

The Retention Charter and How to Thrive in Psychiatry

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Declaration

- *I do give permission for the following slides to go on social media. Views expressed in my presentation are my own and are not a reflection of RCPsych stance or policy”.*

The Retention Charter and next steps



Charter launched in July 2025 – the first by a Medical Royal College



Presentations and workshops across the UK



Collaboration, and contribution to national policy



The Thrive in Psychiatry campaign – RCPsych's first campaign focussed on retention and wellbeing



Colleagues- led initiatives and ideas, feedback



Self assessment tool and template

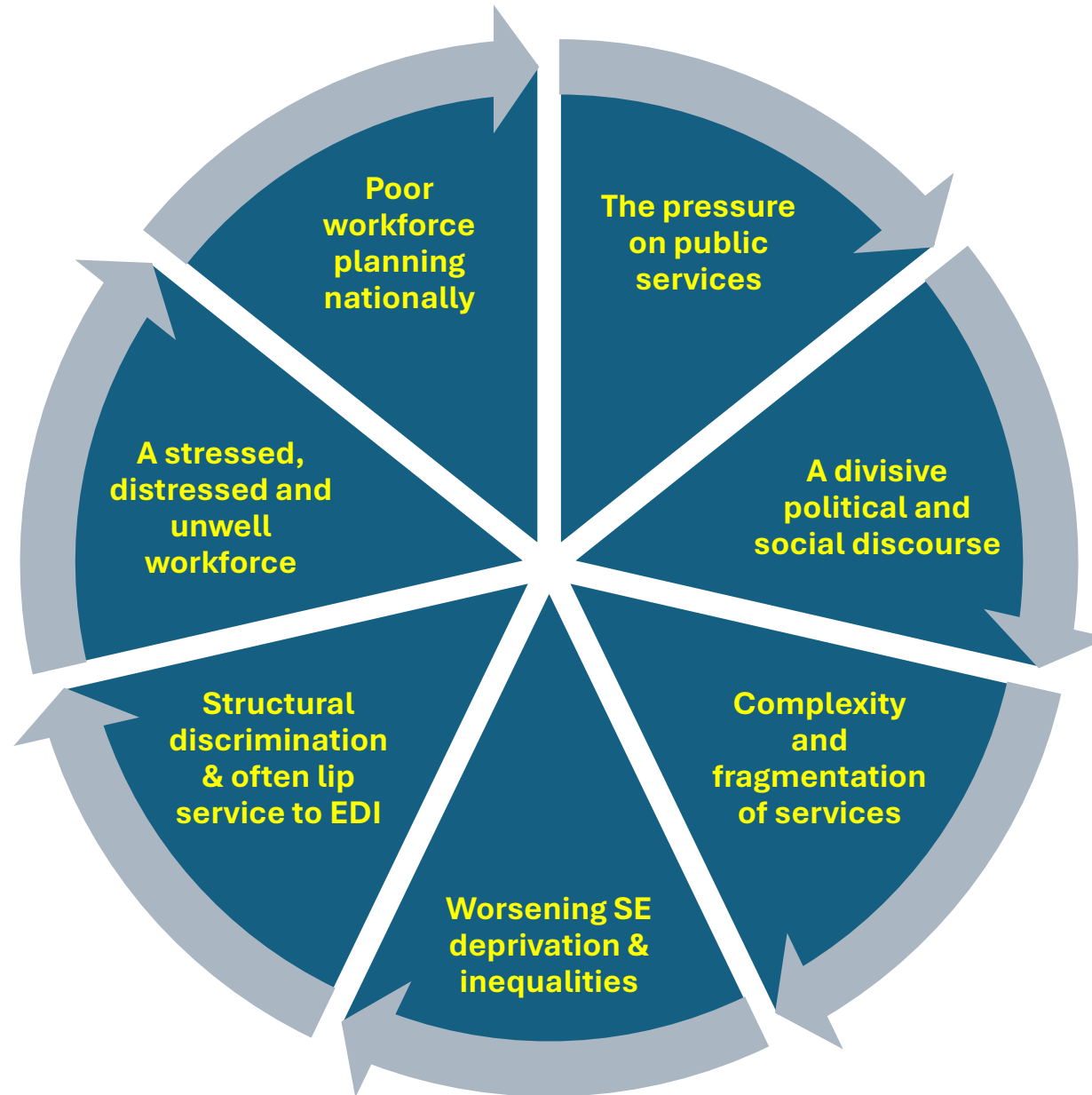


Emerging research



Measuring Impact

The workforce picture is set against a landscape of inequalities. The data is damning – the RCPsych census, the GMC report, sickness data



How do we move from learned helplessness to led hopefulness?

