



OUR IMPACT & LEARNING

IPS SERVICE TRANSFORMATION
ACROSS ENGLAND



| Contents

4

Executive Summary

10

Technical
implementation
support

21

Reflecting on our
learning and impact

7

The principles of
Individual Placement
and Support

13

Workforce
development

27

The opportunity
ahead

9

The role of IPS Grow

17

Data tools/
performance
standards

30

Acknowledgements

10

The work of IPS Grow

20

The coronavirus
challenge

90% of people
living with severe
mental illness
want to work...

only **8%**
are in paid
employment.

Finding Opportunities

Challenging Prejudice

Championing Talents

Changing Lives

This is IPS

 **IPS
GROW**

Executive summary

Most people accessing mental health services report that they see gaining employment as key to their recovery, wellbeing and life opportunities. In addition, research increasingly demonstrates that being out of work can lead to a variety of negative health effects and socio-economic issues for individuals and their families. Yet unemployment rates remain high for people with mental health conditions.

The research evidence continues to grow to support the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) approach, as the most effective intervention for assisting clients with mental health problems in gaining paid employment. In addition, IPS is increasingly being successfully applied to other groups with long term health conditions and people in recovery from addictions.

Given the evidence base, benefits to health services, and feedback from clients, NHS England has committed to a massive scale-up of access to IPS. The NHS Long Term Plan set a target for 55,000 people with severe mental illness to have access to IPS each year, up from just 10,000 per year in 2017.

This has required a major expansion of existing IPS services over the past two and a half years, and the creation of new IPS services across many parts of England. In 2019, IPS Grow was commissioned to support NHS England, NHS Trusts, IPS providers and commissioners to implement this expansion. We have developed national standards and guidelines, provided technical IPS support and resources, built data and reporting tools, and shaped workforce development strategies.

Our goal has been to support the implementation of consistent, high quality IPS provision across the country – as measured against both the 25-point IPS fidelity scale and the achievement of employment outcomes for people with severe mental illness. This report provides more detail on the work we have undertaken to achieve this and the impact we have had so far.



About this impact report

This report summarises our experience of developing the IPS Grow national infrastructure support over the past two and a half years with our partner organisations. We have built upon international research and practice, and have benefited from the skills and experience of IPS practitioners across England. Here we have identified some of our achievements, challenges and learning.

This includes a review of our learning from the challenges and changes resulting from the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic during 2020-21. Mental health and IPS services were suddenly faced with supporting those accessing services through the isolation of lockdowns, with limited face-to-face contact. At IPS Grow we did what we could to help the sector to maintain morale, focus, and impact, and to continue moving forward. We adapted to delivering all our support virtually and online, learning valuable lessons we can apply into the future, beyond Covid-19.

Services have done an incredible job during this time, continuing to develop and becoming more effective. They have focused on client wellbeing and supported people into paid employment, whilst also assessing emerging labour market opportunities. The impact of the pandemic will affect employment outcomes for IPS clients for some time to come. But by continuing to develop a robust network of quality IPS providers, we will ensure our clients have the best possible chance of success.

Looking ahead, there's still a lot of work needed across IPS in England. There is much more we can do to reach a high-fidelity scale-up of IPS practice – and ultimately to improve job outcomes for people accessing mental health services.

Thank you

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our consortium partner organisations (Centre for Mental Health, Southdown, Enable supported employment services, Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust and South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust) as well as NHS England and NHS Improvement and Department for Work and Pensions. In addition, a special thank you for the support and shared learning we have benefited from across the IPS community – both in the UK and internationally. Together we will continue to build high quality IPS practice. The results will be life-changing for many people accessing mental health services.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. J. Miller'.

Lynne Miller
National IPS Grow Lead



The case for employment

“My life’s improved loads because I now look after my finances, I’ve learned to deal with my anxiety on public transport – don’t get scared in crowds anymore. I’m me old self again, not letting myself go. I got paid today for the first time in years. Today I feel okay about my future, more relaxed, more calm, a lot better.”

IPS Service User

Being in paid work is an important goal for many people with mental health problems. It can lead to improved self-esteem, financial independence, greater social contact, and an all-round improvement in wellbeing.

What’s more, there is strong evidence that people accessing mental health services *want* to work.

The benefits to health services are also clear: fewer hospitalisations due to mental health problems, fewer suicides, reduced pressure on

community mental health services, and significant cost savings. It’s in everyone’s interests to ensure everyone has the right support available to gain paid work.^{3,4}

Further info available at www.ipsgrow.org.uk

- 3 NHS England 5 Year Forward View, 2014 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/5yfv-web.pdf>
- 4 Saha S, Bejerholm U, Gerdtham U-G, Jarl J. Cost-effectiveness of supported employment adapted for people with affective disorders. Nord J Psychiatry. 2018 Apr;72(3):236–9.



£22bn

The overall cost of sickness absence in England linked to the impact on people’s ability to work

(Five Year Forward View for Mental Health)³



The principles of Individual Placement and Support

“Having an Employment Specialist in the clinical team doesn’t just give clients a sense of hope, it gives the whole clinical team a sense of hope.”

Psychiatrist

Individual Placement and Support (IPS) is an internationally recognised, evidence-based approach to supporting people with mental health conditions to gain employment and stay employed. It is supported by research from 28 randomised control trials, which demonstrated that IPS was more effective than other vocational rehabilitation approaches.¹

1. Z. Joyce Fan, PhD, Barbara A. Lucenko, PhD, Sharon Estee, PhD, Barbara E.M. Felver, MES, MPA, Callie Black, MPH, David Mancuso, PhD In collaboration with Melodie Pazolt, (2016) Behavioral Health Program Administrator, Improving Employment Outcomes for People with Mental Health Disorders in Washington State



“My Employment Specialist has made a huge difference to my approach to life, confidence and preparedness to work. She picks one up from the dark corners of low self-esteem and despair and makes one begin to feel like a human being again with something to offer in the world.”

