

**Original Document:**

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Purpose of document

The health trainer service is an integral part of the wider public health workforce. Health trainers are drawn from within the communities that they serve to provide different kinds of support to the most vulnerable and deprived people in society. The purpose of the report is to highlight the effectiveness and success of the health trainer service in meeting the needs of clients across a range of health and wellbeing measures, using data from the Data Collection and Reporting Service (DCRS). It builds on previous findings from the authors first report *Indicators of Change: The Adaptation of the Health Trainer Service in England* that explored the different ways in which the service is being used across England.

Summary of contents

The report discusses how health trainers are ideal for promoting mental health and wellbeing and supporting clients with a range of complex issues such as physical ill health, social isolation, anxiety and stress. It then goes on to review the connection between mental wellbeing and physical health and explain how many health trainers have additional training in areas such as motivational interviewing and cognitive behavioural therapy that is not always recognised. Following on from this, the report considers the growing challenges for many health trainers in their role and how to ensure that they receive the right training so that they can provide the best support for clients.

Summary of outcomes

The DCRS data offered in the report provides strong evidence to show that the health trainer service is effective in helping 'hard to engage' groups, reducing health inequalities, supporting healthy lifestyle and positive behaviour change, and significantly improving the mental wellbeing of many clients across a range of wellbeing measures. However, the success of clients in terms of improved health outcomes is not so good for those with lower mental wellbeing. There is concern that sometimes, health trainers support clients with more severe mental health problems when other services and professionals do not know how to support them.

Summary of recommendations

The report highlights the need for health trainers to be given greater training in mental wellbeing and understanding a broad range of mental health problems to better meet the needs of all clients. Also, to protect the role of the health trainer and ensure that they are fully understood by other professionals, they should be provided with the necessary, additional training and support from other health and community-based services through more integrated working relationships, in terms of the type of training offered and how quickly it is provided.

Further information and resources

Indicators of Change: The Adaption of the Health Trainer Service in England  
[http://www.rsph.org.uk/filemanager/root/site\\_assets/our\\_work/position\\_statements/r1485.dcrs.report\\_hires\\_.pdf](http://www.rsph.org.uk/filemanager/root/site_assets/our_work/position_statements/r1485.dcrs.report_hires_.pdf)

**Document summarised on behalf of Healthwatch Merton by: N Apprey-Abraham**  
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