- “My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style.” – Maya Angelou
- So the Retention Charter offers a structured systematic framework to understand the art and science of retention of doctors (in the organisation, profession, country)
- It aligns with and complements national initiatives –the SAS Collective #SASSixCampaign [The SAS Collective | #SASSix campaign](#)
- Every time we talk of SAS doctors, we need to talk of Locally Employed doctors (LE) too

Nurturing and developing our workforce - The RCPsych retention charter is on the website!

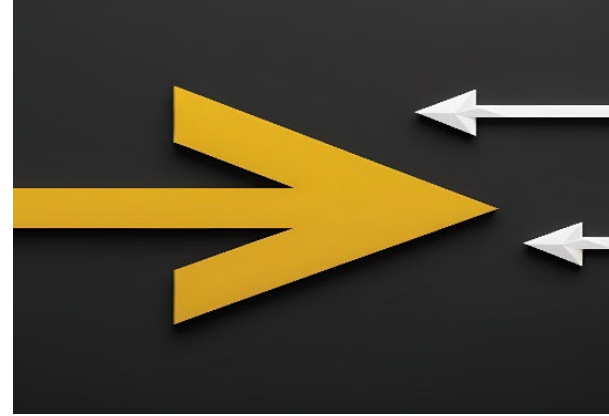
- [The RCPsych Retention Charter](#)
- The first by a medical Royal College
- It is meant for healthcare providers, deaneries & equivalent, medical schools
- Multi specialty and multi professional
- Based on collaboration & QI approach
- Has an intersectional, health inequalities focus, advocating for marginalised groups
- Self assessment & plan for improvement
- Outcome measures & evaluation in progress



The 4 domains of the charter



**Creating a
culture of
belonging**



**Supporting
Psychiatrists'
career planning
including those
considering
leaving**



**Supporting
Psychiatrists'
mental health
and wellbeing**



**Developing
medical
leadership**

Structure of the charter – A matrix approach

Domain	Action	Developmental stage	Indicators	Advice and resources
The four domains as per previous slide	Four actions linked to each domain	Foundation, Intermediate or Mature	Indicates progress towards each developmental stage	Steps organisations can take and resources they can use to implement recommended actions

Domain 1 – Developing Medical Leadership

Actions:

1. **Support existing medical leaders** to remain motivated and deliver their best
2. **Support the leadership development of all Psychiatrists including resident doctors, SAS doctors, LE doctors/clinical fellows and consultants**
3. **Develop managerial skills** for all Psychiatrists
4. **Create clear leadership development pathways and equitable opportunities** to pursue leadership roles for those with the right values (e.g. individuals whose values align with those of the RCPsych and their own organisation) and who are interested.



Domain 2 – Creating a Culture of Belonging

Actions:

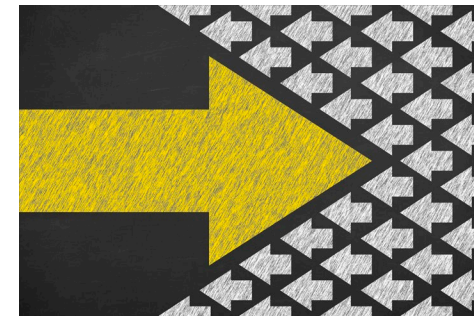
1. Deliver robust and holistic **induction programmes** with **enhanced support** available for new psychiatrists, those transitioning between career stages and/or returning to work after career breaks, and **International Medical Graduates (IMGs)**.
2. Develop an organisational culture that **celebrates diversity**, role models **inclusive behaviours**, and takes accountability for addressing **discrimination, bullying, and harassment**.
3. **Recognise and reward** the strengths and hard work of Psychiatrists from all backgrounds and career stages.
4. Value Psychiatrists' identities as **clinical leaders and experts** in the biopsychosocial model, including them in multi-professional structures, organisational decision-making, and the design of clinical services.



Domain 3 – Supporting Psychiatrists' Career Planning Including Those Considering Leaving

Actions:

1. Continually promote the retention of psychiatrists through **'stay conversations'** and **proactive measures** to help them achieve their career goals.
2. Ensure provision of **targeted support** for staff groups who might experience difficulties planning or navigating their careers.
3. Provide access to **retirement planning** discussions at an early stage and support those **retiring and returning** to work.
4. Have **enabling conversations** with Psychiatrists **considering leaving** or who have decided to leave the organisation/profession, ensuring that they feel supported, and their decision is a considered, positive choice.



