

Mental health inpatient wards

Mental Health Optimal Staffing Tool (MHOST)

Ensuring that NHS organisations have the right staff, with the right skills in the right place has been a key trust board requirement since the National Quality Board (NQB) guidance was published in 2016. This emphasises the need for developing evidence-based, patient need-driven staffing levels in all mental health care settings. This approach was further supported by the NQB in 2018 in their mental health staffing improvement resource.

The Mental Health Optimal Staffing Tool (MHOST) is an easy-to-use multi-disciplinary, evidence based system that enables ward based clinicians to: (i) assess patient acuity and dependency; and (ii) convert acuity and dependency data into a workload index and required FTEs using built-in staffing multipliers to ensure that ward establishments reflect patient needs.

The NQB guidance states that, “NHS provider boards are accountable for ensuring their organisation has the right culture, leadership and skills in place for safe, sustainable and productive staff”. The MHOST (or any evidence based workforce method) should be undertaken using the triangulation approach as endorsed by the NQB guidance. The MHOST aims to validate decision making regarding clinical staffing but should always be combined with professional judgement and quality metrics to be most effective.

Ensuring safe, sustainable and productive staffing

The Mental Health Optimal Staffing Tool (MHOST) is:

- ◆ Able to help mental health staff measure patient acuity and dependency to inform evidence-based decision making on staffing and workforce.
- ◆ Appropriate for use in any mental health hospital within the UK, covering the following specialisms:
 - ◇ Working age adult admissions wards
 - ◇ Old age functional and dementia wards
 - ◇ Forensic (High and Medium secure wards)
 - ◇ CAMHS Tier 4 wards
 - ◇ Eating Disorder wards
 - ◇ Perinatal wards
 - ◇ Psychiatric Intensive Care Units (PICU)
 - ◇ Low Secure & Rehabilitation wards.
- ◆ Used in conjunction with measures sensitive to quality in mental health wards, such as readmission rates, Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROMs), medicine omissions and staff engagement scores.

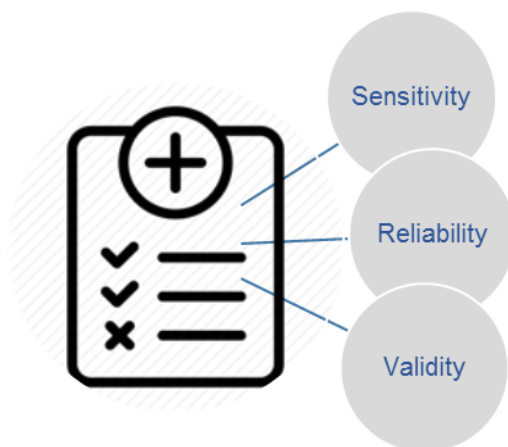
Benefits of the Mental Health Optimal Staffing Tool (MHOST)

The MHOST embraces all the principles that should be considered when evaluating/implementing decision support tools described in ‘Safe, sustainable and productive staffing: An improvement resource for mental health (NHSI, 2018)’

- ◇ **How acuity and dependency are measured in mental health settings**
- ◇ **How to ensure that accurate data can be collected**
- ◇ **What quality metrics should be allied to acuity and dependency measurement to enhance staffing decision making**
- ◇ **How to use staffing multipliers to support professional judgement in reviewing and setting clinical workforce establishments.**

The development process

The development of the MHOST was commissioned and funded by Health Education England (HEE). The tool is based on five acuity and dependency levels for each mental health in-patient specialty. Each acuity and dependency level has an associated descriptor to enable clinical staff to score patients receiving care in their ward. These descriptors were developed by expert reference groups during the MHOST project.



Data collection exercise

Independent observers undertook detailed data collection in mental health (MH) wards, recording all clinical staff activity over six shifts (spanning 24 hours Monday to Sunday) to understand the workforce requirement to meet patient needs in each MH ward.

Observations involved collecting new data or validating historical data from 361 best practice MH wards (those achieving a pre-determined quality rating) and 363,127 multi-disciplinary clinical interventions connected to 175,229 patient dependency/acuity scores in best-practice MH wards over eight years.

The opportunity

To license the Mental Health Optimal Staffing Tool, please click here:

<https://www.innovahealthtec.com/snct-mhost-licence-form>

The Tool was formally approved by the Shelford Group Chief Nurses in 2018.

Other available tools

- ◆ [Safer Nursing Care Tool \(SNCT\): Adult Inpatient Wards in Acute Hospitals](#)
- ◆ [Safer Nursing Care Tool \(SNCT\): C&YP Inpatient Wards in Acute Hospitals](#)
- ◆ [Safer Nursing Care Tool \(SNCT\): Adult Acute Assessment Unit](#)
- ◆ [Safer Nursing Care Tool \(SNCT\): Emergency Departments](#)

LICENSING ENQUIRIES
IMPERIAL COLLEGE LONDON
Email: nhsinfo@imperial.ac.uk

GENERAL INFORMATION
THE SHELFORD GROUP
Email: info@shelfordgroup.org
Web: www.shelfordgroup.org