



# Quality Account

2021/22

# Quality Account Contents

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# Part One

# Part One: Statement from our CEO

**Welcome to Vita Health Group's 2021/22 Quality Account. This is our third publication covering both the musculoskeletal (MSK) physiotherapy and mental health services we provide on behalf of the NHS. It reflects the quality of services provided during the last 12 months and importantly sets out our plans for further quality improvements and priorities during the year ahead and beyond.**

Our purpose is to 'Make People Better.' During the reporting period we elevated the mental and physical health of 118,837 NHS patients. We completed mobilising our Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) service for Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland CCG, and mobilised an IAPT service for West Essex CCG. We also expanded and redesigned some of our existing mental health services, secured our first community dermatology service, and remain a trusted partner to 15 Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).

Our successes during the year have been recognised through winning four awards (and runner up in others) including 'IT Innovator of the Year' and 'Primary Care Provider of the Year,' at the Health Investor Awards, 'Best COVID-19 Response in Healthcare' at the Covid Response Awards, and 'Using Insight for Improvement' at the Patient Experience Awards. Receiving these awards during the height of a pandemic speaks volumes about Vita Health Group's leadership, responsiveness, and the unwavering dedication of our colleagues.

During the reporting period, in December 2021, Vita Health Group underwent its first CQC inspection, achieving a 'Good' rating overall. The CQC, who regulate all health and social care services in England gave Vita Health Group a 'Good' score in all 5 areas: Safe, Effective, Caring, Responsive and Well-led.

We have also seen an improvement in staff engagement, with 82% of our workforce responding to our annual staff survey, and an improved engagement score; 4.08 out of 5 (compared to 4.03 last year).

Our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) portfolio has evolved significantly through investment in four EDI networks, positively influencing change in recruitment, education, working adaptations, and developing our female leaders of tomorrow. The latter will help bridge the gender pay gap, which will be an area for improvement during the coming year.

Improving service access for everyone has certainly been a priority. The success of our West Essex 'How are you feeling?' digital marketing campaign in 2021 saw a three-fold uplift in referrals from individuals from under-represented population cohorts. Further campaigns followed in all our IAPT services and will remain cyclical to address targeted areas and under-represented cohorts.

Vita Health Group's 'Speak Up' Guardians are fully embedded, supporting our workforce to raise issues without fear of negative consequences. Over the next 12-months we will train local champions. This quality improvement is close to my heart; as CEO I offer [askderrick@vhg.co.uk](mailto:askderrick@vhg.co.uk), providing every employee with a direct escalation point no matter what their role. Those who speak up are thanked, responded to, and given feedback about their concerns, and any planned changes.

We have made excellent progress against our existing priorities and set four more for the next couple of years, focussing on a range of quality improvement areas including technology, patient safety and specialist training.

I would like to personally thank every employee for their continuous focus, enthusiasm, and commitment to deliver safe, high-quality services to our service-users and customers.

This Quality Account has been endorsed by our Executive Management Team (EMT). I confirm the content, to the best of my knowledge, reflects an accurate and fair view of the quality of our services and performance.

I am pleased to share this Quality Account with you and hope you enjoy reading it as much as I have.



**Derrick Farrell**  
CEO





# Part One: About Vita Health Group

Vita Health Group is a leading private UK healthcare provider. We are dedicated to making people better, by providing integrated physical and mental health services to employers/insurers, the NHS, and private patients.

With over 34-years' experience delivering best in class physical and mental health, Vita Health Group has unique insight into delivering holistic, person-centred care. We are committed to our company values:

**Leadership** – We lead the way through innovation and continuous improvement

**People centred** – We support, develop and value each other, so together we can make a difference

**Customer focused** – We are passionate about going above and beyond for our customers

**Quality** – We hold each other accountable and strive to deliver excellence

**Integrity** – We treat each other with respect and honesty

Our physical health services range from physiotherapy to group exercise classes and more specialist treatments such as acupuncture and injection therapy. Our mental health services include cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), guided self-help and group therapy sessions.

Over the last 12-months our growth and success have been recognised, demonstrated through a range of prestigious national and international awards.

Awards	Category	Recognising
Health Investor Awards	Winner – IT Innovator of the Year	Our investment in innovative technology
Health Investor Awards	Winner - Primary Care Provider of the Year	Continuing to provide innovation and deliver excellence, despite the impact and pressure of COVID-19
COVID Response Awards	Winner - Best COVID-19 Response in Healthcare (over £15 million turnover)	Our rapid and innovative reaction to the pandemic
Patient Experience Network Awards	Winner - Partnership Working to Improve the Experience	Our work to develop an innovative digital chatbot to elevate the service-user experience within primary care psychological therapy
International Digital Experience Awards	Runner up – Best use of Artificial Intelligence	Our innovative approach to using artificial intelligence within our primary care mental health services
Leading Healthcare Awards	Highly commended – Partnership of the Year	Partnership working to develop an innovative digital chatbot to increase access to primary care mental health services, and elevate the experience

# Part One: 2021/22 statistics

**118,537**

NHS referrals received

**352,621**

NHS appointments delivered

**205**

Employees TUPE transferred

**3.5%**

Improvement in IAPT  
clinical recovery rate  
(compared to 2020/21)

**30**

Individuals trained to  
become Mental Health  
Advocates

**41%**

Workforce growth

**30%**

Increase in workforce  
membership of our  
influential equality, diversity,  
and inclusion staff networks

**18,450**

Mandatory training modules  
completed



# Part One:

## Our geographical and clinical speciality expansion

During the reporting period we provided physical and mental community healthcare services to fifteen CCGs nationally. We also completed our IAPT service mobilisation for Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland CCG, and mobilised an IAPT service for West Essex CCG. This involved the TUPE transfer of 205 staff. Furthermore, we have worked in partnership with Basildon and Brentwood Commissioners to design, mobilise, expand, and deliver additional healthcare services, including:

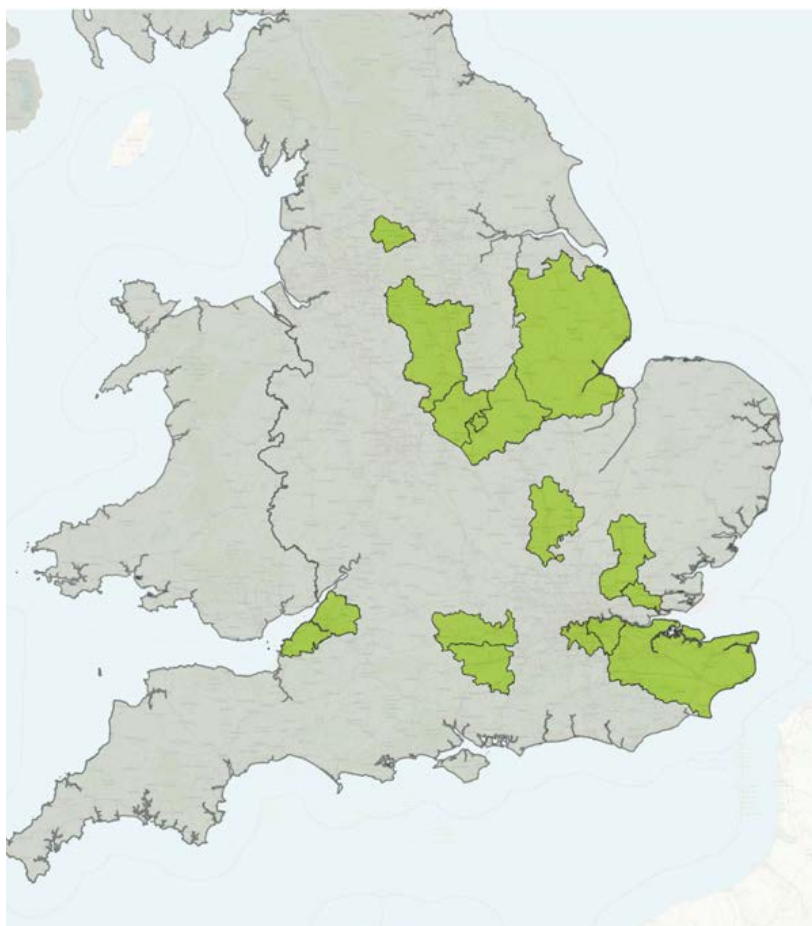
- ✔ Mental Health First Contact Practitioner (FCP) Service. During the reporting period we expanded our FCP Service across all six of their Primary Care Networks, enhancing access to expert mental health advice and treatment.
- ✔ Step 4 mental health service. During the reporting period we have implemented a Step 4 psychological therapies service for individuals whose common mental health conditions i.e., depression and/or anxiety disorders, are severe in nature and often compounded by additional factors, including trauma; abuse; personality disorder; and emotional dysregulation. This complexity makes treating their symptoms more challenging, although they do not need treatment in a secondary care setting. Our Step 4 service is designed to support this 'missing middle' in mental health pathways, by offering a wrap-around service to provide people with holistic care and support, delivered by the right clinicians, avoiding the need for secondary care mental health intervention. During the reporting period we have treated over 300 individuals who would previously have been sat for up to two years on a secondary care mental health service waiting list.
- ✔ Physical health service and enduring mental illness (SMI) outreach support service. We provide comprehensive and systematic annual health checks and cardiovascular risk assessments for those on the SMI register, supporting primary care to meet their health check national targets.

We also launched our MSK FCP Service across four of Bromley's Primary Care Networks, with further expansion planned for the next reporting period.

Finally, during the reporting period we secured our first community dermatology service, which we will mobilise and launch during the early part of the next reporting period.

During the reporting period, we provided our NHS services from 72 estates; across 15 CCGs as illustrated on the map. This will be expanded during the next reporting period as demand for face-to-face services continues to rise, to support mobilisation and delivery of our first community dermatology service, and support delivery of any newly launched services.

As an established provider of mental and physical health services to a large range of non-NHS organisations, we also have 475 MSK Network Clinics and 175 remote Cognitive Behavioural Therapists delivering psychological therapy services, and 95 Cognitive Behavioural Therapists delivering face-to-face psychological therapy services. This ensures we have excellent national coverage, bringing care closer to home.



# Part One:

## Embedding quality improvement

### I Launching 'How are you feeling?' campaign

Whilst mobilising our West Essex Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) Service, we knew our marketing campaign needed to be big and bold to reach out to the local population which had historically under-utilised their IAPT Service. In-line with our commitment to **quality improvement**, our Marketing Department wanted to launch a campaign designed to reach the local community, promote ease of access to vital mental health services, particularly in the hard-to-reach cohorts such as BAME, LGBTQIA+ and multi-faith communities. The campaign focussed on raising the profile of our IAPT services, collaborating with target groups, and an integrated approach to reach all ages and demographics. We held a series of co-production events with local charities, and community groups, to guide concept development and identify the most appropriate communication channels to make sure our messaging reached the local community, including traditionally harder to reach groups.

I was aware of how people in my personal life had replied when I had asked them how they were doing; people are very quick to say they are fine when I knew differently. This led to the 'How are you feeling?' concept. We compared the typical answers of "I am fine" or "I am ok" to a range of answers that may be closer to the truth, whilst avoiding labelling anyone as having 'mental health' issues as we knew this could deter people from accessing the IAPT service.

We used imagery of real people living in West Essex to provide a true representation of the local community. We launched our 'How are you feeling?' marketing campaign across West Essex on 1st July 2021, including displaying posters on busy Harlow High Street, and highly targeted digital marketing specifically encouraging referrals from older adults and black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, which are all under-represented in IAPT services. We saw a three-fold increase in engagement with our digital marketing, highlighting people were relating to our imagery and messaging.

Worried

Low mood

Anxiety

Stressed

Can't sleep

Lack of motivation





# Part One: Embedding quality improvement

We therefore made the decision to expand our 'How are you feeling?' campaign across all our IAPT services, ensuring the imagery represented the local population each served.

Our campaign has been successful across our IAPT services, for example, in January 2022, we achieved our highest access rate since we launched our Basildon and Brentwood IAPT service in 2019, delivering **quality improvement** by enhancing service accessibility.

