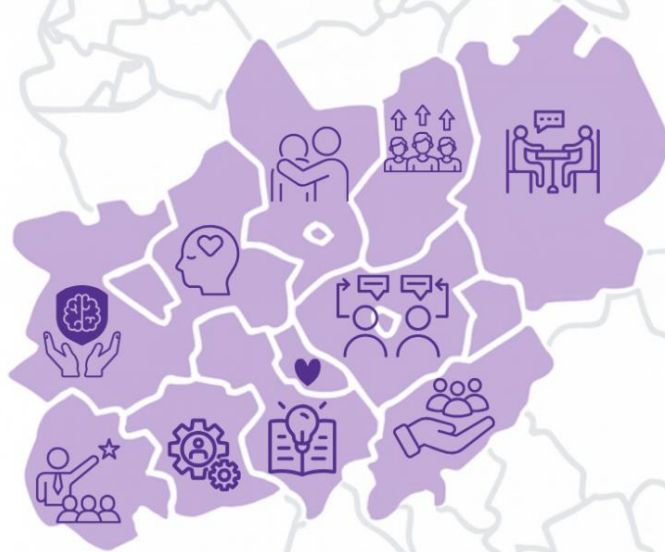


PPN Midlands Workforce Overview Report 2025

Version 1.2 **March 2026**



About the Psychological Professions Network Midlands (PPN Midlands)

The PPN Midlands is a regional membership network for all registered, trainee and aspiring psychological professionals, experts by experience and other interested parties contributing to NHS commissioned psychological healthcare across the Midlands.

We are commissioned by NHS England to provide a joined-up voice for the psychological professions in workforce planning and development, and to support excellence in practice. We are one of seven regional PPNs in England who come together to form the national Psychological Professions Network.

Contact us

[Psychological Professions Network Midlands](#)

Email: bsmhft.ppnmidlands@nhs.net



Contents

Contents.....	3
Executive Summary	4
Introduction and Purpose	5
Background	5
1. The 2023 PPN Midlands Workforce Overview report.....	8
2. Data Sources	8
Data Analysis	8
NHS Benchmarking Network Census Data	11
Workforce Diversity and Demographics	14
Education and Training Highlights.....	20
Summary and Recommendations	20
1. Data maturity	21
2. System leadership.....	21
3. Cross-sector alignment	21
4. Workforce sustainability	21
5. Equity and opportunity.....	22
Glossary	22

Executive Summary

This 2025 PPN Midlands Workforce Overview Report provides an updated, high-level picture of the psychological professions workforce across the Midlands, building on the first report published in April 2023. It draws primarily on the NHS Electronic Staff Record (ESR) and the 2024 NHS Psychological Professions and Talking Therapies Censuses, supplemented by findings from the 2024 National Education and Training Survey (NETS). The introduction of the annual Psychological Professions Census marks a significant advance in workforce intelligence, offering a consistent national dataset across NHS-funded settings.

The Midlands accounts for 22% of England's landmass and around 10.8 million people. Between 2018 and 2025, the psychological professions workforce within NHS mental healthcare more than doubled, increasing from 2,298 to 4,825 (ESR data), representing growth of about 110%. Practitioner Psychologists (32%), Psychological Therapists (25%) and Practitioners (14%) form the largest groups, with 29% in assistant, associate or trainee roles. Six of the 11 Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) report higher whole-time-equivalent (WTE) staffing per 10,000 population than the national median, though incomplete data submissions (particularly in the Black Country, Northamptonshire and Nottingham & Nottinghamshire) continue to limit comparability.

Workforce diversity broadly reflects local demographics. Urban ICSs, particularly Birmingham and Solihull and the Black Country, show the greatest ethnic diversity, while rural systems such as

Lincolnshire and Derbyshire remain least diverse. Gender imbalance is marked, with 84% of staff identifying as female. The proportion aged over 50 years (24%) is slightly above the national average (21%), indicating an ageing workforce in some areas.

Vacancy, turnover and joiner rates vary considerably. Vacancy rates range from 0 to 30%, and turnover averages 20% in adult community mental-health services, above the 13% seen in Talking Therapies. Sickness absence remains comparatively low (2–6%).

NETS results show that psychological professions students in the Midlands report more positive training experiences than the national average, though teamwork and teaching scores have declined slightly since 2022.

New national Census data has strengthened the region's understanding of its workforce, offering a more coherent evidence base. However, incomplete returns, limited role-level detail and gaps in ethnicity reporting mean the intelligence remains imperfect, with similar limitations in ESR data, particularly regarding non-NHS providers. Although workforce growth is encouraging, the next phase requires greater focus on quality, coherence and sustainability, supported by stronger leadership, improved data maturity, better cross-sector alignment and continued attention to equity. With clearer insight into local variation in diversity, training and workforce stability, the Midlands is now well placed to move from describing variation to addressing it through coordinated regional action.

Introduction and Purpose

This workforce overview report builds on a previous PPN Midlands Workforce Report published in April 2023¹. At that time – and as outlined in the report – obtaining a coherent picture of the Psychological Professions across the Midlands was challenging, and the conclusions and recommendations highlighted several areas for improvement.

This report offers an updated overview and high-level snapshot of the Midlands Psychological Professions workforce at the date of publication. Through providing this concise overview, the report aims to provide a summary picture of the psychological professions workforce in the Midlands – to inform workforce planning, support inclusive growth, and help ensure services are better aligned to population needs.

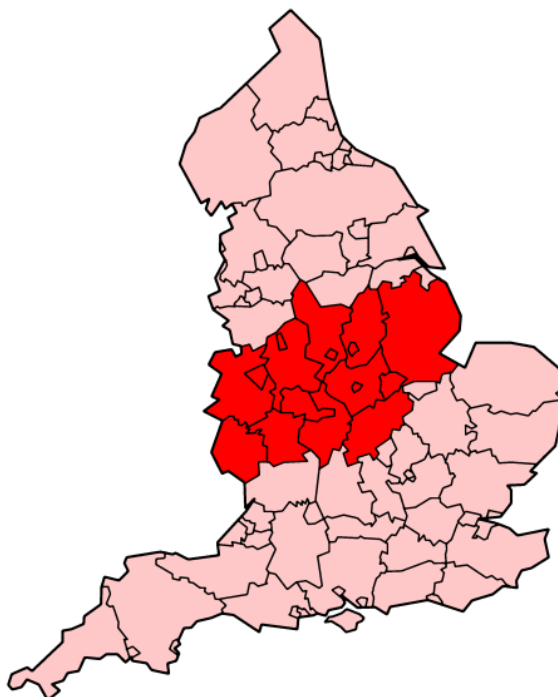
The first Workforce Census of the Psychological Professions opened for data collection in April 2023, commissioned by NHS England and undertaken by the NHS Benchmarking Network, and was published in early 2024. A second Census was undertaken in 2024, with data published in the Summer of 2025. This report benefits from the findings of these additional data sources, which were not available in time for the previous report.

Background

The PPN Midlands 2023 workforce overview report provided a comprehensive background of the Midlands context, using 2011 census data. This report will not revisit these areas in detail. Instead, a high-level updated summary drawn from the 2021 census² is outlined below.

The Midlands region:

- Accounts for 22% of England’s land mass, spanning an area of over 11,000 square miles;
- has a population in the order of 10.8 million people;
- is noticeably more diverse than in 2011. Census 2021 shows a lower proportion of individuals identifying as White in both regions compared with 2011, and larger proportions in Asian, Black and mixed groups in many local authorities.
- Birmingham continues to be described as one of Europe’s youngest cities with roughly 37–40% of residents under 25³.



