

# NHS Case Study:

## Introducing new coaching services to bring a healthy development

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Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent





**Having the chance to coach and be coached by professionals from across the public sector has been a revelation for NHS staff since joining the West Midlands Coaching and Mentoring Pool. In a world of greater integration, it's a win-win situation.**

Ever since a consortium of four NHS organisations joined the West Midlands Coaching and Mentoring Pool, it's proven to be something of a virtuous circle.

North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust, University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust, Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Clinical Commissioning Groups – a combination of six CCGs – became members of the pool in March 2021. In the first year alone, the consortium's coaches delivered 146 sessions both internally and to people from organisations across the pool while NHS staff received 178 coaching sessions.

The pool now has more than 100 coaches and mentors and its ethos of cross-sector learning fits well with the advent of integrated care systems (ICSs) and the spirit of collaboration they embody. It's enabling a wide range of NHS staff – from clinicians to commissioners – to coach and be coached by professionals from the worlds of local government, police and fire and rescue.

ICS's will undoubtedly face numerous hurdles in their journey to becoming the new norm and it's not hard to see how coaching and mentoring will facilitate greater understanding of different roles within the system while fostering stronger relationships.

In that sense, the NHS consortium is blazing a trail. As Nichola McKay, OD and Talent Lead at North Staffordshire Combined Healthcare NHS Trust, points out: 'We are breaking new ground. This is the first system coaching pool collaboration in the NHS. There's nowhere else in the country that's set up a collaboration in this way – creating an

internal pool and then linking it with a wider regional public sector coaching and mentoring pool.

'Our purpose for joining together as a consortium was to really increase the value and effectiveness of our support to staff and impact on delivery of care across our system.'

By participating in the pool, it's helping the four organisations to deliver against the NHS People Plan, the national workforce strategy for delivering the health service's long-term plan. Whether it's about growing your own talent or nurturing an inclusive and empowering culture, coaching and mentoring have a key role to play.

'It also means we can share coaches across the system in terms of the internal pool and get the value of the bigger, wider West Midlands pool which includes some organisations who are our care partners like Staffordshire County Council,'  
Nichola explains.





It gives our coaches the opportunity to work in other organisations outside the NHS, get more insight and a different perspective. Overall, they now have far more opportunities to coach and having that constant supply of people to coach is important because you have to keep practicing.'

The pool also supports the consortium's leadership development programmes. For example, it provides access to a richer diversity of coaches and mentors and that will help New Futures, an initiative designed to help more staff from diverse ethnic backgrounds to advance their careers and enhance skills.

One of the key benefits, says Nichola, is access to the pool's Matching Hub, through which staff can find suitable internal and external coaches.

'It's very efficient in terms of people being able to easily get onto it, say what they are looking for and coachees and coaches are able to get the right match and chemistry because of the amount of choice they have.'

As well as benefitting existing coaches through the CPD and supervision they receive when coaching externally, being members of the pool has encouraged more staff to train as coaches. Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent CCGs currently has around 20 staff going through Institute of Leadership and Management level five training. It's a major shift for the organisation, says Caroline Nokes-Lawrence, Head of HR, OD and Inclusion.

'We are a really small organisation compared to the others in the consortium and we only had one coach out of a workforce of 300. The opportunity to access coaches from different organisations has been absolutely fundamental.

'The excitement that it has generated for our workforce is wonderful. They can't believe how much choice they have! It's encouraged people to train as coaches and made it easier for them to do that because they have so many people to coach.'

Caroline says the pool is 'developing that ethos of working together' and cites one example of a coach who's supporting a police officer.

'It's helping them to learn about their job and the jargon that comes with it. It's such a different experience for them to coach someone who is non-NHS. It's a different world and that insight helps with other things that you might be involved in.'

Manny Sandhu, Director of Leadership, OD and Resourcing at WME expressed how pleased WME are to share their insights and quality coaching and mentoring provision with health, 'We see the importance of collaboration and integration between local government, health and emergency services, and this is one example of where we can open the doors to what has been an established service to the local government sector over the last 15 years.'

Nichola has no doubts that joining the pool has pushed coaching up the agenda 'massively'.

Work has now started on creating an internal mentoring pool – something that's made easier by the platform, CPD and supervision provided by the West Midlands Coaching and Mentoring Pool. She believes the greater focus on coaching and mentoring will help in the integration of health and social care

'This is going to be really important. We're moving to an ICS so it seems logical that we change our developmental approaches and culture. We have partnerships in the WMCMP across the whole system rather than just the NHS. It's opening up our coaches' minds through cross-sector learning.'

Nichola adds: 'As coaching leads across our partnership, we come together to meet monthly and drive the coaching agenda forward across the ICS.

'Looking to the future, we are working together to decide where our focus needs to be and developing a joint strategy for the next three years of our membership of the pool. That will include development of the mentoring side of our internal pool, building a more diverse pool of coaches and CPD activity for our coaches, to build their inclusive coaching skills.'

"I have been delighted with the opportunities the West Midlands Coaching and Mentoring Pool has offered for the whole of our system. I have seen the enormous benefits the coaches have gained, the increased confidence in the principles of coaching as a tool for growth and development, and for our coachees the ability to receive coaching outside the geography of the ICS. The fresh perspective from people both inside and outside of health and care has been pivotal to the growth of our people. Our coaches are, to use a quote, 'signallers of culture' and being the best they can be through CPD and membership of a supportive community of practice has really promoted the profile and quality of this essential building block of leadership development."

**Shajeda Ahmed, Director of People, OD & Inclusion for North Staffordshire Combined Health Care NHS Trust) and Executive Lead, OD, Leadership, Inclusion and Health & Wellbeing for Staffordshire & Stoke-On-Trent ICS**

## Feedback from coachees...

"I was paired with a very experienced NHS Associate Director. I believe that by having a coach outside of my organisation allowed me to be very honest in my relationship with them as they had no pre-conceived ideas of me, my role, the organisation I worked in or be influenced by any organisational agenda."

**Sara Rogers, Senior Corporate Services Manager**

"I genuinely believe it has helped me to gain a promotion and has also improved my own wellbeing in terms of setting healthy boundaries. I have appreciated this opportunity."

**Tracey Cox, Head of Primary Care Contracting and Transformation**

## West Midlands Coaching and Mentoring Pool (WMCMP)

Launched in 2007, West Midlands Coaching and Mentoring Pool is a practitioner-led initiative managed by West Midlands Employers and currently involving 35 organisations from across the public sector, from local authorities to emergency services.

Members can both provide and access more than 100 coaches and mentors in the external pool and host an internal pool via the WMCMP online Matching Hub. All external coaches are qualified to Level 5 work based Coaching and Mentoring Certificate or above.

**[www.coachmentormatchingwme.org](http://www.coachmentormatchingwme.org)**

## About WME

West Midlands Employers is a not for profit, public sector organisation collectively owned by 32 councils in the West Midlands. It is one of 9 Regional Employers' Organisations in England and has a vision to advocate, build and champion a resilient and diverse public sector workforce for an ambitious West Midlands region. Its wide range of services supports this vision.

Visit **[www.wmemployers.org.uk](http://www.wmemployers.org.uk)**

## Find out more

The WMCMP is open to all public sector bodies across the West Midlands. Contact us to find out more or to book a demonstration [info@wmemployers.org.uk](mailto:info@wmemployers.org.uk)

If you'd like your organisation to join West Midlands Coaching and Mentoring Pool, contact [info@wmemployers.org.uk](mailto:info@wmemployers.org.uk)