IPS Service User

The Long Term Plan for IPS expansion



In the Long Term Plan (January 2019), NHS England committed to extending support for IPS across secondary mental health services, to help people find and retain employment. The initial target is to increase the number of clients receiving IPS support from 20,000 to 55,000 by 2023/24, and then to 115,000 people per year by 2028/29². This would represent half of the eligible population.

To achieve this, commissioners, IPS services, and their host health trusts have been asked to support a massive

expansion in IPS. As they expand, IPS services need to remain faithful to the eight evidence-based principles of IPS:

2. NHS England Long-term Plan January 2019 <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/publication/nhs-long-term-plan/>



The role of IPS Grow

IPS Grow was commissioned by NHS England and DWP (Department of Work and Pensions). Hosted by Social Finance (a not-for-profit social enterprise), IPS Grow was developed in partnership with our consortium partners to champion best practice and support the expansion of high quality, consistent IPS services across England.

We launched in March 2019, tasked with the following:

- Provide strategic and practical technical support to mental health trusts and IPS providers, to enable them to develop high fidelity, high performing IPS services at pace. Develop national standards to drive consistency across IPS services in relation to performance, quality, practice, and fidelity. Offer shared learning, benchmarking, and quality assurance fidelity reviews to embed and measure these standards across the board.
- Create communities of learning and practice to build networks, share and develop learning, and in turn promote quality IPS delivery.
- Design a workforce development programme to support this large-scale recruitment, training and development of IPS staff, and build leadership capacity across the sector.
- Increase understanding of IPS among commissioners and boost commitment to IPS fidelity.
- Strengthen international links with IPS learning collaboratives, to support the effective implementation of IPS.

“Over the last 18 months you have been the voice of reason, a sounding board and motivator on many occasions. As a team we value the training and networking sessions and the safe space to share concerns. Your support and positive feedback, especially during the RAND fidelity reviews, allowed our service to continue to grow, but also gave us the confidence that we are providing a quality service to support all our clients.”

IPS Team Leader

Working in partnership to achieve impact

Our partners include Social Finance, Centre for Mental Health and four experienced IPS providers: South West London and St George’s Mental Health NHS Trust, Southdown IPS services, Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust and Enable IPS services (Shropshire Council). They have played a key role in sharing resources and learning, and developing many of the new IPS resources, such as e-learning for Employment Specialists.

Likewise, our partnerships with the national NHS England Quality Improvement Team, NHS England Regional teams, IPS providers, health trusts, and commissioners have been crucial to the successful expansion of IPS.

To support the scale-up of IPS, we have established new relationships with a range of stakeholders across the health system. We have worked across seven regions with 135 CCGs, 44 health systems and 70 IPS providers. Many of these were developing and delivering IPS for the first time.

The work of IPS Grow

Our work to support the national expansion of IPS has been split across three workstreams:

Technical implementation support

Sitting at the centre of our Technical Implementation Support workstream are our eight IPS Grow Leads. They work across the seven regions, supporting the IPS services to develop and grow, while ensuring consistent, high fidelity IPS. These roles involve building open, collaborative working relationships across the mental health system.

The creation of these roles stems from a wealth of international research and practice, as well as two UK pilots in 2001 and 2019.^{5,6} Over the last 20 years, the IPS Employment Center in the US has found that a permanent 'IPS Trainer' role is essential. They ensure consistent and sustained implementation of high fidelity and high performing

IPS services. Without this role, service outcomes usually decline and services experience fidelity drift, which ultimately restricts access to IPS and a working life.

Such is their importance that many countries have now adopted similar permanent roles. In England, we call them IPS Grow Leads.



Technical
implementation
support



Workforce
development



Data tools/
performance
standards

5. Bond, G. R., Drake, R. E., & Becker, D. R. (2020). An update on Individual Placement and Support. *World Psychiatry*, 19, 390-391.

6. Implementing what works, Centre for Mental Health Briefing 44. <https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/publications/briefing-44-implementing-what-works>

IPS Grow Leads

The IPS Grow Leads work across all services in a region helping to establish new IPS services or enabling existing IPS services to continue to develop their practice and effectiveness. The role is wide-ranging and covers:

- Supporting the creation of an implementation profile and development plan for all new IPS services.
- Site-based training workshops, field mentoring and consultation to mental health agencies. This includes tailored support around mobilisation, recruitment, training, coaching, and on-site technical support.
- Tracking employment outcomes and conducting IPS fidelity reviews.
- Coordinating learning networks to share good practice and challenges across large regions.

In line with research, these Communities of Practice (CoPs) have been established for IPS providers and other stakeholders across the seven England regions. These are valuable networks for IPS professionals to share learnings on successful practices, procedures, and resources. They offer a safe space to explore and address common problems, ensure services feel less isolated and support new practice and learning.

The IPS Grow Lead as an agent for change

IPS Employment Center also identified that the 'IPS Trainer' has an important change manager role. Fixsen et al⁷ (2006) identified that "Successful and sustainable implementation of evidence-based practices and programs always requires organisational change." IPS Trainers act as agents for change, working across the health system with key stakeholders and steering committees to "address system-level barriers and facilitate incentives for implementing and sustaining IPS." (Debbie Becker, 2011⁸)

For our IPS Grow Leads, this often involves building senior buy-in and clinical sponsorship. They often establish and support local steering committees to overcome any implementation challenges.

