriers and building bridges

2a: Connecting mental health services and homelessness organisations

“So, when you’ve experienced a lot of challenge, you tend to have this sort of cynical view of other disciplines coming in, so I think it’s been a refreshing view to have [trainees] coming in and being such a positive influence and a positive part of the team. So, I think it’s breaking those barriers down” (Placement Staff)

2b: Challenging stigma and advocating for people experiencing homelessness

“It has empowered me as well to fight the stigma that there is against homelessness people, which I think unfortunately there’s a lot of” (Trainee)

4 CONCLUSIONS

- TCP placements in homelessness organisations brought reciprocal benefits to all parties, with a clear legacy left for all.
- Despite some initial uncertainty, organisations recognised the sustainable benefits of TCP placements to staff learning, wellbeing, service development, and psychologically informed practice.
- Trainees were upskilled in effectively engaging marginalised people in services as well as leadership, advocacy and service delivery.
- TCP placements support the NHS Inclusion Health Framework by expanding access to mental health care, developing a psychologically informed workforce, and strengthening connections between statutory and third sector services.

WATCH OUR VIDEO!



Scan here to hear our trainees reflect on their placement experience.



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