As part of our commitment to continuous **quality improvement**, in January 2022 we launched our 'You' campaign, which builds on the success of our 'How are you feeling?' campaign. We introduced new initiatives, including GP Support Packs, a range of promotional products geared towards specific population cohorts, podcasts, and videos for people with hearing impairments, supported by more detailed reporting functionality to enable us to target our initiatives to reach out to cohorts under-represented in each of our IAPT services. To date, our 'You' campaign is proving to be highly successful. Over the reporting period, we have received 86,619 referrals into our IAPT services, which has been supported by our fresh and agile approach to marketing, supported by the outreach activities undertaken by our team of Partnership Liaison Officers, which has encouraged referrals from people from all walks of life.

**Sarah Mather**  
Marketing and Communications Manager

**NHS West Essex**  
Clinical Commissioning Group

*I am ok!*

*Worried, low mood, lack of motivation*

*Rosie, Epping, Mental Health Nurse*

VitaMinds works in partnership with the NHS in **West Essex- Harlow, Uttlesford and Epping Forest** to offer a range of short-term psychological therapies.

**It is a free service.**

- Scan the QR code
- Call us on 0333 015 2966
- Ask your GP to refer you to Vita
- [vitahealthgroup.co.uk](http://vitahealthgroup.co.uk)
- Monday to Friday 9am - 8pm Saturday 9am - 12.30pm

**vita health group**



**NHS Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire**  
Clinical Commissioning Group

*I am fine!*

*Stressed, anxious, can't sleep*

VitaMinds works in partnership with the NHS in **Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire** to offer a range of short-term psychological therapies.

**It is a free service.**

- Scan the QR code
- Call us on 0333 200 2893
- Ask your GP to refer you to Vita
- [vitahealthgroup.co.uk](http://vitahealthgroup.co.uk)
- Monday to Friday 9am - 8pm Saturday 9am - 12.30pm

**vita health group**

**NHS Basildon and Brentwood**  
Clinical Commissioning Group

Are you struggling to cope?  
**YOU are strong**

VitaMinds is your local talking therapies service. If you are 16 years and over and live in Basildon, Brentwood, Billericay & Wickford, we can support you by providing the tools you need to get life back on track. It is FREE and Confidential.

**SCAN & TALK**

**CONTACT US**

- Text 'YOU' to 8802
- [vitahealthgroup.co.uk](http://vitahealthgroup.co.uk)
- @VitaMindsVHG
- 0333 222 0710

**vita health group**

# Part One:

## Embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion for quality improvement

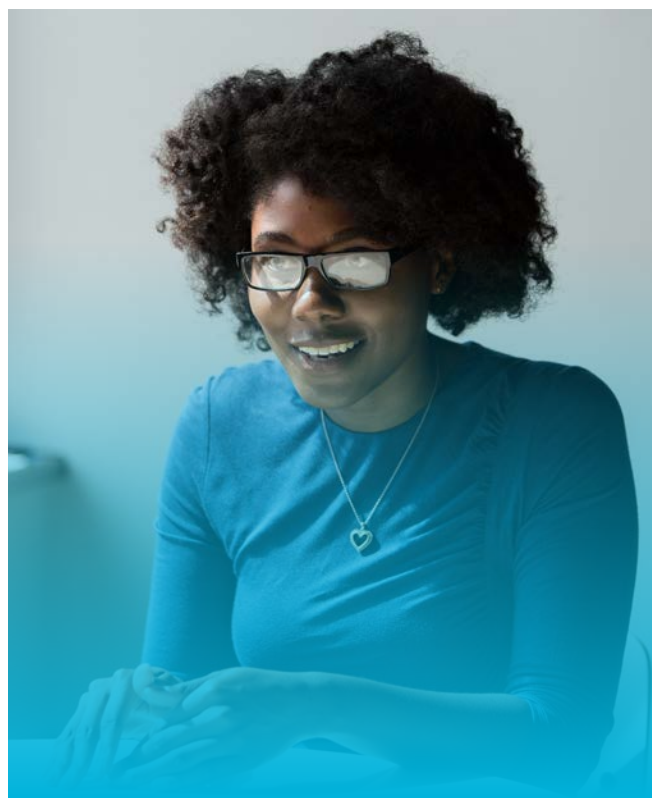
During the reporting period, Vita Health Group placed a renewed focus on equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). This focus was founded on the understanding that fostering an environment of inclusion, diversity, and equal experience is critical to achieving positive outcomes and service-user experiences.

### I Race and Ethnicity

Significant effort has been made to improve the experience of colleagues from minority ethnic backgrounds. This work was founded on implementing the Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) in 2020. Upon establishing that its findings did not adequately represent our intent or commitment to addressing racial inequality, we took action to improve, including:

- ✔ Raising the prominence of our zero-tolerance standpoint on discrimination, abuse, or violence in the workplace.
- ✔ Taking action to improve workforce diversity.
- ✔ Developing training to raise awareness about racial inequality issues.
- ✔ Creating an environment where issues about race are highlighted.
- ✔ Maintaining active staff networks with a direct line to senior management.

The positive impact of these actions has been demonstrated by our 2021 staff survey, which showed improvements in the experience and wellbeing of racially minoritised staff. Results showed black, Asian and minority ethnic staff scored higher than or equal to their white counterparts for measures of engagement and wellbeing, as well as likelihood of recommending our services, and our organisation as a place to work.





# Part One: Embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion for quality improvement

## I Disability

Our Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) is now fully established within the business, with the role commencing on 6th April 2021. This additional resource has enabled us to complete several key activities including:

- ✔ Renewing our Disability Confident Employer status.
- ✔ Relaunching our 'Disability Confident Guaranteed Interview Scheme' (DGCIS).
- ✔ Rollout Disability Awareness Training for all managers.



The DGCIS and supporting activities ensure disabled (inclusive of hidden disability) or impaired candidates are treated with equity throughout the recruitment process, mandating all disabled or impaired applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job are offered an interview. From January 2022, we started to see the positive impact of our activities.

9%

of applicants had a long-term health condition, impairment, or disability

40%

of successful candidates had a long-term health condition, impairment, or disability

On 15th April 2021, we established our Diverse Ability network, which is led by our DLO. This network provides a forum for our disabled, impaired, and neurodiverse colleagues and allies to access support, have a collective voice on issues affecting them, and raise awareness. The network has directly contributed to changes made to our key internal communication methods, making them more Dyslexia Friendly, and planned improvements to our reasonable adjustment process. For example, we have introduced Dragon speech recognition software to assist colleagues with Dyslexia and updated our Teams software to incorporate captions and improved font to support colleagues with visual and hearing impairments. We have also issued guidance to all employees, encouraging them to make their communications and emails dyslexic friendly, with tips on how to achieve this.

We have also rolled out internal Mental Health Advocate (MHA) training, developing a team of MHA's in the business who have the skills and confidence to recognise and positively respond to the signs and symptoms of common mental health conditions, and effectively guide others towards the right support. Colleagues have had access to mental health advocacy since 3rd November 2021.



# Part One:

## Embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion for quality improvement

### I Gender

During the reporting period, we reduced our gender pay gap by 4.1 percentage points. We would like to see a further reduction next year, and the following measures have been put in place to achieve this:

- ✔ Educating our managers on what the GPG is and how they can positively influence it.
- ✔ Continuing to work closely with our staff networks.
- ✔ Further investment in learning and development opportunities for women across the business.
- ✔ Attracting more women into senior positions via targeted recruitment, internal promotion, and diverse interview panels. We are already seeing an increase in the number of women in senior roles across the business, including at executive management team and board level.

Following colleague feedback, during the reporting period we significantly improved our maternity support offering. A new package was co-developed and accepted, following consultation with facilitated working groups, the EDI Team, and members of our women's network (WITA). The new package includes significantly improved financial support and access to a Maternity Handbook. During the next reporting period we are aiming to secure the Menopause Friendly Accreditation.

To further support colleagues and families with childbirth, we have also signed up to the Employer with Heart Charter. This means we are committed to providing extended maternity leave for those who give birth prematurely, as well as giving partners the time they need to be with their baby in hospital. We also support parents returning to work following the birth of a premature baby, with formal and informal flexible working options and additional leave. During the next reporting period, we will finalise our Neonatal Death, Miscarriage and Stillbirth Policy.





# Part One:

## Embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion for quality improvement

### I EDI informed recruitment

During the reporting period, we conducted a full review of our recruitment policies and procedures to verify alignment with EDI best practice, resulting in the following improvements:

- ✔ Implementing an anonymous application process.
- ✔ Prioritising internal applicants to support career development opportunities.
- ✔ Developing and launching EDI informed recruitment training for managers.
- ✔ Educating managers on the principles of positive action.
- ✔ Committing to providing diverse interview panels to mitigate the impact of implicit bias.
- ✔ Implementing a new process guaranteeing interviews for disabled / impaired candidates who meet the minimum job specification.

We are hopeful these positive actions will lead to increased diversity at all levels of Vita Health Group.

### I Education series

In response to demand for more EDI educational content to be delivered across the business, during the reporting period we made a series of education seminars available for all staff members to access, topics covered included:

- ✔ Trans Health Awareness.
- ✔ Leadership and Career Development (with a focus on the barriers women and racially minoritised communities face to progression).
- ✔ LGBTQIA+ Health Awareness, Data Collection and "QueerTech".

These sessions were well received and more sessions will be arranged for the next reporting period, to meet high demand.

“ Thank you so much, this was a really important session. ”

“ Really interesting and informative. ”

“ Really well put together and considered. ”

“ Insightful, I learned so much and feel empowered to ask questions. ”



# Part One: Embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion for quality improvement

## I Staff Networks

During the reporting period, we significantly increased our investment in our staff networks, with four active networks running:

- ✔ Women's (WITA) Network.
- ✔ Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Network (BAME).
- ✔ Diverse Ability Network.
- ✔ LGBTQIA+ Network.

Almost 200 employees have now joined our staff networks. The results of a recent member survey highlighted the impact of the networks, with them scoring positively on several measures, including:

- ✔ 8.2/10 rating of members overall experience of participating in a network.
- ✔ 8.7/10 rating of how likely members are to recommend participating in a network.
- ✔ 8.4/10 rating that being part of a network had a positive impact on their experience of working at Vita Health Group.
- ✔ 8.3/10 rating that since their establishment, the networks have contributed to improving Vita Health Group.

The main benefits of being part of diversity network were cited as a positive impact on wellbeing through accessing peer support and ability to influence company policy and procedure. Over the next reporting period, we will be scoping the need and demand for further groups, including a Faith Network and Carers Network.



## I EDS2

2021 marked Vita Health Group's initial engagement with the Equality Delivery System. This started with the initiation of a large cross departmental project to evaluate how best to implement EDS2 and begin the process of assessing ourselves against the core EDI indicators.

## I Speaking Up

In September 2021, we launched our enhanced Speak Up Policy and established Freedom to Speak Up Guardian roles. Our aim was to develop a culture where any colleague, service-user safety or quality issues would be highlighted, with opportunities to improve standards of care, our working environments and staff wellbeing identified.

Our Freedom to Speak Up Guardian roles are now well embedded, and we are looking to grow the team to include champions to promote speaking up as our organisation continues to grow.

Over the next reporting period, we will:

- ✔ Continue improving the experience and opportunities of our staff members. This will include increasing support available across different facets of diversity, including faith, age, and those with caring responsibilities, which will be supported by a new Carers Policy.
- ✔ Increase the time spent on ensuring our services meet the needs of the diverse populations we serve. This will mean ongoing engagement and co-production with local communities, with a view to improving access rates and outcomes for marginalised groups. This will also feed into the wider roll out of EDS2 across Vita Health Group.