"I just wanted to feedback how positive the teams found today's Community of Practice. They were all so positive about it and grateful to have this as a source of support and to share good practice, ideas and issues with their peers in other services."

IPS Team Leader

7. Fixsen, D.L., Naoom, S.F., Blase, K.A., et al. (2006) Implementation Research: A synthesis of the literature.

8. Becker, D (2011a) Disseminating supported employment in the United States - The IPS Learning Collaborative. Presentation given at the World Psychiatry Congress, Buenos Aires, September 2011.

CASE STUDY

Building a new IPS Service for Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust

“IPS Grow has been very supportive with Blackpool Council’s development of our new project. The IPS Grow infrastructure has been invaluable and our IPS Grow Lead is always on hand to give information, expertise or to offer involvement as required.”

Mairi Fraser, Team Manager, Employment Support Contracts, Positive Steps into Work Service, Blackpool Council

In 2019, there were no IPS services in place across Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust. IPS Grow worked in collaboration with the local health system, Centre for Mental Health,

and NHS England team to agree what needed to be commissioned in the short and longer-term. IPS Grow then supported the service to mobilise and deliver.



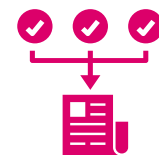
Mobilisation

- Supported service mobilisation planning through weekly calls with the provider and local health system.
- Helped build clinical sponsorship and buy-in for the service through introductory meetings and workshops for clinical teams.
- Supported Blackpool Council to recruit a new team of IPS Employment Specialists, including input into the interview process.
- Supported fidelity-based induction for the new team, with additional access to e-learning and IPS practice support.



Impact

- Developed a clear mobilisation plan with all stakeholders, in accordance with high fidelity.
- Mobilised the new IPS service.
- Adopted the IPS Grow job description, recommended KPIs, and salary band 5 for Employment Specialist roles.



Next steps

- Continued support for the local health system and Trust in Lancashire and South Cumbria.
- Further Team Leader training and mentoring, to ensure a high fidelity service. Evaluated through guided self-assessments and independent fidelity reviews.
- To support ongoing quality improvement, a fidelity review will be followed by a fidelity action plan.

Workforce development

We know that to meet the objectives of the NHS Long Term Plan for Mental Health, the IPS sector needs to expand substantially. The NHS is aiming for a five-fold increase in IPS Team Leaders and Employment Specialists by the end of 2024.

IPS Grow set out to raise the profile of a career in IPS, identify the right people for the roles, and then support them to deliver a high-quality service.

We have formed a working group with a number of IPS services, consortium partners and education partners, to inform workforce development strategy and priorities in 2021 and beyond. This group is key to identifying and influencing how we support the IPS workforce expansion.



Our four routes to impact:

- 1 Recruitment messaging:** attracting people with the right qualities and attributes into a career in IPS. 
- 2 Recruitment Toolkit:** develop guidelines and resources to support services with their candidate selection and onboarding process. 
- 3 Competencies and Curriculum:** developing a competency framework and curriculum for IPS professionals. 
- 4 Training:** Develop online training for IPS Employment Specialists and support quality supervision and mentoring with Team Leaders. 

“IPS Grow has really helped put IPS on the map locally and nationally. We were muddling along before and now have national standards to work towards, which helps me in getting my team and the Trust on board with service improvements.”

Lin Seerey, Mersey Care IPS Service

Recruitment messaging and marketing



In January 2020, IPS Grow began developing a campaign to communicate IPS as a career option. Through a series of focus groups and interviews with IPS staff we identified an Employee Value Proposition. We translated this into a creative concept and messaging, which were tested among IPS staff and service users.

The messaging is designed to capture the hearts and minds of our potential candidates. It promotes IPS as essential, life-changing, and rewarding work, centred around the strapline:

“The opportunity to change minds, and the power to transform lives”.

In September 2020, we rolled out the Employee Value Proposition and creative assets. These empower IPS services across the NHS, Local Authorities and Third Sector organisations to run their own local recruitment campaigns for Employment Specialists and Team Leaders.

Next, we are planning a recruitment video, and a recruitment animation with Health Education England. These will showcase the Employment Specialist role to the public through careers events, recruitment platforms and job advertising channels.

We are committed to championing IPS across the health system. We'll continue to communicate the power of IPS and demonstrate to candidates how, through a rewarding career in IPS, they can change a life.

Marketing within the healthcare sector

IPS Employment Specialists make an essential contribution within the wider Mental Health community, and deserve recognition for their part in the broader recovery agenda. We have worked hard to raise the profile of IPS professionals through our core messaging and by sharing the impact of IPS on clinicians and employers. We have successfully shared many recovery stories, statistics and good news to showcase the impact of IPS, including coverage in OT News and RCNi.

Feedback shows that the IPS services recognise the effect of this centralised, coordinated approach for IPS workforce development. The umbrella brand of IPS Grow has helped to professionalise the service among other mental health workers and clinical teams.

We have also delivered workshops on marketing and branding for IPS services and offered other external communications support.



Recruitment Toolkit



An early priority for IPS Grow was to support IPS services with selecting the right candidates when hiring for IPS roles.

We worked alongside the IPS Grow consortium to produce a toolkit for hiring managers. The toolkit combines common practices and employment experiences with insights from research, to provide high-level guidance on attracting, recruiting and onboarding high quality IPS staff. The toolkit is made up of 23 downloadable and editable templates covering job descriptions, interview questions, role play scenarios, panel guidance, fair assessment tips, and FAQs.



In addition, we offer hands-on support through recruitment information sessions and planning support, and attendance at recruitment assessment centres.

