

Trent Study Day 2025

Programme and Abstract Booklet



Trent Study Day: Trauma in Secure Care

Friday 21st November 2025

Institute of Mental Health, University of Nottingham Programme

09.00	Registration & refreshments (A-floor corridor)
09.30	Welcome Dr Simon Gibbon
09.35	Opening comments Ifti Majid, Chief Executive Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust
09.40	Trauma-Informed Forensic Care: Opportunities and Challenges Lawrence Jones and Dr Phil Willmot
10.20	Well at Work Forensic Staff Study – Exploring facilitators and barriers to seeking mental wellbeing support at work in forensic NHS staff Dr Elena Nixon, Dr Shireen Patel and Priya Patel
10.50	Questions and discussion
11.00	Refreshments (A-floor corridor)
11.20	Can Secure Services be Trauma Informed? Guidance for the Development of Trauma Informed Care Dr Matthew Penn
11.50	Trauma-informed Physical Healthcare for Women in Secure Inpatient Services Dr Róisín Galway, Dr Rachel Beryl and Dr James White
12.20	Questions and discussion
12.30	Lunch and poster viewing (A-floor corridor)
13.30	“The Way of The Warrior”: Recovering Self-Image in Trauma-Informed Forensic Art Psychotherapy Emma Allen and Kate Lawrence
14.00	Breaking the Cycle: Trauma-Informed Support for People Facing Multiple Disadvantage and Homelessness Sam Chu
14.30	Women at War: From Barracks to Battlefields and Beyond Dr Rebecca Bennett and Gemma Saunders
15.00	Questions and discussion
15.20	Poster prize announcement
15.25	Closing comments Paul Devlin, Chair Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust
15.30	Close

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Presentation Abstracts

Session One 09.30 – 11.00

Trauma-Informed Forensic Care: Opportunities and Challenges

Presented by: Lawrence Jones and Dr Phil Wilmot

Abstract:

Many of the people we work with in forensic services have extensive trauma histories. Moreover, traumatic events, in the form of exposure to violence and self-harm, are a regular feature of many forensic services. However, while trauma-informed principles and practices are now widespread in many health, education and social care settings, their uptake has been relatively slow and patchy in criminal justice and forensic mental health settings. This introduction to the day will discuss what is meant by trauma and trauma-informed care, and explores some of the challenges to our thinking and practice that trauma-informed forensic care poses.

Presenter bios:

Lawrence Jones is Head of Clinical and Forensic psychology services at Rampton Hospital. He is a consultant clinical and forensic psychologist and has worked in community, prison, and hospital settings. He teaches on the Nottingham Forensic doctorate and the Sheffield and Leicester Clinical doctorates.



Dr Phil Willmot is a Consultant Forensic & Clinical Psychologist and joint lead psychologist for the Men's Personality Disorder Service, Rampton Hospital. He is also Senior Lecturer in Forensic Psychology at the University of Lincoln.



“Well at Work Forensic Staff Study” – Exploring facilitators and barriers to seeking mental wellbeing support at work in forensic NHS staff

Presented by: Dr Elena Nixon, Dr Shireen Patel, & Priya Patel

Abstract:

Background:

Healthcare and other public care staff are considered to be at risk of developing poor mental health due to the challenging nature of their job. High levels of stress and other mental health problems in these groups have been linked with poor outcomes for the person themselves and the wider organisation they work in, as well as the quality of care provided. Forensic mental health settings, in particular, have been characterised by unique contextual challenges and clinical demands, and these remain underexplored.

Aims:

Therefore, the present study aims to explore the factors that hinder or facilitate mental wellbeing and work performance as well as wellbeing support-seeking in forensic professionals working in inpatient forensic, community forensic or prison mental health services.

Methods:

We have been recruiting forensic staff who work in Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust to complete a survey about their demographics, mental health and wellbeing, and occupation-related characteristics. We have also been interviewing staff about their perceived psychological wellbeing needs and what might be hindering, facilitating or could improve their uptake of wellbeing support offered through work so that they can best be supported. In addition to interviews, 3 small focus group discussions will offer further insight into how the identified interview themes could help better tailor the provision of wellbeing support services for this population.