**Ishmael Beckford**  
Market Director (Private Services) and Board EDI Lead



# Part One: Enhancing our Intranet quality

In February 2021, as part of our 2020/21 quality improvement initiatives, we invited members of our workforce to join our Intranet Steering Group. The purpose of the group was to encourage internal collaboration to understand what our workforce wanted from our Intranet, and how we could re-launch Vita Health Group's Intranet to meet the needs of all staff, both new and existing. The first step on this journey was to launch a staff survey to obtain the views of our workforce, which would be used to guide Intranet development during this 2021/22 reporting period. 108 individuals responded to the survey:

## 35%

of respondents used the Intranet daily

## 72%

of respondents thought the Intranet was a helpful resource

## 38%

of respondents could easily find the information they needed

This indicated our Intranet was a helpful resource for our workforce, but it was difficult to navigate. This was reinforced by the top five suggestions for improvement:

**Improve search function / navigation**




**Revamp homepage so less cluttered**

**Make better organised / clearer**

**Fill gaps in department pages**

**Keep it up to date**

Our Intranet Steering Group has used the employee voice to build a new 'Vita Hub,' which has been rolled out in a phased approach, focussed on implementing improvements our workforce wanted. For example, we have:

-  Made our Intranet more visually appealing by de-cluttering our home page and applying consistent branding.
-  Made our Intranet easier to navigate by adding a navigation tool to the home page, adding drop down menus to each department page, and adding clear "I want to" buttons for most frequently used topics.
-  Appointed Department Administrators who are responsible for keeping specific pages up to date, so our workforce is only accessing current information.

**Quality improvement** is an ongoing commitment; the Intranet Steering Group will continue to use the employee voice to drive positive change.

**Sean Langley – Head of Marketing**







# Part Two

# Part Two:

## 2022/23 Quality improvement priorities

The four quality improvement priorities detailed in this section will ensure Vita Health Group achieves measurable quality and safety improvements, particularly within its NHS services. We have listened to feedback received from service-users, stakeholders, and external organisations, such as Healthwatch and Independent Mental Health Network, to support our key priority improvement decisions.

### Priority 1: Over the next two years, continue to invest in improved technology and digitally enabled care to enhance the service-user journey

To enhance quality of life for people with long-term conditions (**Domain 2**), help people recover from episodes of ill-health and injury (**Domain 3**), ensure people have a positive experience of care (**Domain 4**), and provide treatment and care for people in a safe environment and protect them from avoidable harm (**Domain 5**), during 2022/23 we will implement a range of initiatives to further improve the technology and digitally enabled care within our service provision.

Key initiative	How we will measure successful implementation
Work collaboratively with our technology providers to further develop the efficiency and effectiveness of our current digital support tools	An improved digital pathway launched within our IAPT services, providing greater system integration, increased accessibility, and earlier risk detection
Co-produce an enhanced computerised cognitive behavioural therapy (cCBT) platform, which utilises artificial intelligence to provide tailored self-management, which is seamless with service-user's ongoing treatment	An improved online CBT platform launched within our IAPT services
Develop a digital therapist support package, providing an extensive resource library and supported service-user care model	Additional digital tool developed to enhance service-user support
Develop additional tools within SystmOne to enhance efficiency of our MSK Patient Administration System	Additional capabilities developed within SystmOne, including developing robotic process automation (RPA) functionality which redirects resource to priority tasks

### Priority 2: Support Commissioners to achieve wider objectives

To enhance quality of life for people with long-term conditions (**Domain 2**), help people recover from episodes of ill-health and injury (**Domain 3**), ensure people have a positive experience of care (**Domain 4**), and provide treatment and care for people in a safe environment and protect them from avoidable harm (**Domain 5**), during 2022/23 we will implement a range of initiatives to enhance access to primary care physical and mental healthcare services.

Key initiative	How we will measure successful implementation
Launch and deliver GP Collaboration Project to support Basildon and Brentwood Commissioner's achieve their national Serious Mental Illness (SMI) physical health check targets	Increase in number of people on the SMI Register having annual health checks
Expand the capacity of our Step 4 service, and increase the skillset of the team to include EMDR and CAT specialities, supporting Basildon and Brentwood Commissioner's objective to provide population with appropriate, and timely care, closer to home	Increase in the number of more complex mental health service-users appropriately seen by our Step 4 Team, with positive clinical outcomes and service-user experience
Launch 'Enhanced Step 3 Model' Pilot, supporting service-user empowerment	Only service-users that have demonstrated active involvement in their treatment following assessment, are placed on the waiting list
Embed our core mental health provision within our new dermatology pathways, supporting parity of esteem between mental and physical health	Number of dermatology service-users identified with common mental health conditions, and offered appropriate mental health support, including those prescribed isotretinoin, which has known mental health side effects
Launch chronic pain pathways, providing stepped care to live well with pain	Co-produce pathways with service-users with lived experience and secondary care pain management team, and embed within service models

# Part Two:

## 2022/23 Quality improvement priorities

### Priority 3: Expand the reach and specialities of our training provision

To enhance quality of life for people with long-term conditions (**Domain 2**), help people recover from episodes of ill-health and injury (**Domain 3**), ensure people have a positive experience of care (**Domain 4**), during 2022/23 we will enhance training and development within Vita Health Group.

Key initiative	How we will measure successful implementation
Broaden specialised clinical training offering	Women's Health In-Service training designed and launched, followed by implementing Women's Health treatment pathway
Enhance MSK section of the Vita Hub	MSK section of Vita Hub enhanced to include interactive clinical pathways utilised within one-to-one supervision and group In-Service training, and detailed and accurate Power BI data to inform clinician one to ones and future training
Increase number of IAPT Trainees appointed to help address the national shortage in the IAPT workforce, and increase number that remain with Vita Health Group post-graduation	Increase in number of IAPT Trainees appointed through both HEE Trainees and apprenticeships. Vita Health Group Training Lead appointed, dedicated to Trainee onboarding and their support and development during Traineeship

### Priority 4: Continue to improve our patient safety culture, systems, and behaviours

To ensure people have a positive experience of care (**Domain 4**) and provide treatment and care for people in a safe environment and protect them from avoidable harm (**Domain 5**), during 2022/23 and beyond we will implement a range of initiatives to further improve patient safety, risk management and learning from safety incidents within Vita Health Group.



Key initiative	How we will measure successful implementation
Adopt the Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF) to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Broader scope with proportionate safety management responses</li> <li>• Tightly defined investigation approach</li> <li>• Improved experience for all those affected</li> </ul>	PSIRF in place, replacing the existing Serious Incident Framework (SIF) and the three key parts of the PSIRF document adopted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part A: Preparing for incidents</li> <li>• Part B: Responding to incidents</li> <li>• Part C: The governance arrangements (including key organisational roles and responsibilities) necessary to provide an effective response</li> </ul>
Learn from early adopters of PSIRF	Utilise shared national experiences from the early adopters of PSIRF to inform learning
Introduce a new patient safety risk management system (2-year plan)	Patient safety risk management system in place capturing patient safety data from incidents, complaints, risks, and concerns, ensuring a 'no wrong door' approach. All colleagues trained on system use, which is embedded into day-to-day practice. Patient safety and risk data aggregated and made available to better inform analysis, thematic trends and decision-making



# Part Two:

## Achievement against 2021/22 quality improvement priorities

### I Priority 1: Implement new initiatives to improve service-user safety

Key initiative	Success measures	Progress achieved	Status
Continue to develop Power BI technology to support our delivery of data informed services	Additional capabilities developed within Power BI to provide a clear view of all performance areas to guide development and quality improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connected our Power BI infrastructure with Advance Client exports within iaptus, providing full and detailed access to the full dataset, supporting automated reporting and minimising need for human intervention through manual reporting</li> <li>Using same methodology to connect Power BI to SystemOne – on target for launch during next reporting period</li> <li>Expanded on key functions within Power BI to allow for deeper insight into clinical and operational metrics including detailed clinical outcomes, audit findings, thematic analysis of patient feedback, capacity, and utilisation</li> </ul>	
Use lessons learned from Phio pilot to fully launch Phio within our MSK Services, providing an innovative access route into MSK, and digital triage so service-users access the right care, at the right time	Phio launched within our Bromley MSK Service, with positive service-user feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pilot identified how pathway needed to be remodelled to avoid 'false positives,' where service-users unnecessarily escalated</li> <li>Pathway remodelled, introducing a 'Rehabilitation Therapist' pathway to manage service-users with straightforward exercise programme needs, and 'urgent physio' to clarify symptoms which may need escalating</li> <li>Phio Launched in August 2021 across our MSK services</li> <li>Feedback survey launched March 2022: 156 survey responses received, with average 4.1/5 rating (5 being very easy to use)</li> </ul>	

# Part Two:

## Achievement against 2021/22 quality improvement priorities




### I Priority 1: Implement new initiatives to improve service-user safety

Key initiative	Success measures	Progress achieved	Status
Continue to work in partnership with Limbic to develop additional digital support tools	Additional digital tools developed and embedded within service delivery models to enhance the service-user pathway and provide ongoing service-user support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launched VitaAccess (powered by Limbic) in our two largest IAPT services: Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG), and Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR). In BNSSG, over half of our service-users chose to use VitaAccess as their preferred self-referral route</li> <li>Launched VitaAccess in our new West Essex IAPT service</li> <li>Worked with Limbic to add additional open text fields, enabling service-users to provide richer information about their concerns, enhancing pre-assessment support</li> <li>Re-focussed our digital pathway so a higher proportion of service-users choosing to self-refer via VitaAccess could provide information up front, enabling a focussed assessment to be booked for each service-user to review their information, and agree tailored treatment plan</li> <li>Integrated with the national spine API to improve early service-user eligibility checks</li> <li>Introduced and published treatment option explainer videos, at start of digital journey, to educate service-users on their digital treatment options, supporting informed onward care decisions</li> </ul>	
Expand use of virtual reality technology across our IAPT services	Virtual reality technology launched in additional IAPT Services, with service-users using it to support treatment for anxiety related phobias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Virtual reality technology expanded across two additional IAPT Services and used as an option to treat stress and trauma, eating disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), and addictive disorders</li> </ul>	

# Part Two:

## Achievement against 2021/22 quality improvement priorities

### Priority 2: Enhance equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) for employees, service-users, and our wider stakeholders




Key initiative	Success measures	Progress achieved	Status
Work in collaboration with Independent Mental Health Network to drive forwards our co-production agenda	Individuals complete co-production training to enhance our workforce and partner organisation's approach to co-production, with positive feedback provided. Service level Co-production Steering Groups established to support co-production events with a range of stakeholders, with service improvements co-designed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three co-production training sessions held: Introduction to co-production, Management Risk, and Identifying Participants, with 92 attendees</li> <li>• Range of coproduction events held during procurement, mobilisation, and service delivery, leading to enhanced access routes, marketing, and estates planning</li> </ul>	
Enhance our reporting procedures enabling workforce trends to be closely monitored to guide EDI improvements	EDI monitoring data continually analysed and used to improve representation and progression: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDI in recruitment data</li> <li>• EDI in reported incidents</li> <li>• EDI in workforce data (protected characteristics) and employee survey feedback.</li> </ul> Action plan with defined timescales created to rectify identified issues, with progress monitored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDI data aggregated from recruitment systems and processes, workforce data, 'Speak Up Guardian' data and employee survey</li> <li>• EDI information included within incident reporting. However, this remains in its infancy and further work is planned to evolve the type, volume, and metrics of EDI specific incident data</li> </ul>	
Invest in workforce training to improve how we engage with diverse groups, enhancing the experience of service-users with a protected characteristic	Workforce complete training. Process to analyse service-user experience survey results by protected characteristic implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EDI training provided on LGBTQIA+ Awareness, Disability Awareness and EDI Informed recruitment</li> <li>• Educational seminars delivered on Trans Health Awareness, Leadership Career Development (with a focus on the barriers women and racially minoritized communities face to progression), LGBTQIA+ Health Awareness, Data Collection and "QueerTech"</li> <li>• Developed 'Implicit Bias' training module, to be launched during next reporting period</li> </ul>	



# Part Two:

## Achievement against 2021/22 quality improvement priorities

### Priority 3: Enhance access to primary care mental health services and non-IAPT pathways

Key initiative	Success measures	Progress achieved	Status
Launch Mental Health First Contact Practitioner (FCP) model across all Basildon and Brentwood CCG Primary Care Networks (PCNs)	Mental Health FCP Model launched in all Basildon and Brentwood PCNs. Service-users provided with quicker access to appropriate mental health services and report a positive service-user experience. GPs spend less time on mental health consultations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of Basildon and Brentwood's Integrated Primary Community Care Project, we successfully mobilised our FCP service across all six PCNs, working collaboratively with locality partners to achieve an integrated care model</li> </ul>	
Launch Healthy Living Healthy Minds (HLHM) Programme within our Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) IAPT Service	Strong programme uptake, with positive service-user feedback. Reduced pressure on the core IAPT service by offering the right care at the right time and potentially negating the need to access CBT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HLHM Programme launched within our BNSSG IAPT Service in April 2021</li> <li>3.2 WTE Health and Wellbeing Coaches recruited to support high demand for supplementary support alongside psychological treatment, with further 2 WTE resource confirmed to start April 2022</li> <li>During reporting period, 712 service-users referred to HLHM Programme, with 59% attending at least one appointment</li> <li>Of those that completed programme, average PHQ9 score was 14, and on completion was 9, indicating trend towards recovery</li> <li>Data analysis is in early stages; some service-users completed HLHM Programme in recovery, and asked to be discharged from Step 2 CBT waiting list</li> </ul>	
Recruit additional Wellbeing Navigators into BNSSG IAPT Service workforce to increase volume of service-users accessing supplementary support alongside psychological treatment	Additional Wellbeing Navigators appointed to provide active signposting and support focussed on individual social determinants of health, with a subsequent increase in service-users accessing wrap-around support. Data will be reviewed comparing those who complete IAPT treatment with and without wrap-around support, examining clinical outcomes and duration of service-user journeys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional Wellbeing Navigators appointed, with 3.8 WTE now working within our BNSSG Service</li> <li>Data being collated. An update will be provided in our 2022/23 Quality Account</li> </ul>	

# Part Two:

## Statement of assurance

### Executive Management Team statement of assurance

During 2021/22 Vita Health Group provided community physiotherapy, Musculoskeletal Clinical Assessment and Treatment Services (MCATS) and Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) Services to 15 Clinical Commissioning Groups, either directly, or via a subcontracting arrangement with a Lead Provider. Vita Health Group has reviewed all available data regarding the quality of the NHS services we have delivered.