The workforce development working group was instrumental in securing resources from NHS England. Our next step is to develop a recruitment landing page and job alert system for careers in IPS. These are currently in development and will launch later this year.

Competencies and curriculum



Traditionally, the IPS employer landscape has been fragmented, leading to disparities in pay, training and development. To strengthen the workforce, we developed national standards and resources to drive consistency across IPS services.

IPS Grow worked alongside Professor Roth & Professor Pilling – leading experts at UCL – to develop a national Competency Framework and Curriculum for IPS. This work draws on years of research into what makes a good Employment Specialist, with input from leading IPS providers and other experts. The publication of the curriculum and competency framework recognises the wide-ranging and skilled nature of the Employment Specialist role.

These valuable tools are now available for open access via the UCL and Royal College of Psychiatrists websites. They'll inform workforce recruitment decisions and drive consistency in induction and training standards. This may pave the way for accreditation of IPS training in the future.



Case study

Pay scale parity at Oxford Health

Based on IPS Grow's recommendations and supporting business case, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust has recently uplifted existing Employment Specialists from B4 to B5 to better reflect the experience and skill level of the role. Similarly, the service has also uplifted the pay of Senior Employment Specialists to B6 to reflect the additional responsibilities and demands for this role.

"IPS Grow's input has been invaluable"

IPS Team Leader

Building the case for more consistent pay banding

IPS Grow has been involved in building the case for more consistency in pay for IPS workers, supported by the work of Roth & Pilling. This is an ongoing priority area and we're working with NHS employers to qualify and support consistent pay across the country.

"I feel that this course has been tailored just right, whether you have been an Employment Specialist for a few years to just starting off. It is easy to follow the step-by-step guidance through each component of the 8 Principles of IPS. And I have been given links and access to additional resources. Thank you"

FutureLearn Course Learner, Jan 2020



Training

We recognised a need to develop accessible training for IPS staff. Working with our IPS Grow consortium partners, we developed a free e-learning course covering the key principles of IPS best practice. 'Supporting People with Health Conditions Into Work' supports Employment Specialists to deliver IPS and ensure their clients achieve their full potential. The course incorporates two virtual classrooms led by the IPS Grow Leads, and a workbook for learners.

The course first launched in October 2019 and has had 799 learners complete the course to date.

Following a 2020 review and needs analysis of the IPS workforce landscape, Health Education England commissioned the Centre for Mental Health and Social Finance to design and deliver IPS Team Leader training under the IPS Grow banner.

96%

of course learners stated they gained new knowledge by taking the course

68%

had already applied some of what they've learnt before completing the course.

Data tools & performance standards

“The interactive spreadsheet and reporting tool, all with [IPS Grow Leads] training and support, have been great for the services.”

IPS Team Leader

The IPS Grow Reporting Tool

It is important that IPS services can demonstrate their value to commissioners and internal stakeholders.

Capturing accurate impact and performance data also supports good performance management and evaluation.

In response to this need, IPS Grow developed the IPS Grow Reporting Tool. This is based on extensive user research with experienced IPS services and a review of the IPS fidelity scale. It is a bespoke web app that aggregates client-level data and simplifies reporting.

Since its first release in 2020, we have improved the app’s usability and developed the dashboard to support supervisions and manage caseloads.

We also developed a standard spreadsheet dataset for recording client information. Used together, the app and spreadsheet reduce the time spent on reporting and enable detailed insights into team performance.



Our tools are in use by over 250 IPS professionals across NHS England, Mental Health Trusts, CCGs, Local Authorities, and Third Sector IPS providers.

IPS Grow also developed a national KPI and outcome framework to enable services to set consistent targets and outcome definitions. We are currently supporting IPS services to ensure their data are captured as part of the new Mental Health Services Data Set (MHSDS).

Support for commissioners

IPS Grow also provided guidance for commissioners of mental health and employment services across primary and secondary mental health care. This included a set of practical tools to help when commissioning IPS, to ensure a high-quality service. Our model service specification and financial model template were critical foundations when setting up and mobilising new, high quality IPS services.



Fidelity reviews

Representing England, the Centre for Mental Health and IPS Grow has joined the International Learning Community. This has involved hosting a senior IPS Trainer from the US, who delivered fidelity training to the IPS Grow team and our key partners.

This was followed by a Task and Finish Group, which tackled the question of how to scale-up fidelity reviews across the country. Together, we created a new Quality Assurance Strategy, making recommendations in line with international best practice and the IPS fidelity manual. This will be implemented in 2021, and includes:

- Team fidelity reviews to be carried out across the country. These should always be followed by technical support to address any required improvements and supported by effective tracking of employment outcomes.
- Fidelity reviews to be carried out over two days. The additional time will allow for the process to include observations of staff practice, which is new to the UK.
- Additional recommendations in relation to racial equality and service performance.

Independent, external fidelity reviews

Quality assurance fidelity reviews help services to identify what they are doing well and pinpoint any areas for improvement. They also help to focus the technical support offered by an IPS Grow Lead.

Following the US fidelity training, we conducted fidelity reviews on IPS services around the country. These were carried out by the IPS Grow Leads, along with a member of the RAND Europe team – a not-for-profit policy research organisation – and formed part of our external evaluation with RAND.

We have now carried out 'before and after' fidelity reviews on seven IPS services. The first reviews in December 2019 set a benchmark fidelity score, and the findings allowed us to develop bespoke action plans for each service, forming the basis of our support.

The second reviews took place in September 2020. Each of the seven services showed an improved fidelity score over this nine-month period. From 7% improvement for services already scoring over 100, up to 66% for the most improved.

This initial pilot has enabled us to build our capacity for delivering fidelity reviews. It is clear that they are an essential tool in helping services to develop a roadmap for improving quality and performance. With invaluable support from the International Learning Community, IPS Grow has built a national approach to the scale-up of fidelity reviews across England.