¹ <https://www.ppn.nhs.uk/all-ppn-resources/402-the-psychological-professions-in-the-midlands-workforce-overview-report>

² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/planningforcensus2021/ukcensusdata>

³ <https://www.bcu.ac.uk/international/why-birmingham/what-makes-birmingham-famous>

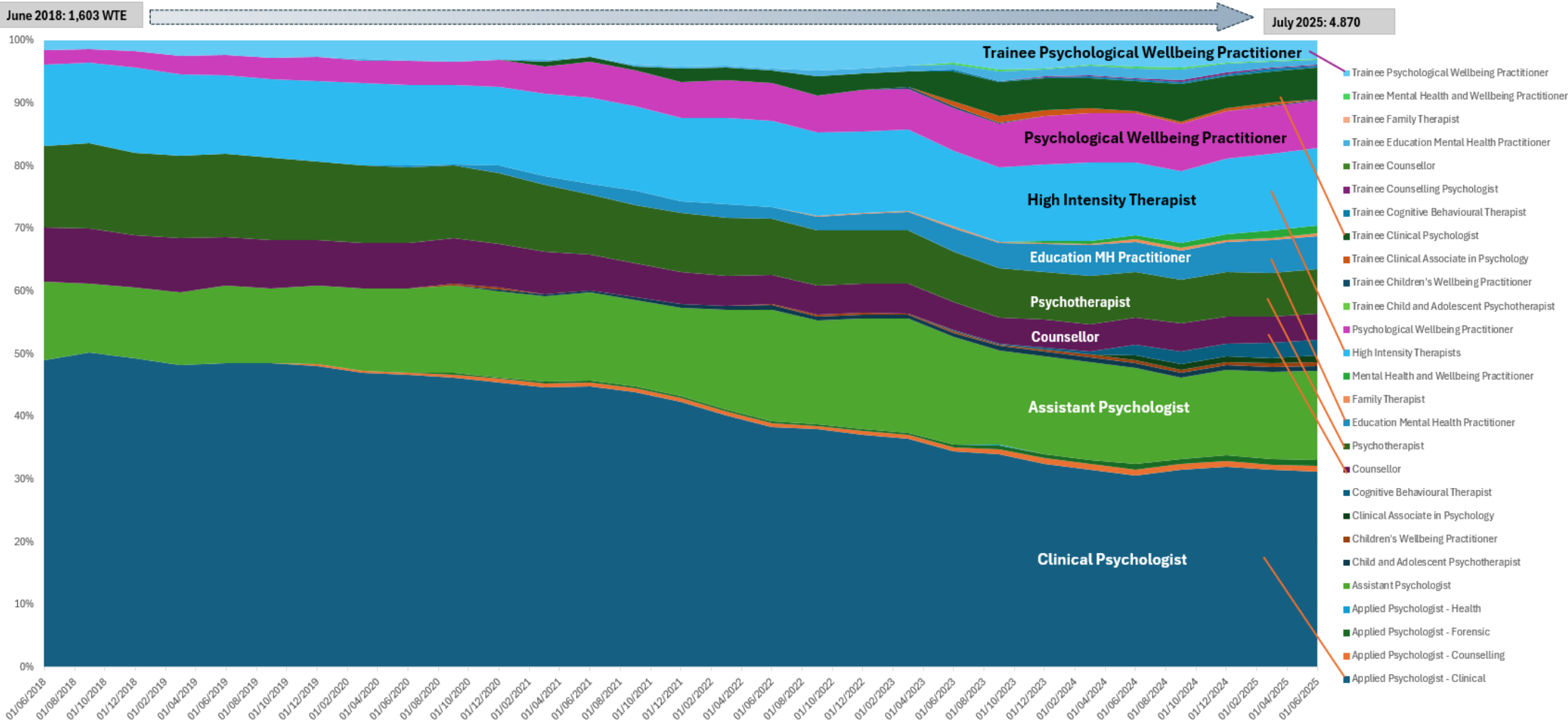
- Deprivation remains a major regional issue – Birmingham, Sandwell and Nottingham remain among the most deprived authorities by rank on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation.
- Population health priorities such as hypertension, depression and obesity continue to be significant⁴.

Growth and Representation

Between 2018 and 2025, the number of psychological professionals working in mental healthcare in the Midlands more than doubled, increasing from 2,298 to 4,825 (ESR data) – growth of around 110% in seven years. The accompanying graph (see Graph 1) shows that Clinical Psychologists make up a smaller proportion of the workforce than before, falling from about 65% in 2016 to under 40% in 2025. This is not because their numbers have declined; in fact, they increased from roughly 1,050 in 2016 to 1,445 in 2025 (a 37% increase). Instead, the change reflects the significant expansion of the workforce, with many new practitioner groups now contributing to a more diverse, balanced and multi-occupation psychological professions workforce.

⁴ <https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/data-tools-and-services/data-services/general-practice-data-hub/quality-outcomes-framework-qof>

Graph 1 – which is limited to the mental health workforce in the Midlands according to ESR data - shows the growth in number of psychological professionals between 2018 and 2025, and also the increasing diversity of psychological professions skill mix across the workforce.



1. The 2023 PPN Midlands Workforce Overview report

The 2023 PPN Midlands Workforce Overview Report¹ drew several conclusions and made recommendations to inform subsequent PPN Midlands workstreams. These were organised under several key themes, all of which will be revisited as part of this 2025 refresh.

- Significant variability with NHS Electronic Staff Record (ESR) data quality;
- Limited CPPO visibility and involvement in workforce planning;
- Inconsistent workforce data returns across sectors;
- Gaps in understanding the demand for psychological roles outside mental health;
- Barriers to accessing professional training, particularly for newer roles.

2. Data Sources

A key development since the last report is the introduction of the previously mentioned annual NHS Psychological Professions Census, which offers a consistent national dataset for psychological professions across all NHS-funded settings for the first time. This forms a significant data source for this report, alongside data drawn from the NHS Electronic Staff Record (ESR). Additional reflections are made from data obtained from the National Education and Training Survey 2024, which was published in Spring 2025⁵.

The Electronic Staff Record (ESR) is used as the primary source of data for this report, as it provides a consistent national dataset on NHS-employed staff. However, there are recognised limitations in both data quality and coverage. ESR is reliant on accurate local input, and errors in coding or recording can affect the completeness and comparability of the data. In addition, ESR only captures the NHS-employed workforce, meaning it excludes services commissioned by the NHS but delivered by non-NHS providers, and does not account for psychological professionals working in health and care roles commissioned outside NHS structures (for example, Children and Young People's services commissioned by Local Authorities). Census data may help to inform some areas missed by ESR.

Data Analysis

Table 1 shows the numbers of psychological professional roles across the Midlands reported to the NHS England Data Warehouse in 2025. As of June 30th 2025, ESR data notes the following over the previous 12 months:

- The overall number of psychological professionals grew by 4.8%. Practitioner psychologists grew by 6.7%, Therapists/Counsellors grew by 11%, MHWPs doubled in number, with other practitioner roles such as EMHP growing by 14%, and CWP although small in number by 12%.

⁵ <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/nets-2024>

- Clinical Associates in Psychology (CAP) – one of the newest roles within the psychological professions taxonomy – rose in number from fewer than 5 in 2024, to 39 in 2025.
- Trainee Therapist or Counsellor roles have increased compared to the same time in 2024 (31 compared to 14).
- Trainee Practitioners (across all roles) have reduced in number compared to the same time in 2024 (203 compared to 240; 14%), perhaps indicating a slowing of growth in some of these roles, but could also relate to services moving outside of NHS provision.
- There are no Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners (PWPs) recorded in some systems, for example Derbyshire ICS. NHS Talking Therapies for Anxiety and Depression (TTad) services in this system are delivered by a non-NHS organisation who do not use ESR. Across the Midlands, ESR shows this role having dropped in number during the 12-month period ending June 30th 2025. These discrepancies may be due to contract changes, with TTad services moving between the NHS and third sector.
- Similar irregularities exist with High Intensity Therapists, with ESR recorded numbers across the Midlands falling from 545 to 537 during the 12-month period.

