

Mental
Health
UK



What is the
Into Work project?





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Into Work is Mental Health UK's holistic employment service. Funded through corporate partnerships, the service currently operates in London & the South-East and North Wales where our Employment Specialists work alongside job centres, charities, businesses, and individuals to provide person-centred support that helps people living with mental health conditions back into employment. From April 2024, we will also expand the support we can deliver to employers - creating positive change in the workplace that benefits both our clients and the wider workforce.

Our vision for Into Work is simple but ambitious. We want to change the way in which people living with mental health challenges are supported into, and in, work. We believe that this will have a positive socio-economic impact not only on the individuals supported, but also businesses and workplaces across the UK, as well as the nation as a whole.

Addressing the needs of the whole person

Our approach builds on the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model delivered by our partner charity Rethink Mental Illness, combining the IPS

Framework with wraparound wellbeing support that also looks at the holistic needs of a person - their finances, housing, social connectedness, mental health support, etc. We work alongside the client at their pace, developing a personalised recovery/vocational plan and exploring employment needs and aspirations. We aim to empower people on their way to gaining meaningful employment by adding value through holistic tailored support, skill enhancement, employer engagement, advocacy and awareness, long-term focus, and community and peer support.

This approach is unique to Mental Health UK and is based on our belief that by considering the whole person's needs and circumstances and tackling issues

in other areas of life that impact on mental health and wellbeing, we'll ensure that they feel more secure and supported, and able to stay in work long-term.

How does Into Work differ from IPS?

We see Into Work as “enhancing” the traditional IPS model by:

Supporting people’s recovery in other areas of life. A person’s capacity to find work is often about much more than just their CV being up-to-date or their interview skills. Sometimes, they lack confidence or view their mental health as a barrier to working, or maybe they’re spending all their time and effort trying to get a housing issue resolved or are worried about supporting their family. By taking a holistic approach, we aim to create space for clients to focus on finding work that has a positive impact on their life and supports their recovery journey.

Being flexible on timescales. Although we aim to get people into meaningful employment as quickly as possible, some clients need longer than four weeks to build their confidence and motivation. We provide a high level of support in the early stages to help people overcome those initial barriers and get to a place where they feel able to enter the workforce.

Focusing on workplaces and employers. With traditional IPS, Employment Specialists’ relationships with employers stop at getting their clients into a role based on their preferences. At Mental Health UK, we go further by providing support to employers to improve their understanding and acceptance of mental health, discussing ways to create a more supportive and stigma-free workplace that can benefit all their employees.

To deliver this, we have created a dedicated team to facilitate vocational opportunities, placement fairs and networking events alongside training support for employers around mental health in the workplace.

“ I felt like I couldn’t get a fair chance at getting work. My advisor helped and supported me to build up my confidence around interview skills, and they even helped fund some smart clothes for the interview. I am now employed and feeling happy and excited about the future. ”

Into Work client

Since launching in April 2023, we have seen some incredible results:

- **We have received 437 referrals.**
- **Supported 344 clients** to create personalised recovery/vocational plans, 2.5 times more than we had anticipated over this period, highlighting the demand for a holistic employment service of this nature.
- **Supported 94 clients to find work or volunteering opportunities**, with numbers increasing each week.
- **98% of our clients have demonstrated a measurable improvement in their mental health** as a result of engaging with the Into Work service. By providing support or making onward referrals in those other areas of life which can impact our wellbeing, we can build people’s confidence and capacity to manage their own mental health better, increasing the likelihood of them finding and staying in work in the future.
- **Built strong relationships with potential employers** including Pret a Manger who have supported two of our clients with work placements, and Amazon, who have set us up as a recruitment campaign allowing us to support clients with the transition into employment.

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Our key learnings/insights

The importance of community support:

Supporting individuals in the community, rather than within a traditional office setting, offers a transformative approach that embraces inclusivity, accessibility, and holistic wellbeing. Community-based support dismantles barriers often associated with formal office environments, giving a sense of comfort and familiarity that encourages open conversations about mental health challenges.

Community spaces provide a diverse array of resources and connections tailored to individual needs. We have found that these settings nurture a sense of belonging, reduce stigma, and acknowledge the multifaceted nature of wellbeing, addressing social, economic, and cultural aspects crucial to holistic health. Ultimately, this approach not only provides more accessible and comprehensive support but also cultivates a thriving ecosystem where individuals feel understood, valued, and empowered in their journey toward mental wellness.

Client feedback: Our clients feel as if they are being listened to and supported. Clients have felt in the past that they are usually caught up in a loop with little support or guidance and minimal outcomes. Into Work offers a safe space for clients to grow by building sustainable relationships through trust, giving clients control over their appointments and mode of delivery (face-to-face/virtual), and being present.

- **Clients are engaging better with statutory services**, as well as being open to mental health support.
- **Clients are also engaging quicker than expected** and are playing a more active role in their support and vocational plans.
- **Employers are more open around working in partnership**, with an aim of supporting the employee and employer to assist with that transition into the workplace.

Find out more

mentalhealth-uk.org/into-work

Our priorities for Into Work over the next 12 months are:

1. To further expand the programme

We want to deliver to more communities across the UK, supporting more people with mental health challenges directly whilst also building the evidence base and case for support to show that our holistic approach works.

2. Extend the support we offer

We want to engage and train more businesses across the country. This will ensure that our Into Work clients and anyone else who may be struggling with their mental health know that they work for an employer that understands mental health, challenges stigma, and enables employees to be the best version of themselves in the workplace.

3. Create policy and practical change

We will use the evidence of the programme to engage politicians and officials in changing the approach to delivering welfare and employment support in job centres and communities across the country.

Mental Health UK

We exist to challenge the causes of poor mental health and provide people with the tools they need to live their best possible life at home, school, and work.



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