"I think it is absolutely essential that there is a check and balance on IPS. I feel this process [with IPS Grow and RAND] has exceptionally high integrity."

**John Bolland, IPS Service Manager,
CNTW Employment Team (a service
who had a recent fidelity review)**

CASE STUDY



Driving significant improvements with Hertfordshire Partnership

Hertfordshire Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT) ran a successful employment support service for around 10 years, as part of its adult mental health programme. It primarily focused on getting clients into unpaid voluntary work and short-term work experience placements.

IPS Grow was brought in to support HPFT in adopting a more evidence-based approach, based around a high fidelity IPS model.

Overcoming internal resistance

At first, the Employment Specialist team were unsure about the need to change their approach. IPS Grow led workshops with the HPFT team to show the value of IPS. In December 2019 an independent IPS fidelity review classified the service as 'Not IPS'. However, a step-change process was agreed, and the team became invested in adopting the IPS model.

A transformation plan

The IPS Grow Lead for the East of England helped HPFT to develop

a clear transformation plan. This incorporated both 'quick wins' and longer-term initiatives to adopt a faithful approach to IPS.

IPS Grow supported the recruitment of a new Team Leader and worked with her to manage the transformation. We provided a mixture of education sessions and practical technical support, coaching and weekly progress reviews.

Becoming a more integrated service

We established an IPS steering committee at HPFT, with representation from the Trust's senior leadership team. This enabled the IPS team to become more embedded with the clinical team and get more involved in discussions about clients. This closer

"Since our initial review in December 2019, my IPS Grow Lead has supported me on a weekly basis to develop an action plan. This has allowed me to successfully collate our evidence to enable us to establish the IPS service effectively into the community mental health teams. Prior to the HPFT service review I felt very well prepared thanks to my IPS Grow Leads' support."

Sarah Pashley, IPS Employment Service Team Leader at HPFT Community Mental Health Services

integration of IPS within the service is helping to change perceptions around clients' readiness for work.

A clear communications plan was put in place for IPS, and HPFT adopted our recruitment toolkit for expanding their IPS team.

66% fidelity improvement

Since that first fidelity review, HPFT has been through a rapid transformation, despite challenging conditions during the pandemic. A second independent IPS fidelity review in September 2020 showed a tremendous improvement, with their fidelity score increasing by 66% in nine months.

The commissioner has now initiated discussions about ensuring that the area meets its IPS access targets under the NHS Long Term Plan.

The coronavirus challenge

"A great big thank you for setting up these weekly drop-in sessions. I am sure each and every one of us has benefitted, especially in the earlier stages of Covid-19. They have been a great way for all to communicate work and personal struggles."

IPS Team Leader

The coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic created many new and developing implications for IPS services. Demand for support from the IPS Grow Leads surged, and we quickly ramped up communications with the IPS community.

- IPS Grow established a Covid-19 support web page (receiving 800 page views per month during the first lockdown) and set up a national learning log to share good practice, innovations, and tools. We also co-hosted a webinar with NHS England and three IPS services to share how services were adapting in lockdown.
- Over the first lockdown, IPS Grow produced 18 weekly bulletins for the IPS community to keep them informed of any developing implications for IPS services. These also flagged arising job opportunities for clients and included good news stories of resilience and innovation from across the sector.
- As the risk of falling out of work increased for our IPS clients, we prioritised job retention tools, in-work support, and related training for Employment Specialists.
- To maintain focus and morale, we moved our Communities of Practice online and held them more frequently, to provide learning and a sense of community. Virtual delivery has enabled our Communities of Practice to join up, making much of our work more accessible to IPS services across the country.
- All our technical support moved online, including coaching, training, and workshops. We established regular virtual drop-in sessions in each region, to help IPS teams feel supported. These were an opportunity for IPS staff to share their learnings around adapting to virtual delivery, and to support staff wellbeing.
- We held virtual 'celebration events' in each region to help services reflect on their achievements.
- Fidelity reviews continued, with some delivered virtually under lockdown conditions.
- We developed a recovery template for services and supported them to plan their next steps as lockdown restrictions eased.
- This continuous flow of communication and tailored support was highly valued during the pandemic. The support enabled the IPS services to move forward with their mobilisation plans. Those with 'before and after' fidelity reviews all improved their scores between December 2019 and September 2020, despite the added challenges.

Reflecting on our learning and impact

IPS Grow has identified five key takeaways from our experience, which will inform our on-going work:



Build coalitions with the wider system and shape policy

1

Through the national sponsorship of NHS England and DWP, IPS Grow had a clear mandate to support the scale-up of IPS across the country. This support has been invaluable, allowing us to engage with the wider system and shape policy.

Developing IPS policy and practice required a nationally coordinated approach. We set up a national IPS Expert Forum to review progress and inform key policy decisions. This brings together representatives from NHS England, DWP, Centre for Mental Health, commissioners, and policymakers from across the UK.

Within the Expert Forum are two sub-groups. One is focused on the scale-up of quality assurance fidelity reviews, which has produced a national strategy. The second sub-group supports the development of our workforce strategy, to scale-up and develop the IPS workforce required to meet NHS England's targets. This coordinated approach was instrumental in securing additional funding from NHS England to develop a new recruitment website and job alert system for IPS careers, which we're developing this year.

These groups will continue to play an important role in shaping the future of IPS.

Work with the local system context, and collaborate to build social capital ②

We've witnessed first-hand the value of working across the local system. We have brought together decentralised networks of key parties – regional NHS Trusts, local health systems, CCGs, NHS England, and IPS providers – to work towards a common goal.