Table 1: Psychological Professionals across Midlands ICSSs

	Bham & Solihull	Black Country	Cov & Warks	Derby & D'shire	Hford & Worcs	Leics & Rutland	Lincs	Nthants	Notts	Shrops & Telford*	Staffs & Stoke*	Total 2025	Total 2024	Change between 24 & 25
Total PPs system	695	519	645	245	339	327	380	377	356	319	570	4825	4602	↑
Practitioner Psychologist	263	119	272	135	77	96	67	112	176	61	166	1538	1441	↑
Assistant psychologist	110	71	70	35	20	34	20	74	78	35	66	622	675	↓
Therapist or Counsellor	79	58	103	12	18	41	47	70	50	38	112	645	581	↑
High Intensity Therapist	63	116	44	40	72	0	76	8	0	52	52	537	545	↓
PWP	39	54	27	0	37	11	58	32	<5	44	26	330	341	↓
MHWP	<5	<5	<5	0	0	7	25	0	10	<5	<5	48	24	↑
CAP	<5	0	0	<5	0	14	0	<5	0	9	<5	39	<5	↑
CWP	0	<5	0	<5	6	6	<5	<5	<5	<5	12	27	24	↑
EMHP	0	53	14	<5	27	21	35	38	11	16	25	242	212	↑
Trainee Psychologist	106	<5	6	<5	5	76	0	<5	<5	9	44	259	228	↑
Trainee HIT	11	11	25	<5	62	0	19	5	<5	<5	20	167	139	↑
Trainee Therapist or Counsellor	<5	<5	<5	0	0	<5	0	<5	<5	7	12	31	14	↑
Trainee Practitioner (all roles)	13	20	52	0	13	<5	22	12	10	30	15	203	240	↓
Psychological Therapist (Other)	<5	5	21	0	<5	0	0	<5	<5	<5	15	41	41	↔

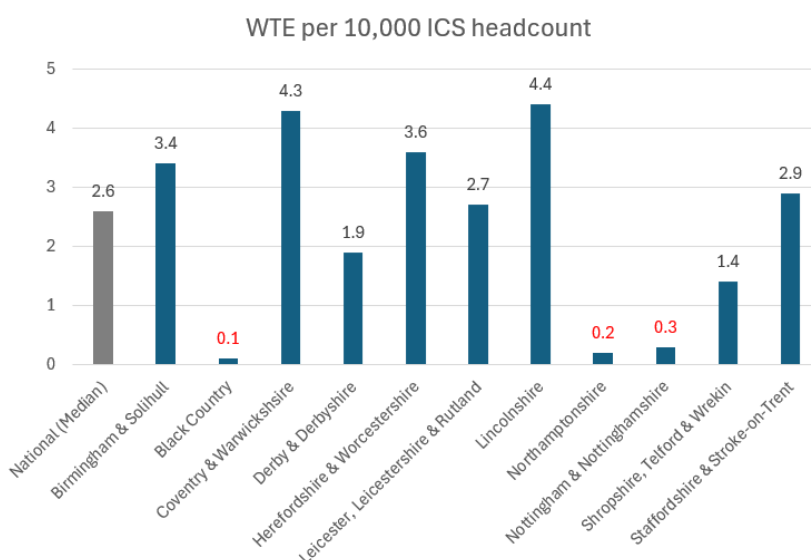
Notes: All figures Whole Time Equivalent (WTE). PP only filter applied for all data. Art and Drama therapy excluded, as well as 'Social Worker - Psychological Therapist'. <5: Values fewer than 5 are suppressed and hidden from visualisation.. 0 value assumed if role was not available to be selected in individual systems. 'Other' includes Assistant Psychotherapist, and Social worker - Psychological therapist. *assignment data shown for this system, rather than employment (due to SLA)

NHS Benchmarking Network Census Data

The following section introduces data from the NHS Psychological Professions Census 2024, the second annual national survey of the psychological professions' workforce, and the longer-established NHS Talking Therapies for Anxiety and Depression (TTad) Census 2024. Workforce census data for 2025 were collected between 27 May and 4 July 2025 and are not expected to be available until early 2026; these findings will therefore be reflected in future reports.

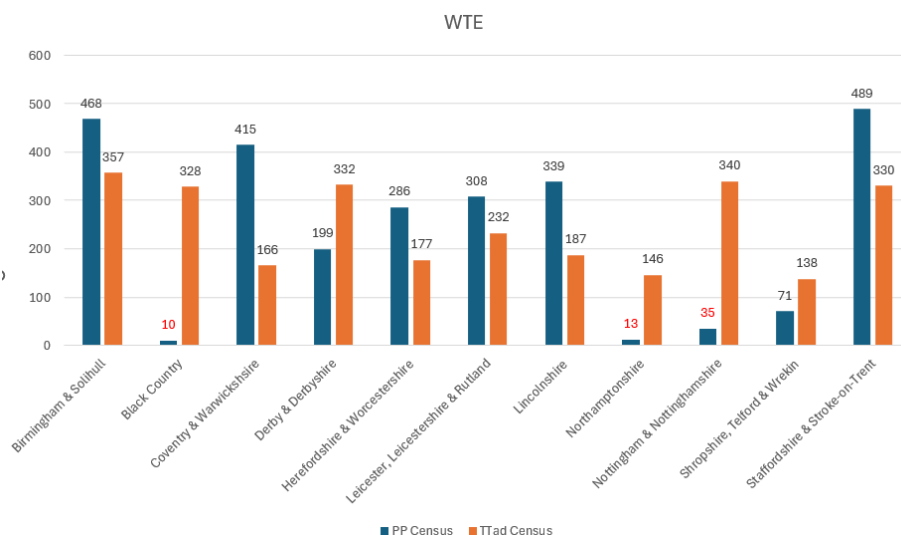
In this report, Integrated Care System (ICS)-level data from the two censuses are combined where appropriate to provide a regional overview, but presented separately in other sections where the datasets differ in scope or structure. Each section clearly states whether the figures are combined or source-specific. This opening section provides a high-level overview of workforce size, diversity, and development.

- According to the *Psychological Professions Census*, six of the eleven Integrated Care Systems (ICSs) across the Midlands reported a higher number of psychological professions whole-time equivalent (WTE) staff per 10,000 headcount than the national median of 2.6.
- The highest figures were reported in Lincolnshire (4.4) and Coventry & Warwickshire (4.3), indicating comparatively strong workforce capacity within parts of the region.