Progress so far and implications:

To date, over 100 individuals have completed the survey, and more than 20 have participated in interviews. Recruitment has spanned low, medium, and high-security settings, with the majority of participants from Arnold Lodge and Rampton Hospital. In collaboration with stakeholders, we have implemented targeted strategies to maximise recruitment, and we will be sharing some of the approaches that proved most effective. Additionally, we will present early insights from interviews with forensic staff, highlighting challenges in accessing or engaging with wellbeing support, along with recommendations for strengthening wellbeing provision.

Presenter bios:

Dr Elena Nixon is an Assistant Professor in Applied Neuropsychology, based in the Institute of Mental Health and the Academic Unit of Mental Health and Neurosciences in the School of Medicine, University of Nottingham (UK) since 2013. She was awarded her PhD in Psychiatry in 2008 and has since been involved in research and teaching in neuroscience and mental health. Her expertise lies in the area of mood disorders, with a special interest in the role of emotional wellbeing in cognitive function and performance. More recently, she is leading research focused on exploring factors associated with wellbeing and mental health and the impact of behavioural/psychological interventions, such as Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy, on the mental health and/or wellbeing of various clinical and non-clinical

populations, including young people and adults with mental health problems, healthcare students and healthcare professionals.



Dr Shireen Patel is a Research Fellow at the University of Nottingham working within the Mental Health and Wellbeing theme at NIHR ARC East Midlands. She was awarded her PhD in Psychiatry in 2024 and has been actively engaged in mental health and wellbeing research since 2011.

Before joining the University of Nottingham, Shireen worked as Health Care Support Worker at Arnold Lodge medium secure unit. Her expertise lies in mental health, with a particular focus on addressing inequalities by improving access to mental health and wellbeing services for marginalised communities and promoting co-produced research.

Shireen has a proven track record in successfully delivering large NIHR-funded studies on time and to target. She is currently co-leading the research management of several NIHR ARC East Midlands and NIHR RfPB-funded projects, exploring areas such as digital mental health, staff wellbeing, and the involvement of ethnic minority groups in research.



Priya Patel is a Research Assistant based within the Mental Health and Wellbeing Theme at NIHR ARC East Midlands. For the past couple of years, Priya has been involved in an RCT (Mindful Life-Well at Work study) comparing MBCT-L (Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Life) to SRP (Stress Reduction Psychoeducation) for healthcare and other public care staff. Priya is now working as Lead Researcher on the Well at Work Forensic Staff study, in which they aim to gather information about experiences of forensic staff wellbeing through surveys, interviews and focus groups with staff working in forensic mental health and offender health settings.



Session Two 11.00 – 12.30

Can Secure Services be Trauma Informed? Guidance for the Development of Trauma Informed Care

Presented by: Dr Matthew Penn

Abstract:

Can secure care really be trauma informed? This presentation will consider the experience of developing trauma informed care in the low secure Women's Service at the Wells Road Centre.

Progress will be considered in light of guidance which was assembled with the aim of developing trauma informed care in women's services in the East Midlands region.

Contributors were drawn from NHS and private healthcare providers, experts by experience and current service users, under the umbrella of the IMPACT Provider Collaborative. The guidance addresses 5 domains:

- Guiding principles: drawn from the six key principles of trauma-informed practice outlined by the NHS – safety, trustworthiness, choice, collaboration, empowerment and cultural consideration.
- Environment: physical environment, activities, restrictive practice, service user empowerment, culture specific provision
- Training: defining trauma, effects of trauma, working with traumatised women and staff wellbeing and self-care
- Staff Support: reflective practice, clinical supervision, post-incident support, staff counselling, psychological interventions, staff space
- Transitions: admission, transfer within or between hospitals and discharge

The presentation will consider the achievements and challenges encountered at the Women's Service and will reflect on the factors that promote and hinder trauma informed care in a secure setting.

Presenter bio:

Dr Penn is a Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist at Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust and is the Consultant for the Women's Service at the Wells Road Centre in Nottingham. Dr Penn manages women with needs ranging from personality disorder and

complex PTSD to mental illness and autistic spectrum disorder and has an interest in the management of psychological trauma.