Our IPS Grow Leads and national team offer insight, build the case for change, and provide the catalyst for action. They have played an important 'change manager' role, cementing partnerships and building successful IPS services that are integrated closely with mental healthcare services.

Our regional NHS England colleagues have supported the expansion and infrastructure of IPS at a local level. Their support has been invaluable in providing sponsorship for our role and driving change locally via health trusts and IPS providers. They have provided links to ICS leads, which we continue to build on. We have also received valuable input from IPS professionals across the country, who have generously given their time to share their skills, learning and resources.

Feedback from a range of stakeholders has shown that these working relationships formed by the IPS Grow Leads – and the wider IPS Grow team – are a key success factor. The flexible and collaborative nature of the support was particularly valued, rather than a 'one size fits all' approach.

We will build on these networks to support the scale-up of IPS, and to share learnings on IPS practice within the mental health transformation agenda.

Build the case for change ③

The IPS Grow Leads have supported change management within health services, with engagement at Executive level via steering committees and meetings with local services. We have built the case for the standardisation of salary bands, and for consistency in fidelity review practice. This has been key to ensuring that annual fidelity reviews become a core part of IPS practice, recognising their importance to driving up quality and performance improvement.

We also worked with NHS England to include job retention support as part of the IPS offer. Now IPS services can respond to local demand for job retention support, up to a recommended 15% of caseload.

IPS Grow has positioned itself as a 'critical friend', forming strong relationships with services and guiding them to develop their practice and model change by sharing clear guidelines, resources and knowledge.

"IPS Grow has helped us build our confidence so that we can create solid foundations for an excellent IPS service offer that is embedded within clinical services, and also has strong partnerships with the local DWP and other supported employment initiatives."

Service Manager

Share knowledge and good practice among peers

In line with international research, IPS Grow has developed regional and national learning communities. This has been key to helping IPS services feel less isolated, and shown that by working together they can drive change in the sector.

International support

Joining the International Learning Community enabled us to learn from experienced international IPS infrastructure teams, particularly those from the US and New Zealand. We're keen to build on these international relationships as they offer many potential benefits to UK services. In turn, we can support other countries with our strengths in developing IPS technologies and data tools.

Our dialogue with international colleagues has informed our fidelity review practice, and the approach to managing a national system of fidelity reviews on an ongoing basis.

Collaboration across IPS

With the distances involved for our IPS leads to travel to meetings, it was important to harness technology to share the knowledge we have accumulated over time – even before the pandemic moved everything online.

Learning has been shared across the IPS community in a range of ways, and supporting implementation through technology has been a particular strength. This includes the successful e-learning course for Employment Specialists, and the IPS workspace in the FutureNHS Collaboration knowledge platform, which now has a community of 1,029 members.

The virtual Communities of Practice have provided shared learning opportunities for IPS services, as well as proving motivational. The CoPs have helped us to build the case for important changes, such as including job

retention practice within IPS, and an increasing focus on cultural sensitivity within IPS services. In future, CoPs will play an important role in supporting IPS Team Leaders to focus on sustained performance and high fidelity.

On-site workshops and technical support have also been among our most effective tools, enabling us to model good practice and share learning that is bespoke to individual services and staff.

Shared resources

By providing a toolkit of resources we have ensured that all IPS services have access to recruitment tools, service practice templates, case studies, policies, etc. We also capture learning logs to support good practice, as services move towards the mental health transformation agenda.

Information, resources and insights are shared through the 'Growing Together' bulletin. The IPS Grow website also hosts an array of insights and messaging around IPS including recruitment, commissioning and provider support. Highlights include [recovery stories](#), easy access to [provider resources](#) and IPS [news](#).

Even the most experienced IPS services have reported that this centralised support and collaboration have been beneficial.

"We think that even when services have reached 100 [on the fidelity scale] it would be helpful to have a review every year to ensure continuity of fidelity."

Angela Hawke, IPS Implementation Lead for Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

Build for scale, adaptability and impact

The IPS Grow team was recruited from IPS services across the country. We have relished the opportunity to learn from each other's varied skills, experience, and resources. It has also been valuable to learn from our host organisation (Social Finance), other IPS services and our international colleagues. This has enabled us to refine our knowledge of the science behind IPS implementation, which will inform our on-going role. In particular, it has driven home the importance of supporting senior buy-in, clinical sponsorship and good performance management systems within services. It is this supportive system, combined with the quality of the delivery of the IPS service, which has the most impact.