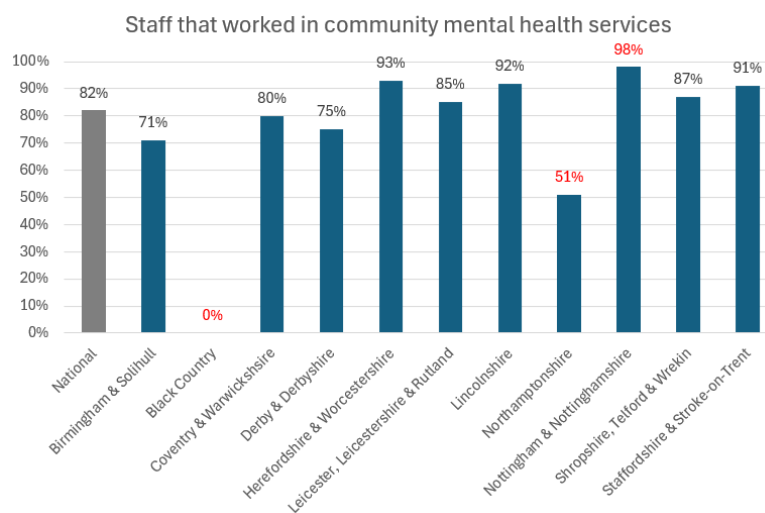


- It should be noted that data for the Black Country, Northamptonshire, and Nottingham & Nottinghamshire were affected by incomplete submissions for the *Psychological Professions Census*, which has distorted the reported figures – sometimes producing artificially high or low values rather than reflecting true workforce characteristics. This limitation recurs throughout the report and should be held in mind when comparing ICSs across the Midlands. In figures and tables, these three systems are highlighted in red to indicate where comparisons may be less reliable, and anomalous data points from these areas have been excluded from comparative analysis.

- *Combined Census* data indicated that the national whole-time equivalent (WTE) for all psychological professions staff was 36,214, with the Midlands region accounting for 5,366 WTE. This graph presents the breakdown of these data across the ICSs.
- For comparison, *ESR data* for the same period recorded 4,825 staff within the Midlands.



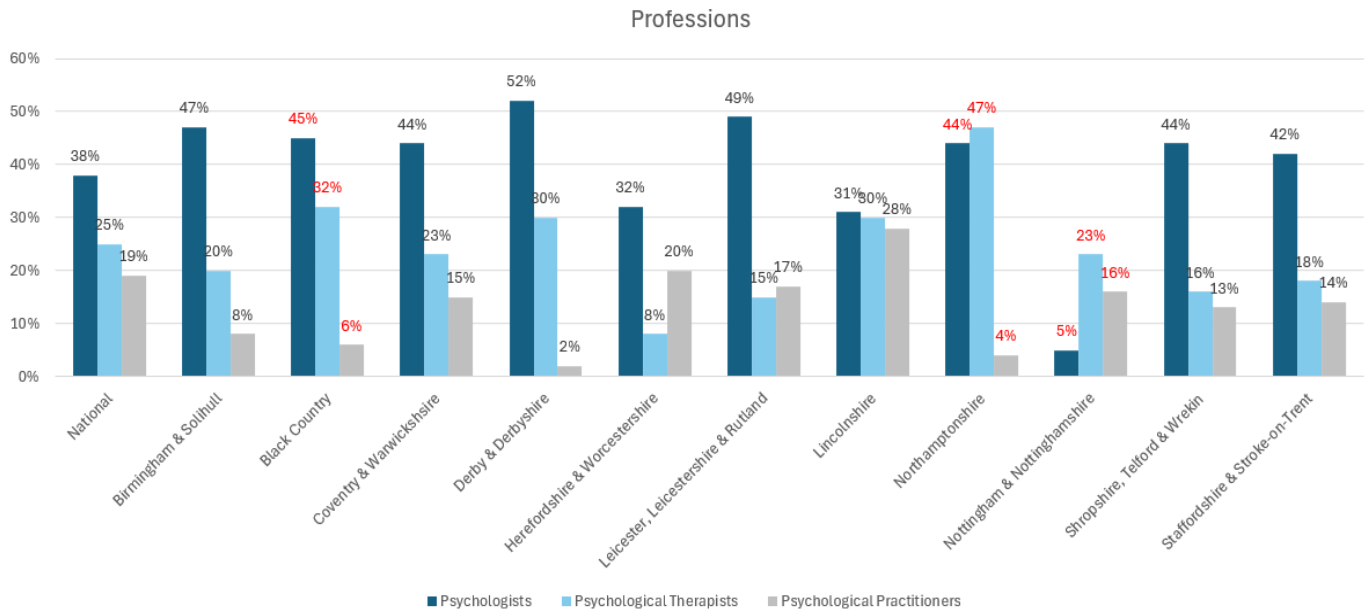
- Nationally, the *Psychological Professions Census* data showed that the highest proportion of psychological professions staff worked within community mental health services (82%).
- A similar trend could be seen across the Midlands, with an average of 84%.



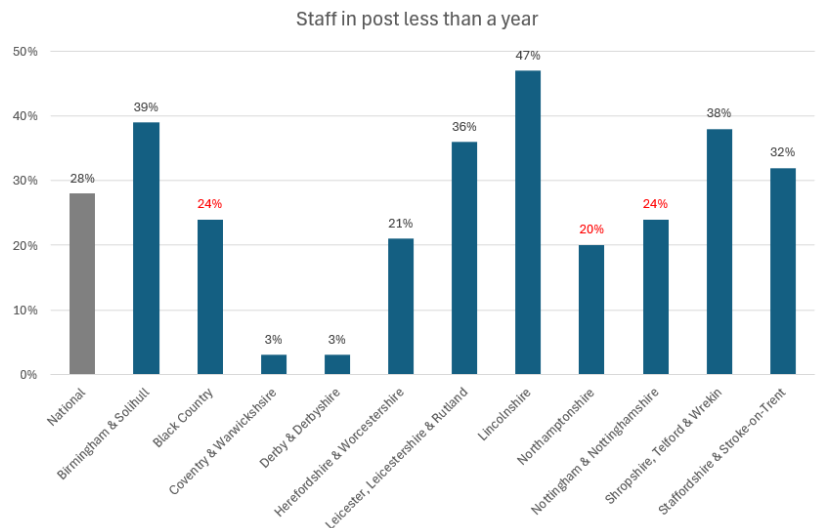
- The psychological professions workforce includes 21 recognised professional roles spanning Psychologists, Psychological Therapists, and Psychological Practitioners⁶. The national trend from the *Psychological Professions Census* data showed a greater percentage of Psychologists (38%) than Psychological Therapists (25%) and Practitioners (19%). Most Midlands regions followed this workforce trend, with slight differences in distribution across the professions. Notable exceptions include Herefordshire and Worcestershire, and Leicestershire and Rutland. The *Talking Therapies Census* did not report on the distribution of staff across these professional groupings, limiting direct comparison.

⁶ <https://explore.bps.org.uk/content/bpscpf/1/375/29>

- *ESR data* for the Midlands present a slightly different picture, with Practitioner Psychologists accounting for 32%, Psychological Therapists for 25%, and Practitioners for 14% of the workforce. The remaining 29% comprises trainee, associate, and assistant roles. These discrepancies may in part reflect the absence of role distribution data within the *Talking Therapies Census*, as well as broader variations in reporting completeness and dataset scope.