Trauma-informed Physical Healthcare for Women in Secure Inpatient Services

Presented by: Dr Roisin Galway, Dr Rachel Beryl, Dr James White

Abstract:

There is increasing recognition of the need for trauma-informed care to be incorporated into physical healthcare provision, both within general community and specialist forensic settings. Physical healthcare examinations and procedures can be experienced as traumatising or retraumatising, which can create barriers to people feeling able to safely access and engage with services, particularly when involving parts of the body, positions, or language that may be associated with past traumatic experiences. This presentation highlights the need for trauma-informed physical healthcare universally and especially within forensic settings; discusses specific forensic challenges and dilemmas around physical healthcare; reviews further considerations for women and gender non-conforming people; and outlines general principles for trauma-informed physical healthcare. The presenters describe a case illustration of developing trauma-informed provision around cervical screening within a high secure forensic inpatient service for women and propose a process model of trauma-informed physical health interventions, which can be applied within other services and settings.

Presenter bios:

Dr Róisín Galway obtained a doctorate in Clinical Psychology from Bangor University. She received a bachelor's degree in psychology from Manchester Metropolitan University and a post-graduate certificate in Advanced Practice Interventions in Primary Care Mental Health from the University of Manchester. She has an interest in working with women in forensic inpatient settings and women involved in the criminal justice system. She holds a post as a Clinical Psychologist in the National High Secure Healthcare Service for Women in Rampton Hospital, UK and has previously worked at all levels of the secure care pathway and in the Women's Offender Personality Disorder pathway in prisons. She has publications in the Journal of Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology and Women and Criminal Justice. She is interested in contributing to the evidence base surrounding women in forensic inpatient settings and supporting the needs of staff working with them, with a particular focus on trauma-informed ways of working.



Dr Rachel Beryl holds a Doctorate in Forensic Psychology (DForenPsy) from the University of Nottingham, where she also obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology (Hons). Rachel is a Consultant Forensic Psychologist and Joint Lead of the National High Secure Healthcare Service for Women. She has special interests in therapeutic interventions for self-injury and trauma recovery, and the organisation of trauma-informed and gender-sensitive services, and has published journal articles and a book chapter in these areas.



Dr James P. White qualified from the University of Sheffield School of Medicine with MBChB and BMedSci (hons). Dr White is a Member of the Royal College of Psychiatrists and holds a Certificate for Completion of Specialist Training in Forensic Psychiatry. Having worked in all levels of secure care, he currently holds post as Clinical Director and Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist at the National High Secure Healthcare Service for Women at Rampton Hospital where he is Responsible Clinician for patients in the Intensive Care Unit and High Dependency Unit. Dr White has an interest in Trauma Informed physical health care in secure settings and working towards building the evidence base in women's secure care; he has contributed to work around Trauma Informed physical health interventions, inequalities in women's physical health care and establishment of forensic style Balint Groups for Higher Specialist Trainees in Forensic Psychiatry.



Session Three 13.30 – 15.30

“The Way of The Warrior”: Recovering Self-Image in Trauma-Informed Forensic Art Psychotherapy

Presented by: Emma Allen and Kate Lawrence

Abstract:

Forensic art psychotherapy (F-AP) establishes a 'quadrangular' relationship among the client, therapist, image, and security, providing a trauma-informed framework aimed at stabilising self-identity in individuals diagnosed with personality 'disorders' and PTSD. This case study illustrates both 'disembodied' and 'embodied' bilateral expressions, and self-portraiture that facilitate emotional processing and integration, within a creatively-attuned therapeutic relationship. F-AP's approach to post-traumatic self-imagery enables visual processing, externalisation, detoxification, and differentiation of an 'inner world of trauma' that recovers self-concepts. By promoting gradual, safe, non-verbal engagement with trauma, F-AP facilitates the processing and integration of traumatic memories, encouraging a holistic self-perception and emotional regulation where an "inner saboteur" archetype transitions into an "inner healer" (e.g. a Samurai warrior). Self-images serve as a mirror; providing opportunities for introspection and insight, which may lead to a decrease in psychological defences as individuals explore complex aspects of identity that could be obscured or fragmented due to trauma. Images can safely encompass unhealthy projections, enabling the repair of relational disruptions through creative expression. F-AP is posited to help individuals rediscover their resilient spirit and authentic selves, nurturing compassion through self-dialogue, therapeutic interactions, and reflections on personality, trauma, and offending behaviour, ultimately reducing risks and fostering self-acceptance in the aftermath of trauma. This presentation has been approved by Information Governance to present to colleagues, where the case material used is for educational, and not publishing purposes only.