### I Participation in clinical research

Research partner	Purpose	Outcomes
Exeter University	How to adapt IAPT interventions to make them more effective to service-users with personality disorders	Outcome data pending; measured using Standardised Assessment of Personality (SAPAS) Questionnaire. An update will be provided in our 2022/23 Quality Account
Exeter University	Impact of using Mindfulness based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) for service-users who have been treated for depression, but not reached clinical recovery	Initial pilot ongoing. An update will be provided in our 2022/23 Quality Account
University of Essex	Establish if specific questions asked during telephone assessment / triage accurately predict which pathway people follow. Use data to develop an accurate digital triage tool which can be used by corporate service-users at the beginning of their journey, avoiding lengthy initial assessments that lead to the same outcome	This research was initially scheduled for our 2019/20 reporting report. Due to the impact of COVID-19 on University of Essex, the start of this research project was delayed. Ongoing impact of COVID-19 delayed data analysis
Health Integration Team	Establish if specific questions asked during telephone assessment / triage accurately predict which pathway people follow. Use data to develop an accurate digital triage tool which can be used by corporate service-users at the beginning of their journey, avoiding lengthy initial assessments that lead to the same outcome	This research was initially scheduled for our 2019/20 reporting report. Due to the impact of COVID-19 on University of Essex, the start of this research project was delayed. Ongoing impact of COVID-19 delayed data analysis
University of Bristol	Establish whether an IAPT Service that blends high quality clinical support with community-based interventions delivers enhanced mental health outcomes compared to clinical outcomes achieved through clinical support alone, and whether a particular cohort benefits the most	This research was initially scheduled for our 2019/20 reporting report. Due to the impact of COVID-19 on University of Bristol, the start of this research project was delayed. The new pathway went live in March 2021, and data is being collected. Bristol University are in the process of writing up this research. An update will be provided in our 2022/23 Quality Account
Private sector customer	To evaluate the clinical safety, clinical accuracy, and user acceptability of three different digital MSK physiotherapy triage chatbots	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Product 1 – clear problems with safety and pathway placement</li> <li>2. Product 2 – Best clinical safety</li> <li>3. Product 3 – Best clinical accuracy</li> <li>4. Products 2 &amp; 3 – Best user satisfaction</li> </ol>

# Part Two: Statement of assurance

## I Care Quality Commission (CQC)

Vita Health Group is required to register with the CQC for the regulated activities 'treatment of disease, disorder or injury' and 'diagnostic and screening procedures.' Vita Health Group does not have any conditions placed on its registration. The CQC has not taken any enforcement action against Vita Health Group during 2021/22. Vita Health Group has not participated in any CQC special reviews or investigations during the reporting period.

We were inspected by the CQC in December 2021. We were pleased to achieve a 'Good' rating across all 5 Key Lines of Enquires.

## I Secondary uses services

During 2021/22, Vita Health Group did not submit records to the 'Secondary Uses Services' for inclusion in the Hospital Episode Statistics.

## I Payment by results

During 2021/22, Vita Health Group was not subject to the Audit Commission's payment by results clinical coding audit.

## I Commissioning for quality and innovation payment framework (CQUIN)

Due to the ongoing impact of COVID, CQUINS have not applied to our NHS Services within the reporting period.

## I Duty of Candour

During the reporting period we produced our Speak Up Policy. We also established Freedom to Speak Up Guardian roles, to develop a culture where individuals confidently report any colleague, service-user safety, or quality issues, enabling Vita Health Group to identify opportunities to improve standards of care, our working environments, and staff wellbeing. During the next reporting period we will appoint Freedom to Speak Up Champions within each of our NHS services.

## I Data quality

During the reporting period we have recruited three additional Data Analysts / Operations Analysts. Our team of data experts are an integral part of our NHS Business Governance Team; they join weekly Business Governance meetings to provide up to date contractual performance data, which is used to guide service developments.



I joined Vita Health Group in April 2021 as a Data Analyst within our NHS division. I feel our NHS IAPT services are fully committed to understanding and using data to drive development. Data is not seen to just assess our performance against our KPIs – it is used to identify opportunities to improve our clinical quality and service-user experience. It's refreshing to work for an innovative company that is led by a continuous approach to achieve best practice to make people better.

Abi Dunn – IAPT Data Analyst



I joined Vita Health Group in November 2021 as a Data Analyst within Vita Health Group's NHS services, to produce and maintain Power BI dashboards and assist with other analyst duties. I've enjoyed working on a broad range of projects with a wide variety of people, which the breadth of my role allows for. My team has been very welcoming and made adjusting to the new role much easier. I look forward to continuing my work at Vita – the provision of high quality and easily digestible data is vital to maintaining efficient healthcare services.

Jacob Hawkes – NHS Data Analyst





# Part Two:

## Statement of assurance

### I Data Security and Protection Toolkit (DSPT)

During the reporting period, we submitted our 2020/21 DSPT assessment on 29th June 2021. We met all mandatory requirements.

Vita Health Group uses the toolkit reporting mechanism to create action plans. During the reporting period, our primary focus has been to uplift from Cyber Essentials to Cyber Essentials Plus. Enhanced certification on schedule for the next reporting period. We are on track for our June DSPT 2022 submission.

### I Safeguarding

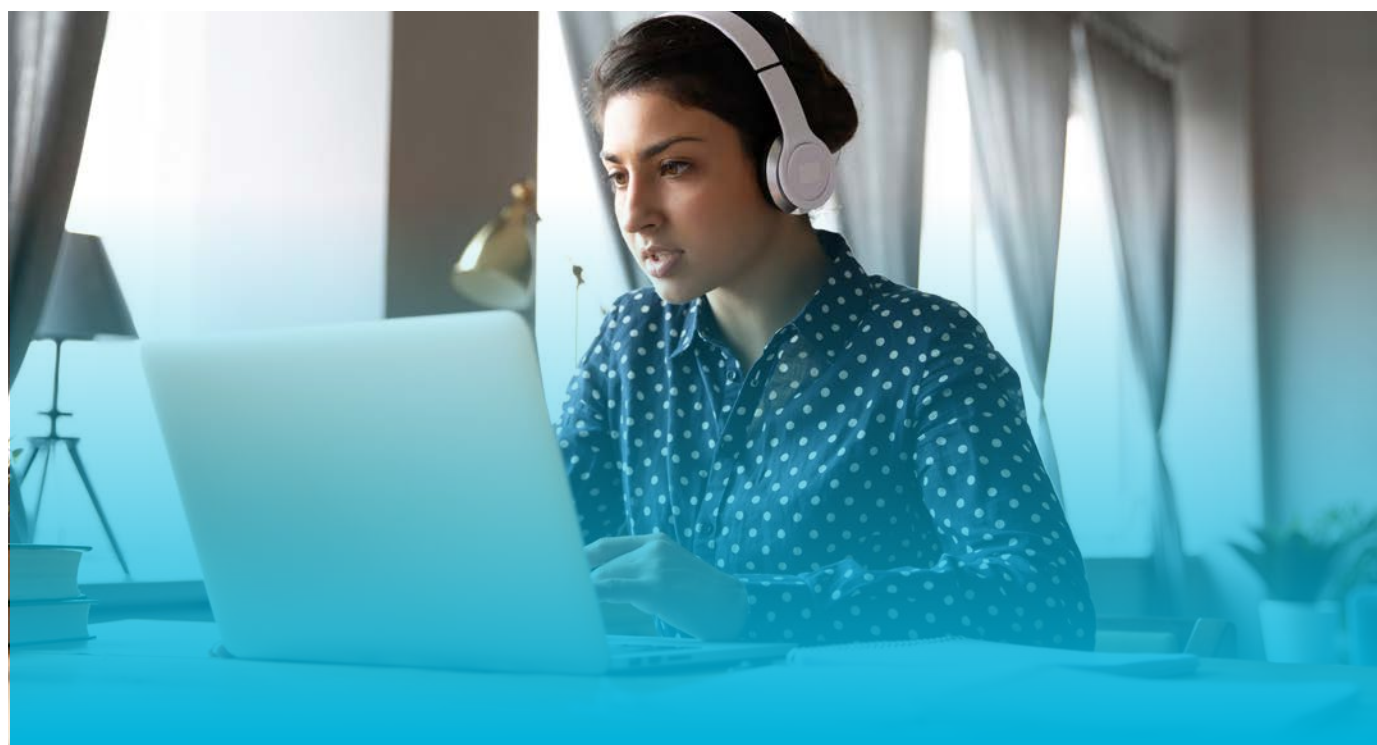
During the reporting period we have continued to implement change to ensure we constantly improve how we protect our staff, our service-users and their carers and family members from avoidable harm, including:

- ✔ Expanded our Safeguarding Team by appointing three additional local Safeguarding Leads, and two regional Safeguarding Leads.
- ✔ Providing external training to our local Safeguarding Leads with the delivery of a bespoke WRAP workshop in extremism and exploitation; resulted in our first 'Prevent' referral being made and shared across teams to consolidate learning.

### I Monitor NHS Provider Licence

On 12th January 2021, Vita Health Solutions Limited, a subsidiary of Vita Health Group was issued its first NHS Provider Licence by Monitor/NHS Improvement.

We have supplied Monitor with assurances regarding 'fit and proper persons' checks of our Directors including Chief Executive Officer (CEO), our continued registration as a provider with the Care Quality Commission (CQC), our annual financial reports, and applicable systems for compliance with the licence conditions and related obligations. To date, we have not had any concerns raised regarding our licence.



# Part Two:

## Statement of assurance

### I Chief Medical Officer statement of assurance

My first year as Vita Health Group Chief Medical Officer (CMO) has been eventful, both in NHS service provision, and for the business. The Covid-19 pandemic continues to necessitate a challenging but exciting pace of change in delivery of healthcare services, which is sometimes difficult to comprehend. As the virus mutations seem to be leading us towards a more endemic picture, we must continue to adapt and evolve to facilitate the urgent 'catch up' required in our health services.

Innovative and demonstrably effective musculoskeletal and mental health interventions are key to servicing unmet need and improving waiting lists, while more digital strategies to approach these and chronic disease management will be vital to providing excellent care, which continues to be accessible and free at the point of need.

We have spent the reporting period supporting and developing key clinical strategies, staff appraisals and clinical continual professional development. Our aim has been to build experienced and clinically excellent multi-disciplinary clinical teams to support delivery of high quality, safe and effective care to our service-users. Our CQC inspection in December 2021 confirmed our provision to be of a high standard.