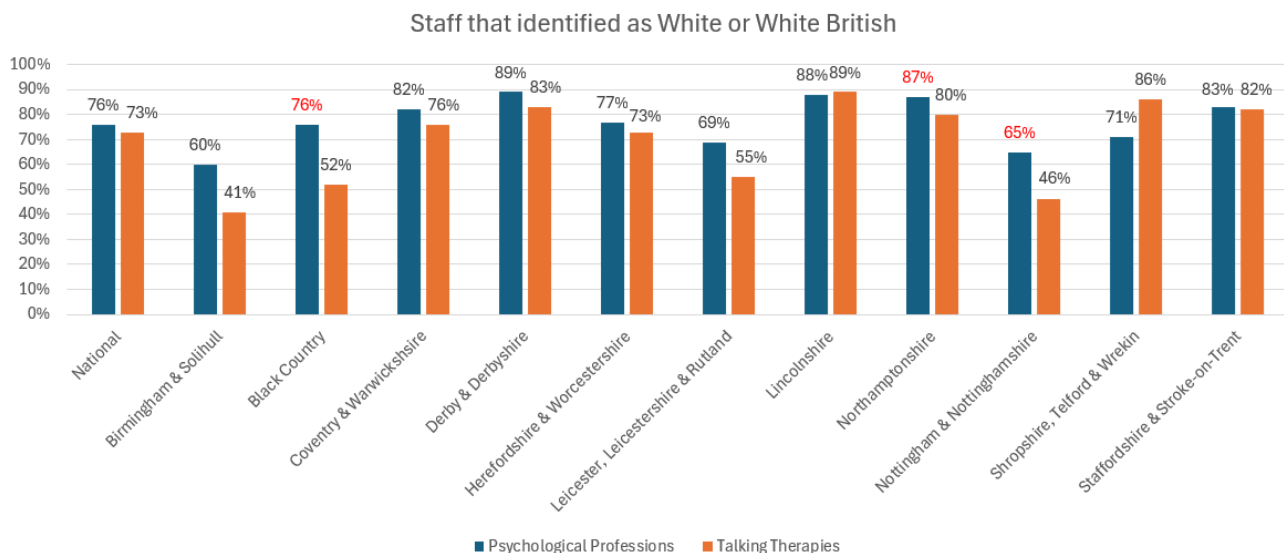
- According to the *Psychological Professions Census*, 28% of the national psychological professions workforce had been in post for less than a year at the time of data collection.
- Across the Midlands, the proportion of psychological professions staff in post for less than a year varied widely, ranging from 3% (Coventry and Warwickshire) to 47% (Lincolnshire), with an average of 27%. This could suggest differing levels of workforce stability and turnover across regions.



Workforce Diversity and Demographics

Ethnicity

- *Regional ESR data* showed that 75% of the workforce identify as White, 12% as Asian or Asian British, 4% as Black, African, Caribbean or Black British, and 4% as Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups, with a further 4% recorded as not stated or unknown. Totals for responses were not provided, and as recording of protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 is optional, there is known significant under-reporting for ethnicity, as well as for other demographic characteristics.
- At ICS level, there was significant variation in workforce diversity across the Midlands.
 - Birmingham and Solihull (BSol) reported a profile of 62% White, 20% Asian or Asian British, 8% Black, African, Caribbean or Black British, 4% Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups, and 3% not stated or unknown.
 - The Black Country demonstrated a similar pattern and was the most ethnically diverse system in the region, with 59% White, 21% Asian or Asian British, 10% Black, African, Caribbean or Black British, 5% Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups, 2% Other ethnic group, and 2% not stated or unknown.
 - In contrast, the least diverse areas were Lincolnshire (88% White) and Derbyshire (89% White).
- *Combined Census* data showed that 75% of the national psychological professions' workforce identified as White or White British. Across ICSs in the Midlands, the *Psychological Professions Census* reported an average of 77% for White or White British staff, compared to 69% in the *Talking Therapies Census*. This suggests greater ethnic diversity across the Talking Therapies workforce.



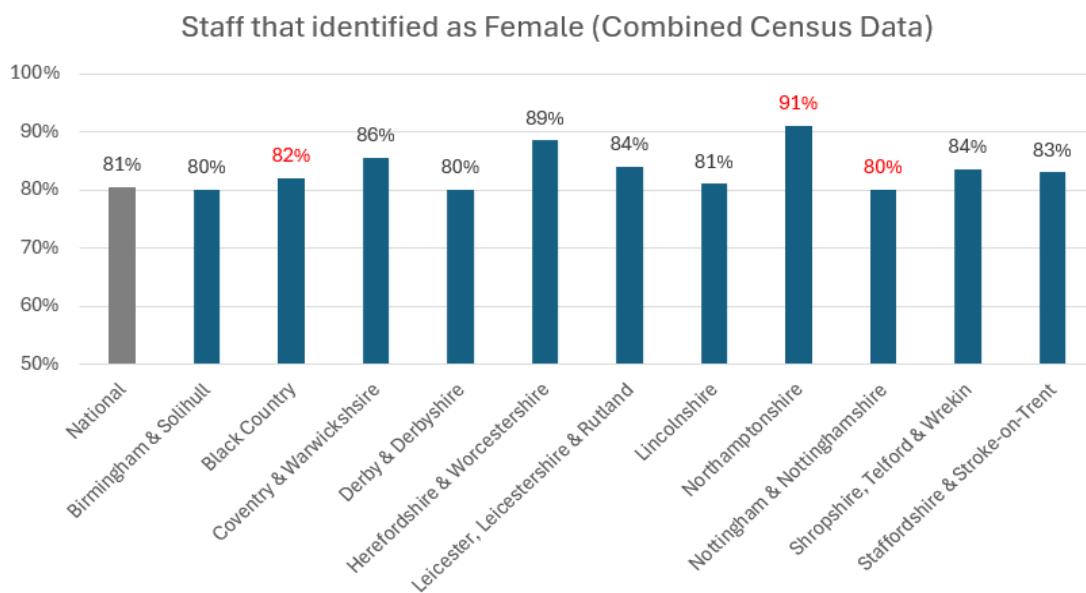
- The graph above highlights variation across regions. For example, Derby and Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, and Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent reported the highest proportions of White psychological professionals, exceeding 80% in both censuses. In contrast,

Birmingham and Solihull reported the lowest proportion in both censuses, indicating greater diversity.

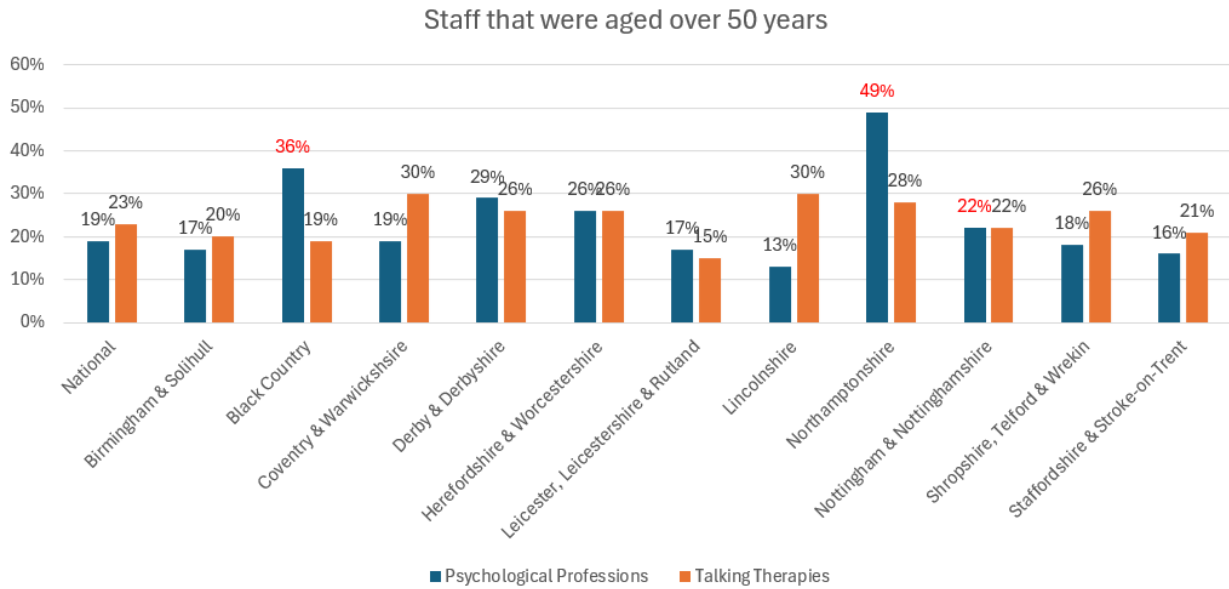
- A key limitation of Census data is that it focuses only on the proportion of staff who were White or White British, without providing a full ethnic breakdown. This makes it difficult to understand the representation of other ethnic groups.
- However, when viewed as a whole, the data suggest that workforce diversity broadly mirrors the demographic profile of ICS areas, with urban ICSs such as Birmingham and Solihull and Leicestershire showing higher representation from Asian, Black, and Mixed ethnic groups, consistent with the diversity of their wider populations. Conversely, more rural systems such as Lincolnshire and Derbyshire have less diverse workforces, reflecting regional population profiles.
- The difference between the *Psychological Professions* and *Talking Therapies Censuses* may also indicate variation in recruitment pipelines and service delivery models, suggesting that some sectors are attracting a more ethnically diverse workforce than others.