Domain 4 – Supporting Psychiatrists' Mental Health and Wellbeing

Actions:

1. Develop and embed an organisational culture focussed on understanding and minimising causes of **work-related stress**.
2. **Promote staff health and wellbeing** and provide support, at an early stage, for those experiencing work-related stress, burnout, or ill health.
3. Create **inclusive environments** and engender positive attitudes towards Psychiatrists experiencing mental and/or physical illness or disability.
4. Make available or signpost to **specific services** and sources of support for Psychiatrists with **mental illness, addictions, and neurodiversity**.



Example of one domain and action

Domain	Action	Developmental stage	Indicators	Advice and Resources
Developing Clinical Leadership	Support the leadership and development of SAS and Resident Doctors	Intermediate	Discussion of Leadership opportunities regularly occurs in supervision, job planning and appraisal processes	Links to leadership opportunities for doctors e.g. The RCPsych Leadership and Management Fellowship Scheme

Next steps after the launch of the Charter

- Presentations and workshops across the UK
- Collaboration, and contribution to national policy
- The Thrive in Psychiatry campaign
- Colleagues' led initiatives and ideas
- Self assessment tool and template
- Emerging research
- Keep asking the questions – where are the SAS doctors? What about SAS doctors? Include LE doctors

Focus on retention - [Thrive in Psychiatry](#)
campaign and website.