My role is to lead clinical engagement within Vita Health Group, partner with other clinicians and contribute to the delivery and development of Vita Health Group's wider agenda. During the reporting period, our Clinical Governance Team has grown considerably to keep pace with company expansion, and we have evolved our systems and approach to accommodate service-user need, provider priorities, and staff wellbeing. In supporting clinical leadership for academic and research activity, we strive to provide a clinical environment that attracts the best talent against the challenging recruitment backdrop of the Covid pandemic.



Importantly, as CMO, one of my responsibilities is to put listening into action so the service-user voice is articulated and heard at the highest level of our organisation. Overseeing our safeguarding procedures, with respect to vulnerable children and adults, is a key part of this listening role. It is also vital that our team continues to focus on listening to our key external partners and stakeholders and build those relationships.

Our newly established Clinical Advisory Board helps foster a corporate culture of medical and scientific rigor, alongside ethical behaviour. Happily, this gives us sufficient independence and authority within the company to affect tough decisions, regardless of reporting lines and to provide advice to the Board on all professional medical issues.

Encouraged by experiences within the scope of quality and safety governance and supported by Vita Health Group's leadership, during the reporting period we have explored the field of Value Based Health and Social Care. We are continually seeking to demonstrate improvement in patient recorded experience and outcome measures, and integrate this approach into our NHS provision, in collaboration with Commissioners and other providers. Vita Health Group's award-winning digital applications are great examples of this, and of relevance in a value based post-Covid era.

By prioritising leadership and support for our staff, with a genuine care for our service-users, I am committed to assisting Vita Health Group to develop our vision to improve the value of clinical outcomes, reduce service-user harm and transform the service-user experience at every interface.

**Joanne Longstaffe**  
Chief Medical Officer



# Part Two: Statement of assurance

## I Registered Manager statement of assurance

We have maintained our registration with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) at our Crystal Palace site for 'diagnostic and screening procedures' and 'treatment of disease, disorder or injury'. We arranged an internal mock inspection in October 2021, which provided us with focus for ongoing improvements. In December our local inspector joined us for a week of remote meetings culminating in a full inspection day in Crystal Palace in December 2021. We were pleased to achieve a 'Good' rating across all 5 Key Lines of Enquires.

This year we have steered a course through a return to full face to face capacity, whilst aligning with changing government guidance and retaining the useful innovations initiated out of necessity in response to the pandemic. Some of these have made measurable differences to the effectiveness of our services. For example, dedicated 'blitz' injection clinics have provided a 30% uplift in the capacity of our injecting clinicians, improving access and timely treatment for service-users but also providing variety and stimulation for our developing clinicians who support clinic delivery. Furthermore, because of increased remote working, we introduced a fast-track diagnostics pathway to move simple cases from physiotherapy to diagnostics without the need for an MCATs appointment. This has been retained as an effective improvement in the way we deliver care.

We have built on our patient safety culture by introducing Infection Prevention and Control Champions, firmly embedding responsibility for hygiene standards across our clinics with those who use them most. This initiative has provided consistent improvement in audit and a tangible change in accountability for the teams. We have provided external training for our local Safeguarding Leads with the delivery of a bespoke WRAP workshop in extremism and exploitation, our first 'Prevent' referral was made in the following months and shared across the teams to consolidate learning.

The pilot of our digital triage tool was concluded and launched to provide immediate access to the next step in the appropriate care pathway for service-users who wanted the convenience of digital access without the tie of an appointment time or location. This has grown to account for approximately a third of our current referrals. We have also supported our local GP practices by providing fully supervised First Contact Practitioners in their surgeries. To meet demand but maintain high standards of competency, a system of remote supervision was successfully implemented, and we have submitted our first portfolio to Health Education England for approval.

Our colleagues told us in the employee survey that energy levels were low. We responded with an additional day of leave for all, and the introduction of Mental Health Advocates across the business to boost resilience and help colleagues address any mental health concerns early in a safe space. We also reviewed and relaunched our appraisal process to focus on wellbeing and development,

which was accompanied by a training module ensuring all managers focus first and foremost on the wellbeing of their teams, moving onto performance next, and ensuring everyone makes time and space for development.

Finally, we have demonstrated the care that is central to our ethos both to our service-users and our colleagues, by making significant improvements to sick and maternity pay. Our staff networks have become a part of everyday life at Vita, making structural changes to how we operate; we have attained accreditations as Disability Confident, Stonewall Diversity Champion, Mindful Employer and Employer with Heart. We are proud of the progress we have made over the year and the colleagues who have been heard to make Vita Health Group a more diverse and inclusive workplace. We hope that this will give greater courage to those whose voices we are still to hear and look forward to what the coming year brings.

**Jenny Ralls**  
CQC Registered Manager and National MSK Clinical Lead






# Part Two: Statement of assurance

## I Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC) statement of assurance

Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC) continues to play a significant role in reducing and preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus. We have come a long way since the start of the pandemic more than two years ago. This time last year, the government roadmap out of COVID-19 restrictions was in its infancy and the journey was very sporadic whilst the UK endeavoured to overcome risks from new variants, fully embed the national vaccination and booster programme, and keep up to date with changing rules and restrictions. Fast forward to today and we finally hit a milestone, where we can emerge from our company COVID-19 Business Continuity Plan and into a new chapter of normality.

Our IPC success, recognised in November 2021 through winning 'Best COVID-19 Response in Healthcare' at the Covid Response Awards, demonstrates our commitment to strong leadership, especially during periods of change. This applies not only at the point of the emergency outbreak, but also the consistent responsiveness and resilience of our entire workforce throughout the COVID-19 journey.

I must also touch on our CQC inspection of our Musculoskeletal Services in December 2021 which achieved a 'Good' rating in all five key standards of care. Our IPC framework referred to within the CQC report in 'are services safe?' demonstrated compliance and assurance of IPC standards that align with the requirements of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014, the Code of Practice for health and adult social care on the prevention and control of infections, and NICE guidelines.

It gives me immense pleasure to introduce our local IPC Champions in our MSK services who are leading on quality improvement and quality assurance matters. The group are a combination of clinical and non-clinical

employees who are responsible for challenging and championing IPC practice in clinical sites, at the point of care.

Our IPC Team continue to work in triangulation with Facilities and Health and Safety, meeting monthly on all related governance, quality, risk, and compliance matters. Our ongoing development of a new IPC framework includes self-assessment against the 'supporting excellence in IPC behaviours' toolkit and fostering integration, alliances, and partnerships within IPC, internally and beyond VHG. Finally, I would like to thank everyone at Vita Health Group for their ongoing commitment to our IPC agenda. It has been a challenging couple of years throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and despite this, we have achieved so much with an unwavering level of vigour.

**Yvonne Attwell**  
Head of Governance

*Yvonne Attwell*



# Part Two: Statement of assurance

## I Head of Safeguarding statement of assurance

Ensuring we protect our staff, our service-users and their family members and dependents from avoidable harm, and promote their welfare and respect for their human rights are key components of our integrated clinical governance framework. Effective safeguarding is also fundamental to achieving our mission of making people better and delivering best in class healthcare. Therefore, our safeguarding provision is continually reviewed to ensure that those who use our services are safe from abuse and exploitation, and the care they receive is safe and effective.

Our Safeguarding Team operates an integrated model with safeguarding expertise embedded within every service, supported by central Safeguarding Leads and a central safeguarding supervision framework. Over the last 12 months our Safeguarding Team has expanded through:

- ✔ Three additional local Safeguarding Leads; appointed to support the growth of our business and ensure our services have access to the necessary safeguarding expertise and supervision to provide the right level of safeguarding to those who need it.
- ✔ Two regional Safeguarding Leads who support our expanding mental health portfolio, and who provide an additional layer of cover to ensure clinical teams always have a senior point of escalation when required.

Our Safeguarding Team now has the following members:

- ✔ Medical Director (EMT) Head of Safeguarding
- ✔ National Clinical Lead (MSK) Head of Safeguarding (MSK)
- ✔ National Clinical Lead (Mental Health) Head of Safeguarding (Mental Health)
- ✔ Regional Safeguarding Leads (Mental Health)
- ✔ MSK and Mental Health local Safeguarding Leads



Our quarterly CPD and supervision has been ongoing for our Safeguarding Team, with external training provided on the PREVENT strategy and use of CHANNEL to identify and prevent potential radicalisation. We have continued to use our Safeguarding Bulletin to share learning from these sessions across Vita Health Group, providing vignettes for case discussion at a local level, supporting the development of best practice within teams. During the reporting period, our bulletins focussed on improving knowledge of the categories of abuse thought to be more prevalent through Covid-19 and lockdown. Topics included Domestic Abuse (and how to use the CAADA-DASH risk assessment), Economic and Financial Abuse, and Human Trafficking.

Our September 2021 bulletin covered the separate issue of terrorism, radicalisation and the PREVENT strategy. Our mandatory safeguarding training continues to be in-line with the Intercollegiate Document, ensuring our staff complete safeguarding training that is proportionate to their role within Vita Health Group. Most of this training is delivered via our e-learning platform. Our 2021 staff survey (82% response rate) shows our training is effective: 98% of respondents confirmed they were confident how to seek support for a safeguarding concern (9% improvement on last year), and 95% of respondents confirmed they were confident how to report a safeguarding concern.

**Philip Adkins**  
Head of Safeguarding (Mental Health)







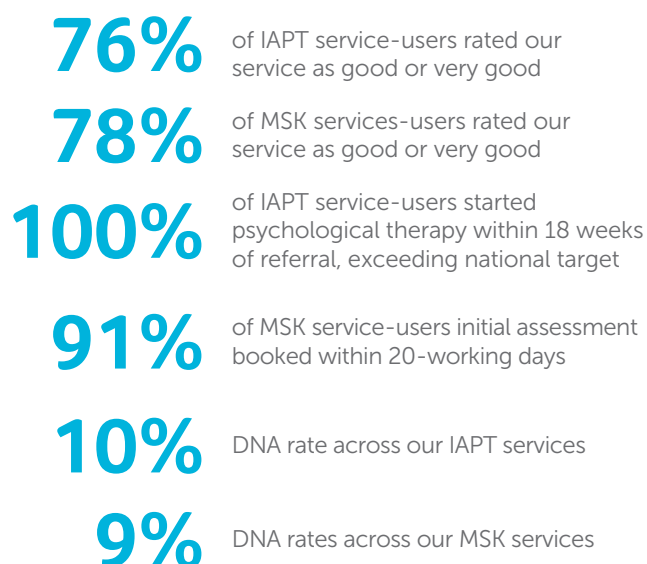
# Part Three



# Part Three:

## Enriching the service-user experience

During the reporting period we have worked hard to provide a positive experience for our service-users, including ensuring minimal waiting times for appointments.



Great communication and brilliant therapist. Very understanding, knowledgeable and helpful.

My clinician was excellent and made me feel safe to open up. She was really accommodating of my disabilities and scheduling around my education.

Appointments always ran on time, and I had regular contact regarding appointments in advance. The staff were very professional, friendly, helpful, and approachable.

Clear and effective advice on exercises I needed to do, clear answers to all my questions over a few phone conversations as my recovery progressed gradually over a few months. Without this I would have either done my exercises in a wrong/ineffective way, and I probably would have lost motivation to continue with them, and I probably would still be unable to walk very far without pain.

Everyone I spoke to at VitaMinds were very helpful and treated me with compassion and respect whilst maintaining a professional manner.

I was always made to feel comfortable and at ease to talk openly without feeling judged. I was impressed with how I was always asked if I was alright to talk in a safe environment and on one occasion, when I wasn't, it was easily sorted by re arranging to another time.

Excellent service. It's completely changed my life.

My therapist was exactly the right balance of caring, empathetic, and professional. I felt listened to, understood, and completely supported.

Seen on time, positive experience, felt I was given plenty of time to discuss my condition and options to move forward. Came away reassured, supported and a new confidence that I will get better and be able to resume a quality of life.

All of the people I dealt with were friendly and caring, helpful, and clear. The clinician was excellent - she performed a very thorough assessment, listened very carefully, and explained the tests and results to me very well. She provided clear advice and a treatment plan to help me with my recovery and gave me useful tips for my ongoing health/exercise approach.