Gender

- Across the region, *ESR data* indicate a gender split of 85% Female and 15% Male. Individual ICSs vary by up to four percentage points in either direction from this overall figure.
- *Combined Census* data showed that 81% of the national psychological professions' workforce identified as Female. Across the Midlands, all regions reported consistently high proportions of Female staff in psychological professions, ranging from 80% to 89% with an average of 83%. This pattern highlights a marked gender imbalance within the psychological professions workforce.

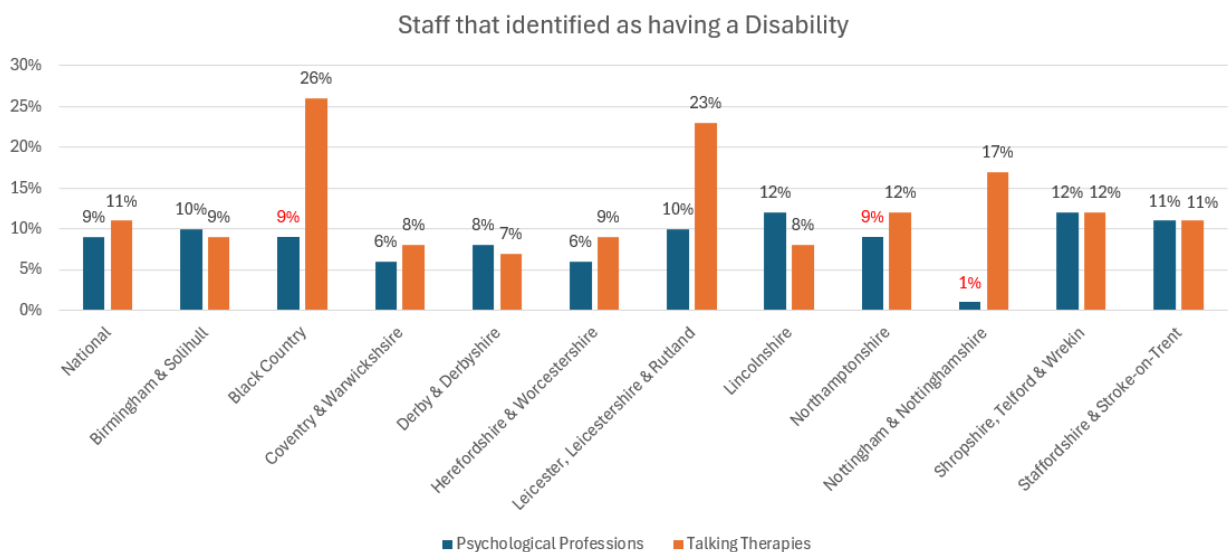


Age



- *Combined Census* data showed that the average proportion of psychological professions staff aged over 50 years was 21% nationally. When looking at the censuses individually, the national proportion was 19% in the *Psychological Professions Census* and 23% in the *Talking Therapies Census*, indicating a slightly older Talking Therapies workforce.
- *Combined Census* data also showed that the average proportion of psychological professions staff aged over 50 years was 22% across the Midlands, which was in line with the national average of 21%. However, differences in age could be seen across regions, with the proportion of staff aged over 50 years ranging from 13% to 30% in the *Psychological Professions Census* and 15% to 30% in the *Talking Therapies Census*.
- *ESR data* showed that 22% of staff across all systems were aged over 50 years, with proportions ranging from 19% in Lincolnshire to 28% in Derbyshire.

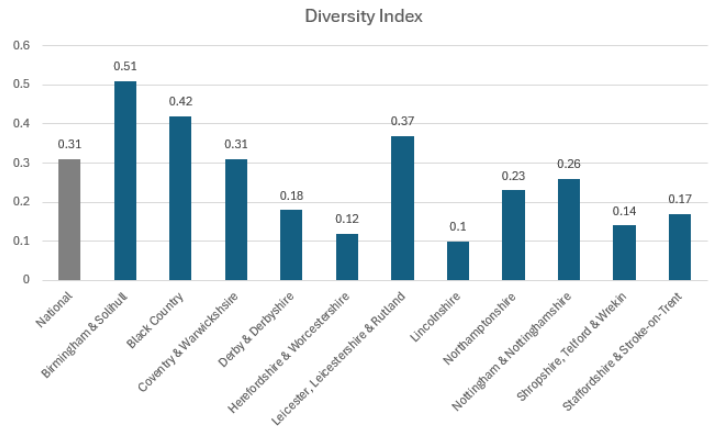
Disability



- *Combined Census* data showed that the average proportion of psychological professions staff that identified as having a disability was 10% nationally.
- The *Talking Therapies Census* data generally indicated higher disability representation (average 13%) than the *Psychological Professions Census* (average 9%).
- The *Psychological Professions Census* data was more consistent (6% to 12%), whilst the *Talking Therapies Census* data showed greater variability (7% to 26%).

Diversity Index

- The censuses used the Shannon-Weiner Index⁷ to measure diversity.
- The national diversity index score was 0.31, which suggested low diversity. Midlands' data showed that diversity varied across regions. Birmingham and Solihull reported the highest score (0.51) across the Midlands, whilst Lincolnshire reported the lowest score (0.1).

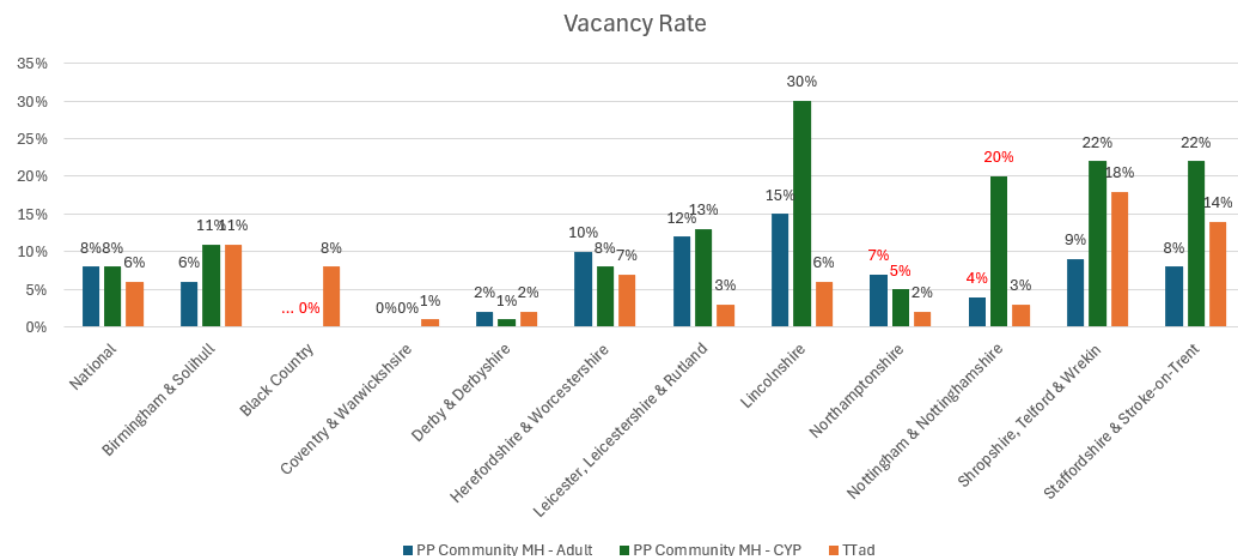


HR Metrics

The censuses also gathered data on key HR metrics, which will be discussed in this section. It should be noted that the *Psychological Professions Census* only reported the metrics of community mental health services (CMHS), which represented 82% of the workforce captured by this census.