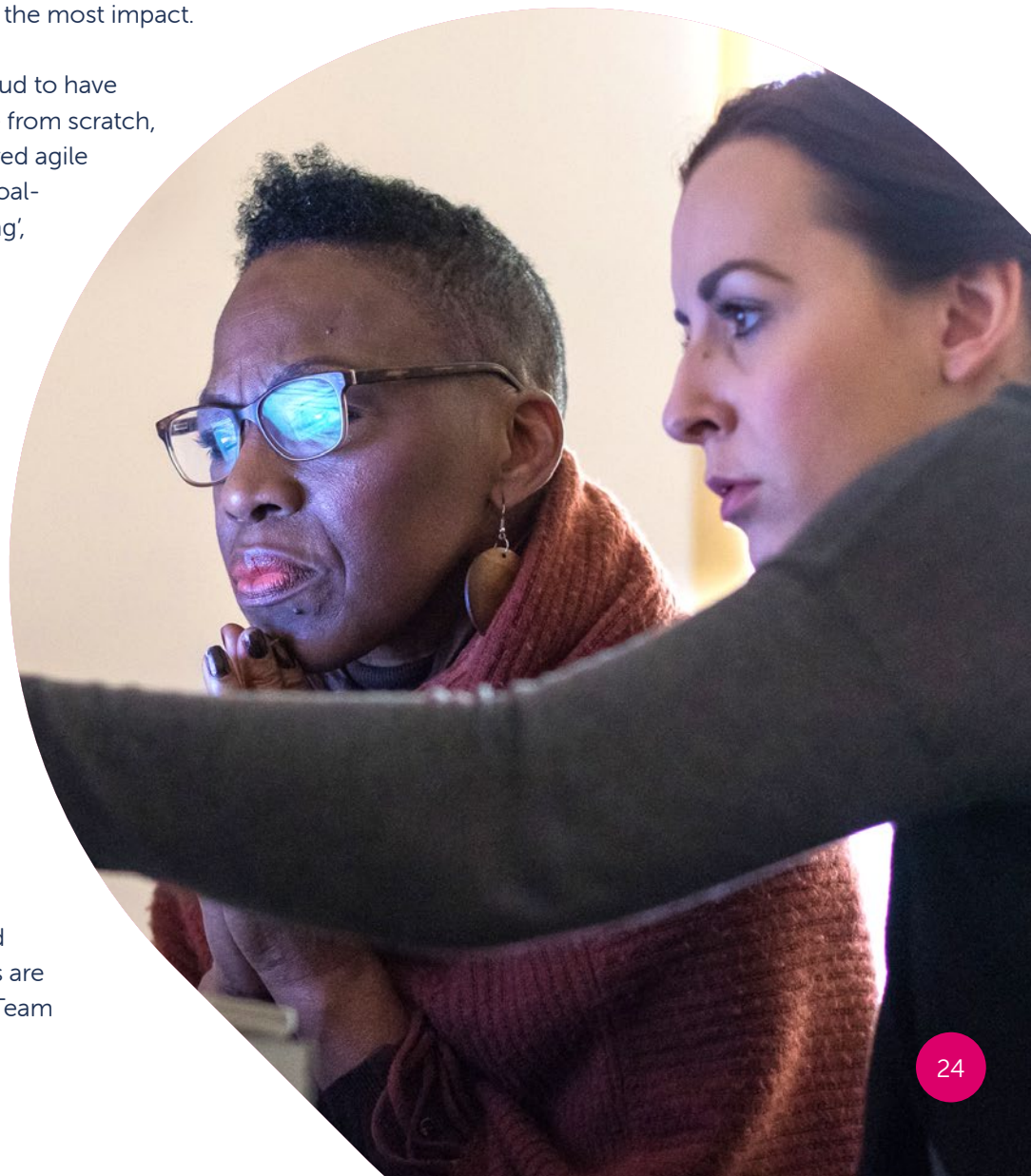
As a relatively small team, we are proud to have developed this support infrastructure from scratch, across the whole country. This required agile project management and strategic goal-setting. We have often 'learnt by doing', and we are constantly reviewing what works most effectively.

We have learnt that whilst scaling up IPS services, maintaining quality along with a supportive system around the service model is key to success. This is why fidelity reviews are a priority.

It is increasingly clear that quality assurance fidelity reviews, when used consistently, are key to every stage of an IPS service's development. Whether these are independent reviews or guided self-assessments, they can help services to prioritise development areas and focus their efforts, to improve job outcomes and the client experience. Fidelity reviews are also valuable coaching tools for IPS Team

Leaders, they enable us to hold services to account, and can be leveraged to influence internal stakeholders.

The development of fidelity reviews will be vital to the on-going effectiveness of the IPS sector. Making regular fidelity reviews a core part of IPS practice is an important step, but there is still a lot of work needed to build capacity for delivering these. We need to ensure, at a national level, that the full two-day fidelity reviews can be carried out frequently and consistently for every IPS service.



IPS Grow in numbers

Participation

250

users of the Data Reporting Tool

799

FutureLearn e-learners

1,029

FutureNHS Collaboration Platform members

170

received training on unconscious bias and white privilege

Results & improvements

498%

increase in visits to careers webpage during campaign (September 2020)

26%

average improvement in fidelity scores for seven RAND independently reviewed services

Delivery

7

England regions

135

CCGs

44

local health systems

8

IPS Grow Leads / Trainers

70

IPS services

25

training workshops

25

IPS fidelity reviews conducted and 3 guided self-assessments. (15 RAND reviews)

The official verdict on IPS Grow

RAND Europe conducted an independent external evaluation of IPS Grow. They conducted interviews and focus groups with IPS stakeholders, and collected online survey data. They also extensively reviewed documentation and observed a number of Communities of Practice events.

RAND concluded that IPS Grow has helped to make the implementation of IPS in England both faster and more consistent. They also recognised our role in improving the quality of IPS offered by services.

They highlighted three key aspects of IPS Grow support that had the most impact on the fidelity of IPS delivery:

IPS Grow Regional Leads

Their support and knowledge of IPS were widely considered a valued asset by interviewees. In particular, support for employer engagement and executive buy-in, and helping Team Leaders to develop their role and leadership skills.

Communities of Practice

Highly valued and well attended by IPS professionals. CoPs offer the opportunity to share good practice and resources, and to network and learn from their peers. These need to evolve to provide targeted technical support for service development.

IPS Grow online resources

Including the reporting tool and spreadsheet, e-learning, templates, recruitment tools, and newsletter. Ensuring these are accessible for all IPS services was a key next step.

RAND also stressed the importance of increasing access to quality assurance fidelity reviews.

92%

of survey respondents rated the quality of IPS Grow support as good or excellent

86%

would recommend IPS Grow support to other services.