## Part Three: Optimising service-user safety

Vita Health Group's safety strategy ensures we continuously look for ways to improve our safety systems whilst optimising high safety performance. Our safety culture is embedded into every service and function that we provide, from initial recruitment of our colleagues to the point of care for our service-users. Our safety initiatives have demonstrated excellent progress, despite forced changes in the way we work resultant from the COVID-19 pandemic. We have worked tirelessly over the past two years to ensure our safety performance is maintained, and we have embedded learning from the pandemic to support this. We have trained more incident investigators in root cause analysis methodology, and we have introduced risk 'drop in' sessions where scenarios and risk registers are shared to aid learning and reinforce a positive safety culture.

In the forthcoming year we intend to further embed key elements taken from the NHS Patient Safety Strategy. We will introduce the Patient Safety Incident Response Framework (PSIRF) which will replace the Serious Incident Framework (SIF) and use early adopters' experiences of PSIRF for shared learning. We will also, over a two-year period, adopt a new Risk Management system to enhance our safety agenda, offering greater insight and transparency of key safety information including risk registers, incidents, accidents, complaints, and safer compliance checks in a single system accessible to all colleagues wherever they work. This quality improvement will be instrumental in driving our safety agenda, ensuring all aggregated data is available to better inform risk, analysis, and decision making.

## Part Three: Improving clinical effectiveness

### Our IAPT Services

During the reporting period we implemented several initiatives to improve our clinical effectiveness, specifically we:

- Employed an IAPT Compliance Manager, and service level Compliance Officers, to review service-user feedback and support development of quality improvement plans.
- Introduced the IESO platform to provide 'talk/type' therapy option for service-users.
- Enhanced our clinical audit schedule by introducing clinical live observation audits and supervisor reports.
- Appointed dedicated Senior Supervisors to work with our IAPT Trainees and associated training providers, to enhance the trainee experience.
- Embedded digital triage into all IAPT services, enhancing service-user safety with early risk identification tools and reducing our assessment waits through focused assessment pathway.

As a result, we have seen a 3.5% improvement in our clinical recovery rate and have maintained our reliable improvement rate.

**55%**  
IAPT clinical  
recovery

**69.3%**  
IAPT reliable  
improvement

“

Earlier this year I attended a Vita Health Group CPD event focussed on improving clinical and case management supervision skills of both high and low intensity therapists. It was facilitated by an experienced CBT Lecturer and clinical supervisor. The training covered theoretical perspectives, how to structure supervision sessions, and how to effectively deliver one to one and group supervision. I personally found the workshop to be extremely informative – it enhanced my clinical skills to ensure I provide good quality supervision.

**Greg Johnson – Senior High Intensity Therapist**

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“

I attended a Vita Health Group CPD event on Supervision for High and Low-Intensity Therapists. The course was run by Nick Hool, an experienced University lecturer and clinical supervisor. The training was excellent. I learnt how to structure and facilitate supervision and learned the theoretical aspects underpinning supervision.

**Sean Saunders - High-Intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapist & EMDR Therapist**

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# Part Three: Improving clinical effectiveness

## Our MSK Services

During the reporting period, we implemented several initiatives to improve our clinical effectiveness, specifically we:

- ✔ Moved our clinical records system to a more stable and reliable platform allowing us to share records with our local GPs.
- ✔ Embedded our First Contact Practitioner (FCP) development programme with our first FCP graduate, who is now training to become a supervisor.
- ✔ Internally published evidence-based clinical pathways to support delivery of consistent care, and the ability to click from the pathway into referral and escalation forms.

- ✔ Implemented 'write to me' to enshrine a more patient-centred approach to communication.
- ✔ Empowered an 'Infection Prevention and Control Champions' Team to support everyone in our clinics to make best practice part of our everyday.
- ✔ Worked with GPs to streamline the referral process, ending repeat referrals and multiple rejections of referrals.

**As a result, we have seen strong results in our MSK services, including 85% of MSK service-users reporting positive improvement (data April to November 2021 only due to system change), which is 3% higher than the last reporting period.**

# Part Three: Driving forwards innovation and growth

Despite the COVID-19 related challenges businesses have continue to face and strived to overcome, Vita Health Group has continued to identify improved ways of operating, which embrace opportunities for innovation and growth.

## I Developed new services

As part of the Integrated Primary Community Care Initiative in our Basildon and Brentwood Service we have:

- ✔ Mobilised a Mental Health First Contract Practitioner (FCP) Service. This is now live in all six Primary Care Networks (PCNs), working to alleviate pressures placed on GPs.
- ✔ Mobilised a Step 4 mental health service, bridging the gap between primary and secondary care, which we launched in September 2021.

In our Bristol, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) IAPT Service we have established a direct referral route to our IAPT service, bypassing the need for service-users to attend a triage appointment with a GP, helping alleviate winter pressures experienced by primary care. Since launch in January 2022, we have received 262 referrals via this pathway. 5 PCNs have not made any referrals via this pathway; we are addressing this through:

- ✔ Offering further training sessions to GP practices in these PCNs.
- ✔ Our Partnership Liaison Officers visiting GP Practices in these PCNs, to promote service awareness.

- ✔ Providing further assurance to GP Practices, by updating our standard operating procedures to include this pathway, and associated risk management procedure.

**3,618**  
FCP appointments  
attended

**308**  
referrals to our  
Step 4 service

# Part Three:

## Driving forwards innovation and growth

### Launched new Patient Administration System

To share records more effectively with community services and GPs nationwide, during the reporting period we launched SystmOne in both our MSK service and our Mental Health FCP Service. This accredited system, widely used by the NHS, allows us greater connectivity to referring agencies and improved strategic reporting.



Implementing SystmOne, an NHSX recognised platform, has brought a range of benefits. It has provided our clinicians with a more stable clinical recording system, resulting in better clinical outcomes reporting. It has also enhanced our auditing ability, which will lead to improvements across our MSK services. It has also enabled, through user-friendly clinical templates and case management structure, our clinicians to have more service-user interaction time, enhancing the service-user experience.

**Lisa Jelly – Director of Mobilisation and Transformation**



### Staff inspired innovation

In recognition that the best sources of innovation and forward thinking come from our workforce, our newly founded staff networks have directly influenced:

- ✔ Our Partnership working with Stonewall.
- ✔ Policy changes, enhancing maternity benefits and flexible working arrangements.
- ✔ Speak Up initiative.
- ✔ An enhanced Performance Wellbeing and Development initiative.
- ✔ Range of initiatives to drive workforce equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- ✔ Launch of our Thrive Mentoring Programme, where our Senior Management Team provide monthly mentoring, supporting internal career development.





# Part Three:

## Providing vital employment support

Employment Advisors are an integral part of our Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR) IAPT workforce, providing vital employment support, advice, and guidance to IAPT service-users who need support to:

- Overcome workplace challenges to retain employment.
- Return to work after time off.
- Secure new employment.

The effects of mental ill-health and employment difficulties can often be interrelated. As a Senior Employment Advisor working within Vita Health Group's Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland IAPT service, I promote the benefits of service-users receiving employment support concurrent to their IAPT psychological therapies treatment. The national Employment Advisors in IAPT pilot recently reinforced the need for employment support provision, as it enables service-users to address their therapy and employment goals together, with therapists focussing on treatment and Employment Advisors focussing on specific employment concerns. This joint working approach provides a tailored package of care within Vita, by addressing the common effects of anxiety and depression on an individual's ability to remain in, return to, or find employment. I enjoy working with a team of experienced, dedicated, and passionate Employment Advisors; we value the impact our role has on supporting service-users to achieve their goals.

**Ajay Maisuria – LLR Senior Employment Advisor**

Over the reporting period, 1,234 LLR IAPT service-users were recommended employment support, of which 817 attended assessments.

**49%** secured and started new employment following employment support

**36%** remained in work following employment support

**15%** remained in work following employment support

"Thanks to my Advisor I was able to get back on my feet. And because of all this support now I know that my life and future can be much brighter and better."

"I have found the sessions with Vita Health Group's Employment Advisor so helpful. I found great reassurance at the beginning, and throughout, when I was assured that I didn't need to put pressure on myself. It made me take a step back and see my struggle from a different (more positive) perspective. The things that stand out, are being asked at the start of each call how I was feeling/how I had been over the past 2 weeks, being listened to without judgement, being told that I was doing everything right in my job search, and having written resources and information emailed to me after the calls. I think overall, it has been very helpful to just talk to someone who has been supportive of me and gently guided me to take real actions, which I might not have felt confident enough to do on my own. So, thank you very much for all your encouraging words and positivity."

"The employment support really helped me move forward and become aware of my anxiety and how to better prepare myself in a working environment. Thank you so much!"

"The Employment Advisor was amazing at building up my courage to tackle difficult situations at work, helping me deal with the challenges that I have faced in the past year, solve on-going finance issues, and increase my confidence to move on in my new career."

"My goal with the calls we had was to be in a position where I was able to build confidence, be ready to undertake any potential opportunities that arise and most of all, find a new job. And because of you, I have achieved that."

# Part Three:

## Providing vital employment support

Within our Derby and Derbyshire IAPT service, Ingeus dedicate two Employment Advisors to Vita Health Group's IAPT service. During the 2021-22 contract year Vita Health Group Derby and Derbyshire IAPT referred 190 services-users for employment support, of which 138 (73%) accepted. Of these, 82 (59%) confirmed an outcome whilst on programme with us:

**46%** secured and started new employment

**22%** returned to work after time off work on a fit/sick note

**32%** retained work

“ Helping to positively affect a client's life is the most rewarding part of the role and reflecting on a client's journey with them and seeing them increase in confidence on a weekly basis is amazing to see. The role can definitely be a challenging one, but the reward of helping a client get to where they need to be is definitely worth it.

**Jase Owen – Derby and Derbyshire Employment Advisor**

“ The initial assessment by the therapist was very thorough. I was pleasantly surprised to be advised there would be both CBT to help deal with my mental health issues, and employment advice. I felt/feel really supported. Thank you.

**Derby and Derbyshire IAPT service-user**

“ I would have found it incredibly difficult to proceed with my recent employment without Jake's help. He has been invaluable in offering advice and helping me to break down any barriers and challenges I have encountered. He has a positive solution to any problem and listens without judgement. He has supported me through applications, interviews and starting two new jobs and I have noticed my confidence increasing after our conversations. He's helped me to make decisions, formulate plans and checked in with me at every stage to ensure I'm keeping on top of everything. It's of huge reassurance to know he's there at the end of a phone or email and continues to support me well into my new role. He's also very friendly, personable, and easy to talk to. Nothing is too much trouble. I'm so grateful to have him in my support network at times of transition making the changes easier to get to grips with.

**Derby and Derbyshire IAPT service-user**

“ After finding myself off work long term for the first time due to anxiety I self-referred to VitaMinds. During the initial consultation they asked if I would like to be referred to an employment support service. I wanted to take all the help I could get so I agreed to be contacted by them although I was unsure of how they could help me. Jake from IAPT Employment Support Service contacted me shortly after and explained how they could support me while I was off work. I had a weekly phone call with Jake thereafter and the support I received was invaluable and ultimately changed my life for the better. Jake quickly recognised that I was not happy in my job and that it was contributing towards my anxiety. He encouraged me to apply for roles I never would have thought to, his enthusiasm gave me the confidence to try different things. He helped me create a CV and always offered his support when writing applications. When my employer became difficult, he offered support and told me what I needed to do. If it were not for his support, I don't know how I would have coped. When a job came up that I really wanted to do but I was unsure whether to apply or not, Jake's enthusiasm made me take a chance and I ended up with my dream job! Since leaving my old job and starting my new one my anxiety has almost disappeared. I am so grateful for the support I received from Jake at IAPT Employment Support Service, it changed my life!

**Derby and Derbyshire IAPT service-user**

# Part Three: Developing careers at Vita Health Group



I joined Vita Health Group in August 2019 as a Cognitive Behavioural Therapist. I was particularly drawn to the company's robust clinical governance, flexibility, excellent clinical outcomes, and occupational focus in therapy. Within 10 months I progressed to Duty Therapist. Within a further 3 months I progressed to Senior CBT Team Lead, where I managed a team of highly skilled CBT therapists. I was able to be involved with Vita customers, supporting the implementation of supervision models and clinical guides. This gave me insight into the operational and commercial aspects of mental healthcare. Within another 3 months, I was promoted again and am now excelling in my role as CBT Service Manager. I am proud to work for Vita, and immensely grateful for the breadth of experiences I have gained within the business. They have allowed me to bridge the gap between my occupational and clinical psychology training and to successfully lead a team of highly skilled and varied clinicians.