Missing data is represented by '...' in graphs.

Vacancy rate

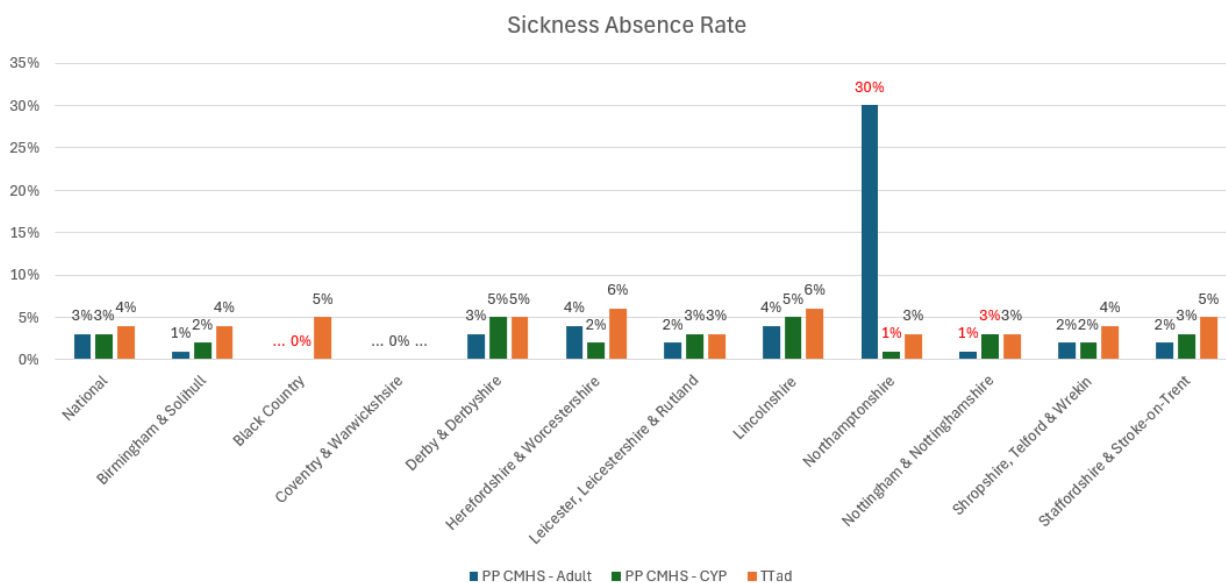


⁷ <https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/abstract/document/6773024>

- Vacancy rates showed significant variation across regions, ranging from 0% to 30%. A small number of regions reported very low rates (0% to 6%), suggesting workforce stability. In contrast, several regions – such as Lincolnshire; Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin; and Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent – reported much higher vacancy rates (20% to 30%), potentially highlighting retention or recruitment challenges.
- The *Psychological Professions* data for children and young people (CYP) CMHS generally indicated higher vacancy rates across the Midlands (average 13%) compared to adult CMHS (average 8%) and *Talking Therapies* services (average 7%), as well as the national vacancy rates for these services (6% to 8%).

Sickness absence rate

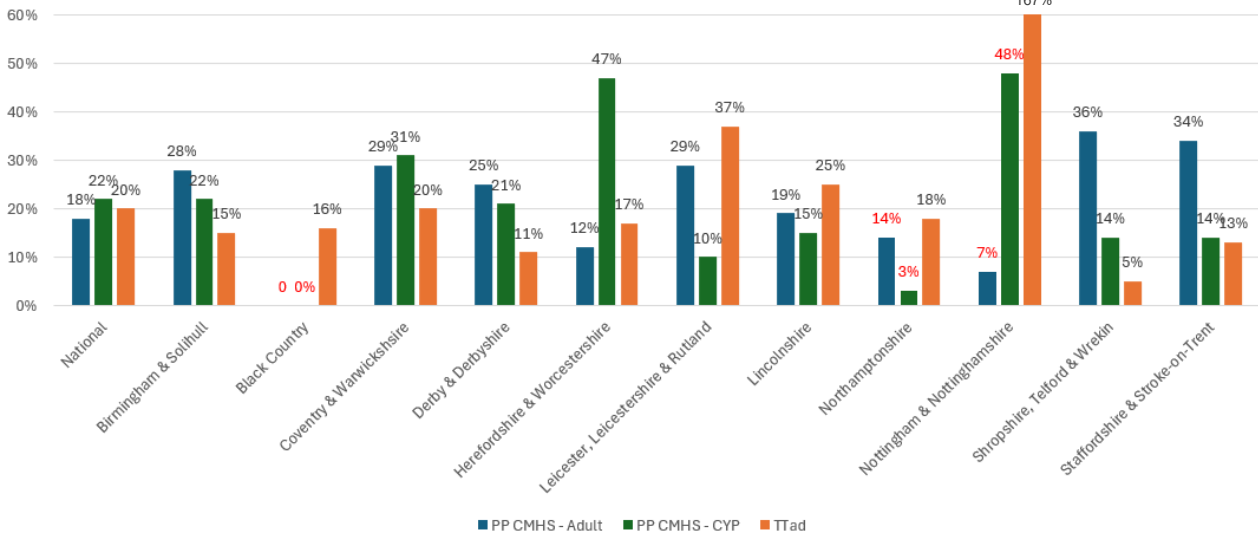
- Sickness absence rates across regions were generally low, ranging between 2% and 6% for most areas. A few regions reported 0%, which could reflect either excellent attendance or incomplete data.
- Overall, the *Talking Therapies* data (average 4%) and *Psychological Professions* data for adult (average 3%) and CYP CMHS (3%) showed minimal variation. These averages were also in line with national sickness absence rates for these services (3% to 4%).



Joiner rate

- Joiner rates varied widely across regions and service categories. Several regions reported moderate rates (15% to 31%), whilst others reported higher rates such as 47% (Herefordshire and Worcestershire) and 167% (Nottingham and Nottinghamshire TTad), potentially indicating greater recruitment activity or workforce turnover in these areas.
- A few regions reported very low joiner rates, suggesting either stable staffing or limited recruitment opportunities.