Presenter bios:

Emma Allen is the Professional Lead in Arts Psychotherapies at Rampton Hospital where she clinically leads and manages a small team of arts psychotherapists. She is also a Senior Art Psychotherapist within secondary care of the Southwest Yorkshire NHS Foundation Trust and has previously worked in several prisons and secure settings, charities and universities, e.g. managing a prevention project for the Safer Living Foundation, Nottingham Trent University and HMP Whatton. Emma was also a Senior Lecturer at the University of South Wales, guest lectures, is a clinical supervisor, published author, co-editor and an active researcher.



Kate Lawrence started her working career in the fashion industry, before retraining as an art psychotherapist and then further developed her career by becoming an Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) practitioner and clinical supervisor. She now works in high secure settings within the mental health directorate as well as with adults with brain injuries, the homeless, and children and adults who have experienced mental, physical and emotional trauma.

Breaking the Cycle: Trauma-Informed Support for People Facing Multiple Disadvantage and Homelessness

Presented by: Sam Chu

Abstract:

This presentation examines the role of trauma-informed and psychologically-informed practice in homeless services supporting individuals experiencing multiple disadvantage. Drawing on practice-based reflections and case examples, it illustrates how psychologically informed training, consultancy, and direct therapeutic interventions—particularly schema therapy and schema-informed approaches—can enhance engagement and improve outcomes for people often labelled as ‘difficult to reach’. The systemic barriers that can perpetuate trauma and exclusion are examined, together with best-practice strategies to reduce the risk of re-traumatisation within services. The session concludes by showcasing local initiatives that drive system-level change, demonstrating how more responsive, compassionate, and effective environments can be created to address the complex needs of this population.

Presenter bio:

Sam is a HCPC-registered and BPS Chartered Forensic Psychologist, an ISST Accredited Schema Therapist, and the Director of Paradigm Psychological Services. Since qualifying as a psychologist in 2003, she worked with individuals with complex emotional and social needs, offering compassionate, evidence-based support across a variety of settings. Currently based in Sheffield, Sam collaborates with a range of services that support women and men experiencing multiple disadvantage. She provides consultancy and training in the development and implementation of psychologically and trauma-informed practice, as well as delivering direct therapy to those who access these services.



Women at War: From Barracks to Battlefields and Beyond

Presented by: Dr Rebecca Bennett and Gemma Saunders

Abstract:

Although Military Sexual Trauma is not formally recognised in the UK, reports of sexual violence within the Armed Forces are rising. This presentation considers the implications of this lack of recognition and explores the broader challenges faced by women during service and in their transition to civilian life.

Presenter bios:

Dr Bex Bennett is an ST5 in Forensic Psychiatry currently working at Rampton Hospital. Prior to starting her medical degree she had a successful career in the military, operating in demanding environments both at home and abroad, as an Officer in the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. With a strong interest in the psychological wellbeing of the Armed Forces community, she has driven local policy change within the NHS and co-founded Sisters in Service, a national award-nominated network for female veterans in healthcare. In 2025 in recognition of her contributions to the armed forces community, she received an honorary master's degree from the University of Derby.



Gemma Saunders is the Clinical Lead for the new NHS Armed Forces healthcare training and education programme and serves as the Regional Trainer for the Midlands. An accredited psychotherapist specialising in trauma and a registered occupational therapist, Gemma has spent the past eight years working with the Armed Forces community across Defence, the private sector, and the NHS. In her previous NHS role, she established a thriving Armed Forces staff network across two Trusts, earning multiple nominations and recognition for her leadership and dedication. She has continued this work by co-founding Sisters in Service recognising the need for safe spaces for veteran women.