The opportunity ahead

Embedding change takes time. Across the IPS sector, tremendous progress has been made in a relatively short period. But there is still a long way to go to meet the goals of the NHS Long Term Plan.

"You have been an enormous support, providing guidance, encouragement and much needed prompting to help us to move in the right direction. Your input has been critical in terms of developing the oversight of the service and moving towards senior staff buy-in. We are moving forward as a trust with IPS and are gradually building our confidence."

Ian Merrick, Service Manager,
West London NHS Trust



Support for Team Leaders

As well as striving for quality throughout the IPS sector, there's still a need for services to scale-up considerably. IPS service Team Leads will be tasked with maintaining and improving standards, developing and retaining existing staff, and expanding their teams. And strong leadership is fundamental to delivering a high quality IPS service with good fidelity.

Our future Communities of Practice will have a focus on supporting and developing these Team Leaders. In addition, the Centre for Mental Health and Social Finance have been commissioned by Health Education England to deliver specific training for Team Leaders, under the IPS Grow banner. Following the recommendations from RAND, we'll also provide clearer guidance around our many tools and resources, to ensure these are accessible to all IPS services.





Quality assurance and fidelity

We are working with our partners to implement the Quality Assurance Strategy, in line with the IPS fidelity manual. This means supporting the scale-up of fidelity reviews across the country. We want every IPS service to benefit from annual two-day reviews – whether independent or guided self-assessments – with consistent moderation systems.

Of course, fidelity reviews are not a standalone intervention. Follow-up technical support is essential to ensure that recommendations are implemented, with local accountability supported by national coordination.

The fidelity sub-group has recommended we introduce a “Quality Mark”, to showcase the good practice in place at the leading IPS services. The mark will focus on three critical elements of IPS practice: performance, integration, and employer engagement. We are currently exploring how to implement this programme.

Consistency

Consistency across services remains a particular area of focus. We will continue to support more standardised approaches for recruitment, progression, and salary banding. We are also exploring more formal approaches to benchmarking across services. There are still many areas that have yet to be fully implemented, such as operationalising the competency framework for Employment Specialists.

IPS services are currently operating within varying performance frameworks, and there are some risks involved as we move towards recording IPS data nationally via the Mental Health Services Data Set. In line with international practice, we believe that a national approach to monitoring employment outcomes will be essential.

“I felt very supported by IPS Grow and RAND colleagues. Our whole team felt invigorated and energised post-review. We also felt we had a crystal-clear roadmap and that made our job easier; follow this action plan and our service will continue to grow and improve – what could be easier?”

John Bolland, IPS Service Manager, CNTW Employment Team (a service who had a recent fidelity review)



Race equity, equality and diversity

There's a real need to continue looking at IPS from the perspective of racial equality.

Like many organisations, IPS Grow responded to the Black Lives Matter movement by looking at what we can do to strive for racial equality.

We now have two new working groups in the north and south that are focused on reviewing cultural awareness within services. Although the original impetus of these groups was race, we envision that they will also explore broader equality, diversity and inclusion issues. We also held training sessions with 170 attendees focusing on unconscious bias and white privilege, delivered in partnership with South Yorkshire Housing Association.

We have produced new guidelines for IPS services, which sets out a goal for IPS to reflect the demographics of those accessing secondary mental health services. A review of people accessing IPS and their employment outcomes based on race is now part of our quality assurance fidelity reviews.

We also supported a recent review of ethnicity data for two London IPS services (Perkins et al, 2021). This recognised that IPS is very effective at supporting people from Black and Asian communities. As we move to the national mental health data set, we will ensure that this includes a focus on reviewing ethnicity data.

We will continue to champion equality and support IPS services to cultivate a diverse IPS workforce, ensure equal opportunities for their clients and, where they can, motivate other employers to do the same.



Senior support and integration

To ensure the expansion of IPS practice, more backing is needed from local commissioners and trusts. In addition, it is becoming more evident across the sector that there is a need for senior IPS Manager roles within mental health services.

They will lead the change management required across health systems to expand IPS practice effectively. IPS Team Leaders often do not have the capacity to build senior buy-in and represent IPS practice across large health services at a time when services are transforming. IPS Grow has developed a business case to support these new roles. It will also be important for IPS services to raise the profile of IPS among primary care networks.

The bigger picture: beyond mental health

There is real potential for IPS to support more people, including those with addictions, physical health conditions or learning disabilities.

We will continue to make the most of the IPS Expert Forum, which has a growing range of stakeholders from across the health system. The Forum and its various sub-groups will champion a consistent approach to the national development and expansion of IPS.

Here at IPS Grow, we look forward to continuing our work in the coming years and to play our part in building the largest IPS provision in the world.

IPS Grow acknowledges the support of its consortium partners:



Centre for
Mental Health



Realising a better future

Southdown

enable
supported employment services



Central and
North West London
NHS Foundation Trust



South West London and
St George's Mental Health
NHS Trust



England



Department
for Work &
Pensions

Whether you'd like to find out more about IPS, how to commission a service, how to join the IPS community in the UK, share a recovery story or feature in the newsletter, or simply ask a question, get in touch!

Or email us: support@ipsgrow.org.uk

Disclaimer and Terms of Use

This report is not an offering of any Notes for Sale and is provided by Social Finance solely for information purposes. Neither Social Finance nor any of their respective affiliates, directors, officers, employees or agents makes any express or implied representation, warranty or undertaking with respect to this Document, and none of them accepts any responsibility or liability as to its accuracy or completeness. Social Finance has not assumed any responsibility for independent verification of the information contained herein or otherwise made available in connection to the Document. The text in this Document may be reproduced free of charge providing that it is reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Social Finance copyright and the title of the document be specified.

© Social Finance, 2021.