Many stories of hope and courage



Podcasts



Blog posts



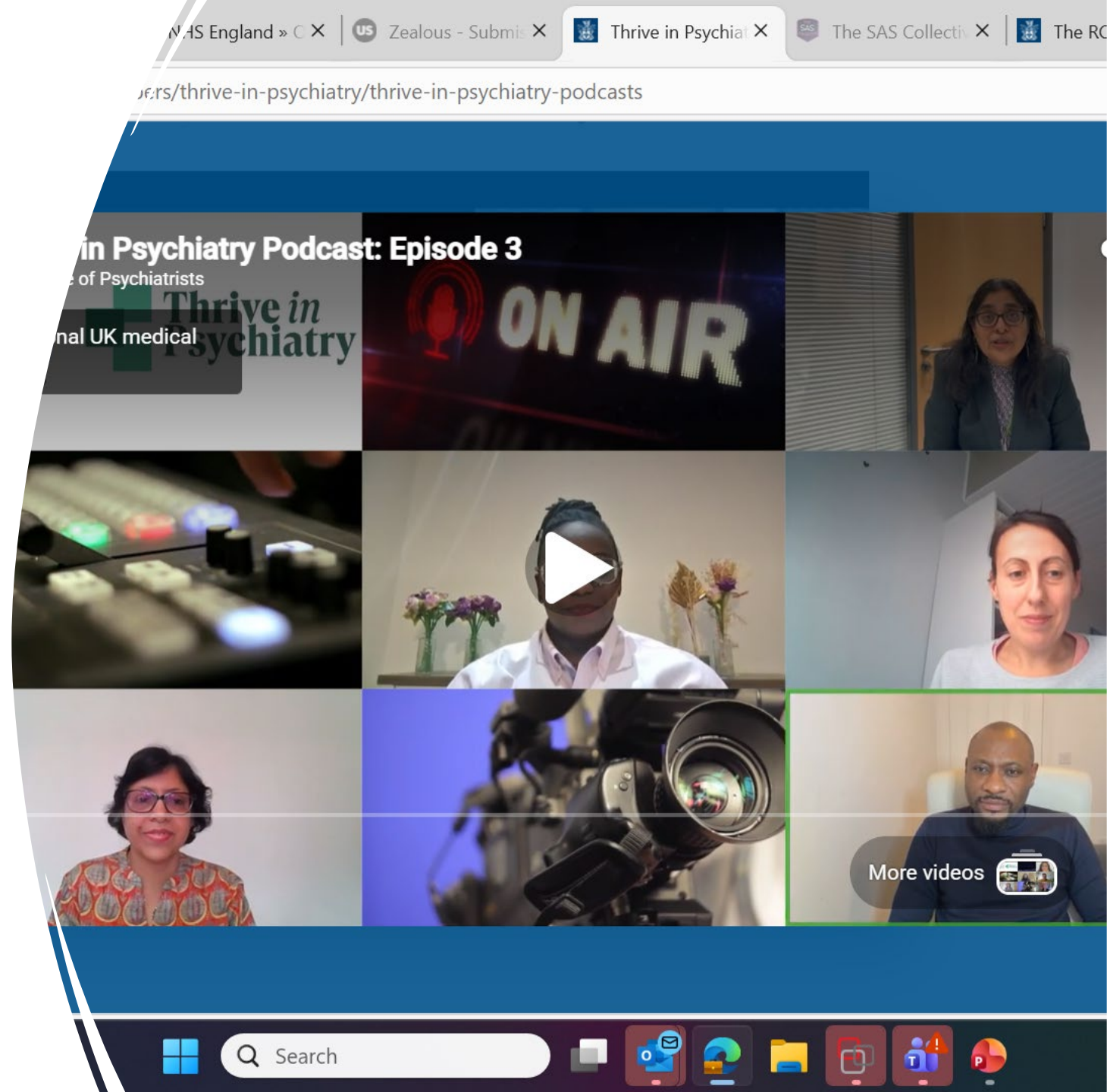
Resources



Sign up to the
weekly newsletter

Thrive and grow in Psychiatry

- “My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style.” – Maya Angelou
- Podcasts available on YouTube - <https://youtu.be/ILSiRg6Qx24>



Initiatives led by colleagues across the country

- Conferences organised on the theme of retention
- *Away days*
- Celebration and award events
- *CPD events in Trusts/Health Boards*
- Ideas and suggestions for the use of the Charter
- *Survey and feedback – coming soon!*
- And more!

Self-Assessment and the Template

	A	B	C	D	E
1	ASSESS YOUR CURRENT STATUS	Domain 1: Creating a Culture of Belonging		Domain 2: Supporting Psychiatrists' Mental Health and Wellbeing	
2	Action 1	Deliver robust and holistic induction programmes with enhanced support available for new psychiatrists, those transitioning between career stages and/or returning to work after career breaks, and International Medical Graduates (IMGs).		Develop and embed an organisational culture focused on understanding and minimising causes of work-related stress.	
3	Action 2	Develop an organisational culture that celebrates diversity, role models inclusive behaviours, and takes accountability for addressing discrimination, bullying, and harassment		Promote staff health and wellbeing and provide support, at an early stage, for those experiencing work-related stress, burnout, or ill health	
4	Action 3	Recognise and reward the strengths and hard work of Psychiatrists from all backgrounds and career stages.		Create inclusive environments and engender positive attitudes towards Psychiatrists experiencing mental and/or physical illness or disability and those with caring responsibilities outside of work	
5	Action 4	Value the identity of Psychiatrists as clinical leaders and experts in the biopsychosocial model, including them in multi-professional structures, organisational decision-making, and the design of clinical services		Make available or signpost to specific services and support for Psychiatrists with mental illness, addictions, and neurodiversity	

Excel file template available on RCPsych website -

<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/improving-care/workforce/the-rcpsych-retention-charter>

To determine your rating for each action, review the foundation, intermediate and mature level indicators.

You should achieve at least half of the indicators for a particular stage to be rated at that stage or higher

Quality Improvement

- **The self-assessment guidance on the RCPsych website gives advice on how to the conduct self-assessment and then how to use this data to generate improvements in retention practices - https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/improving-care/retention-charter/rcpsych-retention-charter-self-assessment.pdf?sfvrsn=2187d9d3_1**
- **Quality improvement approach**
- **Focus on one domain/action at a time**
- **Set time-bound actions**
- **Need for collaboration across teams/departments e.g. medical management, HR, medical education etc.**

Research around retention

- Emerging from the work of the retention charter
- Existing research:
- <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32324635/>
- <https://www.cmaj.ca/transcript-190852> - podcast
- Harvard Business Review (HBR) - effective retention requires systemic approaches rather than ad-hoc perks. Top strategies include proactive promotions, career development, and fostering an inclusive culture.

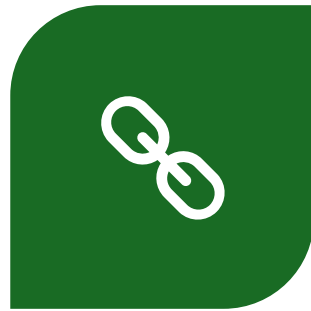
What can you do?

- Self-assess and share – feedback, good practice, ideas
- Implement – to improve quality of staff experience and patient outcomes - <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/improving-care/workforce/the-rcpsych-retention-charter>
- Use the resources <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/members/workforce-wellbeing-hub>
- The GMC survey [Survey of specialty and associate specialist \(SAS\) and locally employed \(LE\) doctors – GMC](#) runs till 2nd June 2026

So I will conclude with



**EVALUATE – WHAT'S
YOUR ORGANISATION'S
BASELINE**



**REITERATE – THE LINK
BETWEEN GOOD
RETENTION AND PATIENT
OUTCOMES**



**CELEBRATE – AND
NOMINATE FOR THE
RCPSYCH AWARDS**



**THANK YOU AND
WELCOME DISCUSSIONS**