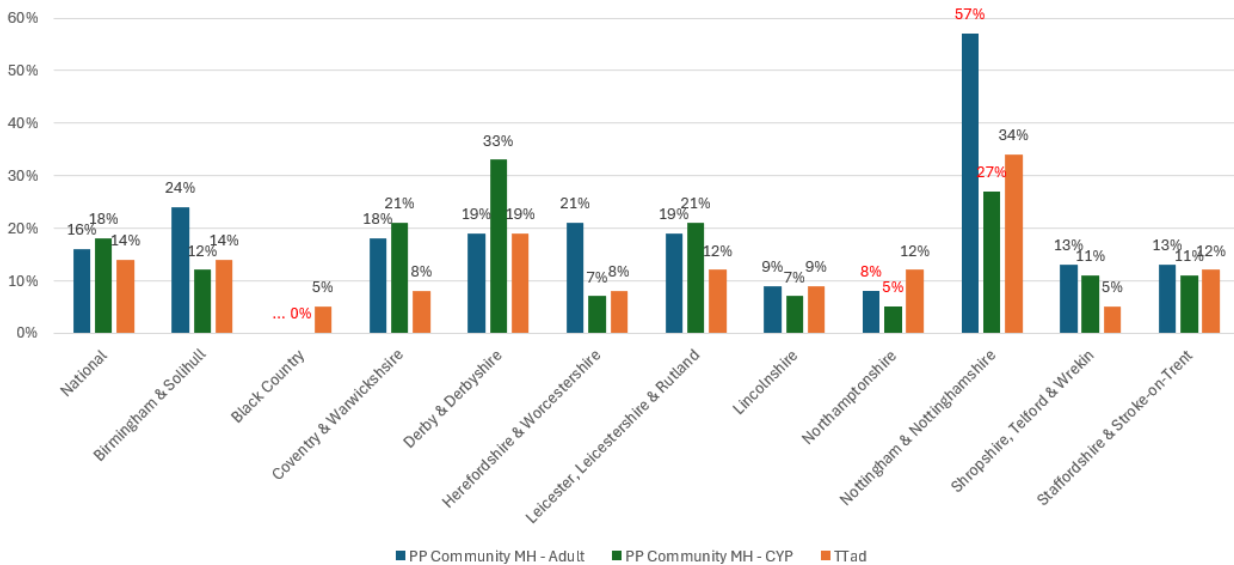
Joiner Rate



Turnover rate

- Turnover rates varied widely across regions and service categories. Most Midlands regions reported moderate turnover (8% to 21%), whilst some regions reported much higher turnover (33%).
- The *Psychological Professions* data for adult CMHS generally indicated higher turnover rates across the Midlands (average 20%) compared to CYP CMHS (average 14%) and *Talking Therapies* services (average 13%).
- The national turnover rates for these services varied slightly (14% to 18%).

Turnover Rate



Education and Training Highlights

The National Education and Training Survey (NETS)⁸ is open to all healthcare students, trainees, and apprentices across England. It is designed to gather feedback on and improve the experiences of healthcare education and training. In 2024, the NETS achieved its highest response rate to date with 43,563 respondents across multiprofessional healthcare groups. However, participation from students in the psychological professions group remained low, with only 1,105 respondents nationally (2.54%) and 183 respondents from the Midlands region (0.42%). The data is therefore limited in its generalisability.

Compared to national averages:

- Psychological professions students in the Midlands reported more positive experiences across most areas, including bullying and undermining, discrimination, facilities, induction, overall experience, quality of care, sexual safety, supervision, teaching and learning, wellbeing, and workload.
- The only area in which the group's responses were lower than the national average was teamwork.

Compared to data from previous years:

- Psychological professions students in the Midlands reported improvements in experiences of safety, wellbeing, and the ability to raise concerns between 2022-2024.
- However, declines were reported in quality of care, teamwork, induction, and teaching and learning.

Summary and Recommendations

For the first time, consistent national data provided through the Psychological Professions Census enable the region to examine its workforce with greater confidence and nuance. However, the full potential of this dataset has yet to be realised due to incomplete or inconsistent returns. The scope and depth of the 2024 data were also limited; for example, figures were presented only for broad professional groupings rather than individual roles, and ethnicity reporting was restricted to the proportion of staff identifying as White, without detailed breakdowns for other ethnic groups.

Similar challenges exist with ESR data, where data quality issues persist and non-NHS services employing psychological professionals trained through NHS-funded routes are not captured within its scope. This challenge may be further compounded by proposed changes to ESR in upcoming years.

Whilst the expansion of the workforce represents a clear and positive trend, the next phase of progress will depend less on numerical growth and more on quality, coherence, and sustainability. The Midlands now possesses a stronger evidence base from which to plan

⁸ <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/quality/national-education-training-survey-nets>

and act. The challenge ahead is to translate this intelligence into coordinated action, shaping workforce planning, commissioning, and professional development in a consistent and connected way.

Across Integrated Care Systems (ICSs), patterns of diversity, training, and workforce stability vary, reflecting local context rather than system design. These variations highlight the importance of regional collaboration, supported by PPN Midlands, to ensure that best practice, innovation, and learning are shared effectively. Targeted support will be essential for ICSs with limited data capacity or workforce infrastructure.

The region is now well positioned to move from describing variation to actively addressing it, using collective insight to drive equitable and sustainable workforce development across the Midlands. The five themes identified in 2023 remain relevant, but now require a more strategic framing:

1. Data maturity

The priority should be to move towards the active use of workforce intelligence to inform planning, commissioning, and continuous improvement. Integrating current ESR and Census datasets should enable more informed decisions on deployment, training, and retention. The 2025 Census dataset, to be made available by the NHS Benchmarking Network through an interactive data explorer, is expected to significantly enhance the region's ability to conduct detailed and targeted workforce analysis particularly as this continues to include cross sector data from acute and community service providers.

2. System leadership

CPPO roles and psychological professions leaders across ICSs should be empowered to shape workforce strategy and ensure that psychological expertise is embedded within multidisciplinary workforce planning aligned with the 10-year plan and three shifts⁹. Strengthened leadership networks will be key to achieving coherence across the region.

3. Cross-sector alignment

The boundary between NHS and non-NHS provision continues to obscure a full understanding of psychological professions workforce capacity. A region-wide approach to mapping and partnership with voluntary, community, and independent sectors would give a more complete picture of service delivery and demand from our communities.

4. Workforce sustainability

The diversification of roles brings opportunity but also pressure on supervision, governance, and progression. Attention should shift towards retention, succession planning, and flexible career pathways that maintain professional standards in support of high quality, safe clinical practice while meeting service needs.

⁹ <https://ppn.nhs.uk/our-work/10-year-health-plan-three-shifts>

5. Equity and opportunity

Diversity data suggests progress, yet gaps remain in representation and access to training. Local conversations with NHS employed psychological professions are key to encouraging declaration of ethnicity data on ESR. Embedding equality and inclusion within all workforce initiatives will strengthen both recruitment and retention, ensuring that our professions reflect the communities they serve.

As the next Census data become available in 2026, PPN Midlands are committed to consolidating this progress by focusing on supporting strategic leadership, data quality, and workforce sustainability. Together with our partners in NHS England, our regional CPPOs, regional HEIs (and other education providers), service leads and experts by experience, we can enable the psychological professions to thrive as a cohesive, visible, and equitable professional group delivering high quality, safe psychological care and clinical practice across our Midlands health and care systems.

Glossary

AP – Assistant Psychologist

APP – Associate Psychological Practitioner

BSoL – Birmingham and Solihull

CAP – Clinical Associate in Psychology

CoP – Community of Practice

CWP – Children’s Wellbeing Practitioner

CYP – Children and Young People

EMHP – Education Mental Health Practitioner

ESR – Electronic Staff Record

HEI – Higher Education Institution

HIT – High Intensity Therapist

HR – Human Resources

ICS – Integrated Care System

IMD – Index of Multiple Deprivation

LTC – Long-Term Condition

MHWP – Mental Health and Wellbeing Practitioner

NETS – National Education and Training Survey

NHS – National Health Service

NHSE – NHS England

PP – Psychological Profession / Psychological Professional

PPN – Psychological Professions Network

PWP – Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner

SLA – Service Level Agreement

TTad – NHS Talking Therapies for Anxiety and Depression

WTE – Whole-Time Equivalent