**Jacy Okrah – Cognitive Behavioural Therapist (CBT) → Duty Therapist → Senior CBT Team Leader → CBT Service Manager**



I joined Vita Health Group in June 2018 after finishing my A-levels. I was looking to start a career but was not sure what I wanted to pursue. I had previous customer service experience, which helped me to secure a role as an Administrator within Vita's National Service Centre (NSC). After just under a year in this role, I was promoted to NSC Team Lead where I focussed on management and performance monitoring. In October 2020, I moved into a Course Facilitator role to help manage and improve our programme of NHS mental health webinars. This role provided me excellent insight into our NHS division during a time of rapid growth. Soon after, we secured two large NHS mental health contracts, and the NHS Mobilisation Team needed additional support. The varied skills I had gained at Vita, including strong project management skills, supported my successful application for NHS Mobilisation Co-ordinator in February 2021. I am grateful for the opportunities provided by Vita Health Group.

**Bea Farrell – Administrator → Team Leader → Course Facilitator → NHS Mobilisation Co-ordinator**



I joined Vita Health Group in 2014 as Occupational Health Service Lead and was promoted to MSK Corporate Service Lead in 2017. Being people centred is one of Vita Health Group's core values, supporting and developing its workforce. In line with this, Vita Health Group has invested considerably in my development, supporting me to attend numerous leadership and development programmes, in addition to receiving personal coaching and mentoring from colleagues both within and outside of Vita, all of which have supported my leadership journey. This encouraged my switch, in 2019, to the NHS side of our business, where I took on the role of Head of Service for our large BNSSG IAPT Service. This allowed me to broaden my horizons and areas of expertise and was a key step in my career progression. In 2020, I was promoted to my current role of National Operations Director. I have overall responsibility for the strategic, financial, and operational delivery of our NHS mental and physical health services, which is extremely rewarding. My career journey with Vita has been made possible by the investment and exposure I have received, for which I am immensely grateful.

**Miles Atkinson – Occupational Health Service Lead → MSK Corporate Service Lead → Head of Service (BNSSG) → National Operations Director NHS Services**

# Part Three: Developing careers at Vita Health Group



I joined Vita Health Group in July 2014 as an Administrator within their National Support Centre, supporting both our mental and physical health service-users. This was a fast-paced environment where I used my problem-solving skills to deal effectively with numerous challenging calls, providing me with a good insight into Vita's core purpose. In 2017 I was promoted to Team Leader, providing me with essential management experience. In May 2019 I was offered a secondment into a Project Officer role in Vita's Commercial Team, which was subsequently made a permanent role. To support this, I undertook training in project management methodologies, which subsequently helped me secure my current role of NHS Mobilisation Lead. Since taking on this role, I have been involved in mobilising many projects, and supporting teams post mobilisation stage. Vita has trained, mentored, and guided me, and made me feel valued, making a huge difference to my career development. As Vita Health Group continues its journey, I look forward to the opportunities that lie ahead and playing a part in its success.

**Rebecca Pettitt – Administrator → Team Leader → Project Officer  
→ NHS Mobilisation Lead**



I joined Vita Health Group in April 2017 as a Rehabilitation Therapist. Drawing upon my previous experience of assessing the injuries of private clients, and prescribing exercise to help them return to fitness, I delivered Vita's functional restoration programme to our service-users with persistent pain, helping them return to work by improving their fitness and lifestyle using a holistic approach. This role strengthened my knowledge about the link between mental and physical health. In December 2020, an opportunity arose to apply for the role of Healthy Living, Healthy Minds Lead, which involved leading a small team of Health and Wellbeing Coaches, who delivered an exercise and lifestyle programme in our NHS Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) services. My application was successful. Within this role, I developed my leadership and management skills. After eight months, I was promoted to NHS IAPT Health & Wellbeing Service Manager. I am grateful for the opportunities for progression provided by Vita Health Group.

**Janey Bosker – Rehabilitation Therapist → Healthy Living, Healthy Minds Lead →  
Health & Wellbeing Service Manager**



In January 2018, straight from sixth form, I joined Vita Health Group as a HR Administrator. As soon as I commenced employment, I instantly felt part of a team, not only in the HR department but within the whole organisation. After a short time in my role, I started an apprenticeship and began studying for my CIPD Level 3 - HR support. This opportunity allowed me to grow my knowledge and develop personally. Vita has fully encouraged my extra learning and has supported me throughout. In my role as HR Administrator, I supported the NHS Mobilisation Team to successfully mobilise several NHS contracts. This experience gave me the confidence to grow as a HR professional. In August 2020, I was promoted to HR Advisor role, and in October 2020 to my current role of Senior HR Advisor. I am responsible for managing the HR Administration Team and providing HR support to our support services teams and private division. I am very thankful to be a part of the Vita Health Group team, and am grateful for the opportunities that have led me to where I am.

**Jasmine Ager – HR Administrator → HR Advisor → HR Senior Advisor**



# Part Three:

## Statements from Commissioners

### I Statement from Basildon and Brentwood Commissioners

From Basildon and Brentwood Clinical Commissioning Groups' response to the Vita Health Quality Account for 2021/22.

As a commissioner of services delivered by Vita Health Group, Basildon, and Brentwood Clinical Commissioning Group (BBCCG) are required to guarantee the information within this Quality Account is accurate, impartially interpreted, and representative of the range of services delivered by Vita Health Group within BB CCG.

BBCCG would like to commend Vita Health Group's response to the continuing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic into 2021/2022 in delivering services to its population, taking care of its staff and the constructive partnership that exists between BBCCG officers and colleagues in Vita Health Group. BBCCG would like to commend Vita Health for their achievements during 2021/2022 for Basildon and Brentwood residents including:

- ✔ Expansion of the Mental Health First Contact Practitioner across all 6 of the Primary Care Networks within BB CCG
- ✔ Implementation of the Step 4 Mental Health Service and Treatment which has enabled accessed to a significant number of people who would otherwise have experienced lengthy waits
- ✔ Physical health service and enduring mental illness (SMI) outreach support service. This service provided comprehensive and systematic annual health checks and cardiovascular risk assessments for those on the SMI register, supporting primary care to meet their health check national targets.

Vita Health Group has also highlighted in their Quality Account specific achievements relating to quality improvement, equality, diversity, and inclusion, and enhancing their intranet quality; all of which they are to be commended for.

BBCCG notes and is supportive of Vita Health Groups Priorities for improvement for 2022/2023:

**Priority 1:** Over the next two years, to continue to invest in improved technology and digitally enabled care to enhance the service-user journey

**Priority 2:** Support Commissioners to achieve wider objectives

**Priority 3:** Expand the reach and specialities of our training provision

**Priority 4:** Continue to improve our patient safety culture, systems, and behaviours.

In summary, BBCCG agree with the key priorities for improvement to be undertaken during 2022/2023 and are committed to working collaboratively with Vita Health Group to support their continuous improvements. BBCCG would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication by Vita Health staff during the challenges that the pandemic posed. BBCCG considers the draft Quality Account for Vita Health covering 2021/2022 as providing an accurate and balanced picture of the reporting period. We will continue to work alongside Vita Health Group to seek assurance on performance and delivery of care by regular monitoring through agreed processes and throughout the coming year.

**Rachel Hearn**  
 Executive Director Nursing and Quality  
 Mid and South Essex Clinical Commissioning Groups



# Part Three:

## Statements from Commissioners

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### I Statement from South East London Commissioners

South East London Clinical Commissioning Group (SEL CCG) commissions a range of healthcare services from our providers, including MSK services from Vita Health Group, on behalf of the population we serve across six boroughs in south east London (SEL).

SELCCG wishes to thank Vita Health Group for sharing their 2021/22 Quality Account with us and welcomes the opportunity to provide a commissioner statement. We are pleased that the working relationship between the CCG and Vita Health Group continues to work well and look forward to continuing this engagement going forward. We confirm that we have reviewed the information contained within the Quality Account, recognising our input is in relation to MSK provision. We confirm that there has been a good level of satisfaction with MSK services provided by Vita throughout 2021-22. We are also assured that learning from any incidents or serious incidents is transparent and that learning from such incidents is embedded into practice. We welcome and support the Quality Improvement Priorities for 2022-23.

Sonia Colwill  
Director of Quality



**South East London**  
Clinical Commissioning Group

# Part Three:

## Statement from a key partner

### I Statement from Equality Action



Equality Action has been a sub-contracted partner for the VitaMinds Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland (LLR) IAPT Talking Therapies service since April 2021.

Equality Action was originally set up in 1969 to work towards eliminating discrimination and promoting good relations between people from different backgrounds. As the communities we serve grew and became more established, we continued to respond to their needs, adapting our services to improve the quality of life of our service-users. Our mission, which is to promote equality and diversity, dignity, and respect through inclusion, is at the heart of everything we do.

We do this by:

- ✔ Offering specialist support and advice services
- ✔ Providing access to local learning and education opportunities
- ✔ Delivering community cohesion activities and events
- ✔ Campaigning on issues that affect people's lives
- ✔ Offering inclusive health and wellbeing activities
- ✔ Creating volunteering opportunities

We have a strong track record of delivering projects to identify inequalities and overcome barriers. Our work enables people from marginalised backgrounds to have access to services, drawing on our understanding of the cultural barriers they experience and the language support we provide.

We are recognised as a key organisation that has built a reputation of working with partners across Charnwood to ensure we provide holistic support to our service-users. We offer a safe space embedded within communities and act as a focal point and source of expertise on matters of equality and diversity for individuals, groups, communities, and organisations, drawing upon the experience and knowledge of our staff, trustees, volunteers, and partners.

Our VitaMinds project draws on our expertise around Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, regarding matters of mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Our initial contact was with Heidi Schanz who approached us to explore our interest in engaging with people from BAME backgrounds. Heidi and her team were excellent in sharing the vision VitaMinds had for the LLR IAPT service,

and the role Equality Action could play. We are one of three local partners that VitaMinds has utilised within their service delivery model, and we work closely with those partners.

We worked together with Heidi and her team to develop the project and agree the key performance indicators that would apply to our service delivery, all geared towards community engagement, which would lead to individuals accessing the service for support. Heidi and her team had approached us due to our other successful projects that had reached communities that are often the hardest to reach due to a range of barriers. These include lack of English language skills, lack of IT and digital skills, lack of confidence, and often the lack of knowledge about what support is available to access.

Once the project was set up, we were put in touch with Osas who is one of VitaMinds Partnership Liaison Officers. Our working relationship with Osas is very positive and we work very closely with her to ensure our services are reaching people from a range of ethnic backgrounds as well as ensuring we deliver qualitative outputs.

We know that engaging with people from BAME backgrounds can be very challenging, especially due to the barriers mentioned above. Our Project Officers ensure our plans always consider cultural and other needs. We have used innovative ways to engage with people.



# Part Three:

## Statement from a key partner

### I Music Beats Project

Our music sessions engage with young people from BAME backgrounds. We have used a local rapper, Lucky C, to bring words and rhythm together in our final Music Beats recording session at Soft Touch Arts. Listen out; we'll be sharing the soundtrack soon!

“

I felt honoured and privileged to be a part of VitaMinds mental health project, as it's something that I am really passionate about. I think men, especially according to social norms, are expected to be tough and not show emotion, which leads to internal suppression. This can then create scars in later life. Collaborating with Equality Action's VitaMinds Project and Soft Touch studios has enabled me to create a song to put myself in someone's shoes who may be experiencing this. I'm hoping the song and project will encourage youth groups, especially from BAME communities, to come forward if they are suffering with their mental health. Or at the very least to spark conversations which can eradicate the negative stigmas surrounding men's mental health, thus encouraging them to get the help and support they need. To be reminded it's ok not to be ok and that there are help and services available to aid in their well-being, it so important.

Lakhibir Legha - Lucky C, rapper

”

### I Faith and Friendship Tent project

We ran free printmaking sessions celebrating the rich cultural diversity of Evington and the surrounding area in Leicester. In March we held a couple of sessions where people from different faiths and cultures came together to help create a fabulous fabric wall hanging that will decorate the Friendship tent - a safe space for all to enjoy. Through this activity we can promote the VitaMinds IAPT service and ensure those that need mental health support, are supported to get this help.

### I Casework and 1-2-1 support

Through our casework, we are also able to identify people who may have underlining mental health issues due to other issues including debt, housing, and immigration. Whilst dealing with the client's immediate issue, our caseworkers look at the holistic need of the client, and where they need referring to the IAPT service, they support the client to access the service.

### I Swimming Session

Our men only swimming session takes place every Tuesday evening at Delisle College, where men from the BAME community participate along with their children. These sessions help them to engage with the local community and promote positive relationships. Due to their work commitments, parents expressed they sometimes are unable to have quality time with their children. These sessions allow them to have that time and increase their interactions with their children, which contributes towards better mental health and wellbeing. The sessions also provide further knowledge of community services and help to promote take up of the VitaMinds IAPT service.

### I International Women's Day

We recently hosted International Women's Day in partnership with Wesley Hall Community Centre based in Leicester City. Over 100 women attended and browsed information and stalls. This event promoted the IAPT Service, resulting in numerous referrals to the IAPT Service.



### I Covid challenges

Although we started building the confidence of people in engaging with our sessions, Covid has brought a lot of challenges. During the end of 2021 (November/December) when the new Omicron variant was identified, people became very scared and reluctant to come out and engage. The number of people attending our sessions reduced and it has taken time, again, to encourage people to engage once restrictions eased in February 2022.

We can see the benefits of the IAPT services and through our contribution, we see more and more people from BAME backgrounds taking up the option to be referred and obtaining vital mental health support. More information about our work with VitaMinds can be seen on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/EAVitaMinds>



# Part Three:

## Statement from a key partner

### Statement from Bluebell Care Trust

The Bluebell Care Trust is a key community partner with VitaMinds in the delivery of the Bristol, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire (BNSSG) IAPT programme.

Our partnership began in 2019 and continues to be a vital resource for parents experiencing mild to moderate mental health difficulties in the perinatal period, as part of the wider pathway of care for perinatal mental health across BNSSG.



At Bluebell, we support parents' mental health and wellbeing during pregnancy, birth and beyond, with a range of tried-and-tested services that support and empower them. We give them tips, tools, and strategies to help manage and improve their own mental wellbeing. Working with NHS professionals from midwives and health visitors to GP's and perinatal mental health teams, we aim to build trusting relationships with families, ensuring they receive the support they need early to prevent more serious difficulties later.

#### Our core services include:

**Bluebell Buddies** – Our award-winning peer support service offers vital one-to-one support for parents. All our Buddies have lived experience of perinatal mental health difficulties, so they can truly empathise with parents. They tailor their support to the parent's needs, offering a listening ear, practical tips for wellbeing and signposting to other services. With support from a Buddy, a parent may gain the confidence to access some additional support, join our Comfort Zone group programme, or drop in at our wellbeing hub, Bluebell Place.

**Comfort Zone** - Our Comfort Zone 11-week group programme runs in three areas of BNSSG and is held in Children's Centres. Comfort Zone gives parents a chance to come together for two hours each week and develop strategies to boost their emotional wellbeing. The group programme offers a free creche alongside the sessions, so parents can focus on their own recovery knowing their infants are safe and happy with our early years team.

**Bluebell Place** - Bluebell Place is our perinatal wellbeing hub in the heart of Bristol. Here, parents are offered warm welcomes, hot cuppas, and a range of activities to support their perinatal mental health.

**Dads in Mind** – We have been supporting dads and partners for over a decade. Some are experiencing their own mental health difficulties or are dealing with trauma



related to the birth of their child. Others may need help whilst supporting a partner who's unwell.

**Eat, sleep and play** - Our Early Years team plays a vital role in supporting parents. As well as providing childcare for the Comfort Zone, the team hosts parent and baby groups, a creche at Bluebell Place and support for feeding and sleep.

The past year has again been an extremely difficult one for expectant and new parents, with ongoing restrictions adding to their feelings of isolation and anxiety. We have continued to provide our support in partnership with VitaMinds, receiving over 270 referrals since March 21 and offering a combination of face to face, online and phone support to ensure parents have been able to continue to access the support they need, even during periods of lockdown.



# Part Three:

## Statement from a key partner

### Measuring our impact:

We use the Work and Social Adjustment Scale to measure wellbeing at the start, during and end of our support, which demonstrates encouraging average recovery rates of between 83% to 93%.

We also capture lots of qualitative feedback, such as wonderful tablecloth drawings completed by each group participant at the end of each Comfort Zone programme, to reflect their recovery journey, quotes, and case studies.

**Ruth Jackson**  
CEO Bluebell Care Trust



Before speaking with Aimee, I was really anxious, suffering from terrible anxiety around sleep due to my two daughters being terrible sleepers and it felt like everything was spiralling. I found it hard to make time for myself and felt guilty when I did. My regular conversations with Aimee, as well as giving me strategies for how to deal with anxiety and insomnia, have really helped me to understand that I am central to the happiness and wellbeing of my family and in order to fulfil their needs I need to look after my own too! Knowing Aimee was going to phone me again, having that appointment in the diary, was itself a huge comfort and took away a lot of the anxiety as I knew I would have a chance to discuss my worries and how to approach them. Thank you, Aimee, and Bluebell, for all that you have done to support me and my family. It will never be forgotten, and we are all so grateful.

**Bluebell service-user (mum who received support from Bluebell Buddy service)**

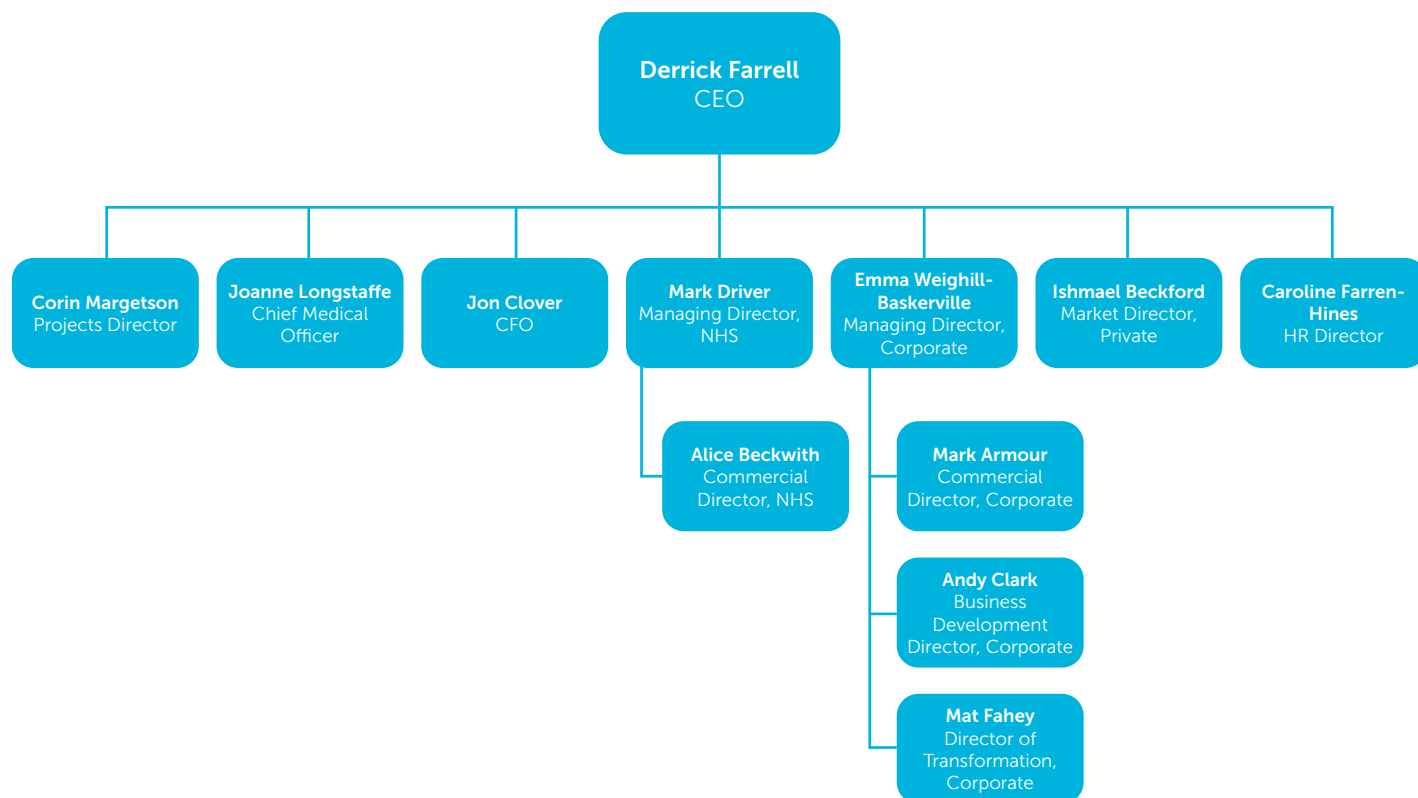


# Appendix 1:

## Local audits

Audit	Description
Information Security / Quality Management Systems	Audit of our systems and services ensuring our compliance with ISO 27001 standards. Audit of our systems and services ensuring our compliance with ISO 9001 standards.
Lone working	Audit of lone working clinics and policies.
Safeguarding	Audit of safeguarding cases, safeguarding reporting processes, policies, supervision, and mandatory training.
Infection prevention and control	Audit of clinics, equipment, compliance, policies and procedures, and clinical practice.
Hand hygiene	Audit of environment, equipment and compliance with hand hygiene technique, policies, and procedures.
Employee compliance	Audit of mandatory compliance requirements including professional registration, DBS clearance, insurance, and mandatory training.
Information governance	Audit of data protection and information governance compliance.
Administration support	Audit of call quality, email quality, and customer services.
Clinical notes	Audit of the standard of treatment notes and record keeping.
Incidents/accidents	Audit of incidents/accidents and supporting processes.
Complaints	Audit of complaints and complaint processes.
Clinical	Audit of clinical reasoning in-line with NICE or relevant guidance.
IAPTs clinical notes	Audit and enhanced audit of all disciplines notes and outcomes from meetings across the whole service.
Quality assurance	Meta audits to determine if clinical notes / treatment have been conducted appropriately.
Triage	Audit of clinical guidelines, care plans, chaperone, and appointments.
Governance, quality, and safety clinical visits	Overarching audit encapsulating all aspects of quality and safety within a clinical environment, including equipment, medicines management, and Infection, Prevention and Control. This also includes interviews with colleagues and service-users and triangulating the results.
Document control	Audit of our document control register.
Paper Triage (GP Referrals to MCATS, T&O, Rheumatology and Pain management)	Peer audits for consistency and appropriateness of decision-making.
Audit Register / Schedule	Compliance audit.
Serious diagnosis and red flags	Audit of non-conformances to flag under, over or missed diagnosis.
Injection therapy notes and competence	Clinician audits through observation and clinical notes review including medicines management.
Radiology referral quality	MRI and IRMER audits for Advanced Physiotherapy Practitioners.
Blood referral	Audit of referral pathways, and appropriateness of referrals.
ESP/APP actions	Determination of pathway and actions including referrals and follow ups.
Clinical observation / call review	Audit of clinical reasoning in-line with NICE guidance, service-user communication, and shared decision-making tools (SDMTs).
Medicines management	Audit of the management of injectable medicines ensuring compliance with policies and processes.

# Appendix 2: Our Executive Management Team






If you would like to give us feedback on our Quality Account or on any of our services, please email: [feedback@vhg.co.uk](mailto:feedback@vhg.co.uk)

If you would like to talk to someone about your experiences of Vita Health Group's services, please visit our website 'contact us' page for all our telephone numbers: <https://www.vitahealthgroup.co.uk/contact-us/>

## Information

If you would like to receive our Quality Account in any of the following ways, please email: [governance@vhg.co.uk](mailto:governance@vhg.co.uk)

-  a copy in a different language
-  a copy in a different format
-  a hard copy

If you would like to keep updated with Vita Health Group news including blogs, webinars, and podcasts, please visit our website 'news' page: <https://www.vitahealthgroup.co.uk/news/>



