

A study exploring the impact of a 6-week yoga programme on National Health Service (NHS) staff wellbeing

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Registration date 11/02/2025	Overall study status Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
Last Edited 09/04/2025	Condition category Mental and Behavioural Disorders	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan
		<input type="checkbox"/> Results
		<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data
		<input type="checkbox"/> Record updated in last year

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims:

Healthcare workers in the National Health Service (NHS) have faced high levels of stress and burnout in recent years, which negatively affects their mental health, physical health and job satisfaction. Yoga has been shown to help reduce stress and improve wellbeing in various groups, but there is less research on this topic in UK healthcare settings. The Yoga4NHS staff programme - created by UK charity the Yoga in Healthcare Alliance (YiHA) - is designed specifically for NHS healthcare workers and can be done either in person in the workplace or online. The full programme is made up of two 6-week courses - Level 1 and Level 2. This study aims to:

1. Evaluate the impact of Level 1 of the Yoga4NHS programme on stress and wellbeing in NHS healthcare workers.
2. Find out what NHS healthcare workers think of the programme by asking them about this as part of the study (e.g. what parts they liked and didn't like).

Who can participate?

NHS staff aged 18 years or older, in both clinical (e.g., doctors) and non-clinical roles (e.g., administrative). Those with severe mental health conditions or physical conditions that might make physical activity unsafe are not able to participate, to reduce the risk of harm. Healthcare workers who take part should be able to understand written English due to the need to complete surveys and communicate with the researchers as part of the study.

What does the study involve?

This study is a waitlist controlled randomised controlled trial (RCT), which is a type of study where participants are randomly put into one of two or more groups. One group receives the treatment being tested (the 'intervention' - in this case, the Yoga4NHS programme delivered via Zoom), while the other group continues their day-to-day activities as normal during the time the intervention takes place. By comparing the survey responses of healthcare workers in each group, we can understand whether any health changes are due to the intervention. The main focus of the study is to measure perceived stress levels, whilst other outcomes are burnout, anxiety, low mood, sleep quality, fatigue, and physical symptoms. Healthcare workers will be

asked to complete surveys on these topics at four times: before the programme, midway through, 1 week after the programme, and 3 months later, and responses between the two groups will be compared. The researchers will also ask participants in the yoga group some other questions to explore their experiences and challenges with the programme.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

Healthcare workers who take part will receive a £10 gift voucher at the end of the study when all questionnaires have been completed, and receive 6 hours of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for completing the Yoga4NHS classes. There may also be benefits related to yoga practice, like reduced stress and positive effects on mental health. Yoga is usually a safe activity, but like any type of physical activity, there is a small risk of injury. Secondly, the topics covered in the study (e.g., stress, burnout, mental health) also mean some questions may be sensitive and could possibly cause uncomfortable feelings.

Where is the study run from?

The study is being conducted by researchers from the University of Westminster, London, UK who are working with the YiHA. The study will be carried out entirely online.

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

September 2023 to July 2025

Who is funding the study?

University of Westminster (UK)

Who is the main contact?

Lucy Doyle, L.Doyle1@westminster.ac.uk

Contact information

Type(s)

Public, Scientific, Principal investigator

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Additional identifiers

Clinical Trials Information System (CTIS)

Nil known

Protocol serial number

ETH2425-0220

Study information

Scientific Title

A mixed methods randomised controlled trial (RCT) exploring the feasibility and effectiveness of the Yoga4NHS staff programme

Acronym

MY4NHS

Study objectives

Following the 6-week intervention period, the intervention group will show significantly lower perceived stress scores, and more favourable scores on secondary wellbeing-related measures, when compared with the waitlist-control group.

Ethics approval required

Ethics approval required

Ethics approval(s)

approved 15/01/2025, LAS College Research and Knowledge Exchange Ethics Committee (115 New Cavendish St, London, W1W 6UW, United Kingdom; +44 (0)20 7911 5000; A. Voiculescu@westminster.ac.uk), ref: ETH2425-0220

Study design

Mixed-methods unblinded randomized controlled trial with 1:1 allocation

Primary study design

Interventional

Study type(s)

Other, Efficacy

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Reduction of perceived stress in NHS healthcare professionals

Interventions

The intervention will be an existing yoga programme designed for NHS staff (Yoga4NHS). This randomised controlled trial (RCT) will recruit ~150 NHS HCWs aged 18+ years to either:

1. The intervention group, who will take part in Yoga4NHS - 6 weeks of hour-long online yoga classes delivered via Zoom by a qualified instructor, with access to catch-up recordings and home resources
2. A waitlist control group who complete no intervention and continue their day-to-day activities as normal during the corresponding time frame

Randomisation is conducted using a random number list generated in R, with participants assigned to either the control or intervention groups on a 1:1 random allocation.

Intervention Type

Behavioural

Primary outcome(s)

Perceived stress measured using the 10-item Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) at baseline, mid-intervention, 1 week post-intervention and 3 months post-intervention

Key secondary outcome(s)

1. Positive and negative affect measured using the Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS) at baseline, mid-intervention, 1 week post-intervention and 3 months post-intervention
2. Overall mental wellbeing measured using the 7-item Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) at baseline, mid-intervention, 1-week post-intervention and 3 months post-intervention
3. Burnout measured using the work-related subscale of the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI) at baseline, mid-intervention, 1 week post-intervention and 3 months post-intervention
4. Sleep disturbance and fatigue measured using PROMIS at baseline, mid-intervention, 1 week post-intervention and 3 months post-intervention
5. Anxiety and low mood, measured using the 4-item Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-4) at baseline, mid-intervention, 1-week post-intervention and 3 months post-intervention
6. Physical symptoms measured using a researcher-derived Likert scale at baseline, mid-intervention, 1-week post-intervention and 3 months post-intervention

Completion date

31/07/2025

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

1. 18 years of age or over
2. Currently working within the NHS

Participant type(s)

Health professional

Healthy volunteers allowed

No

Age group

Adult

Lower age limit

18 years

Sex

All

Total final enrolment

149

Key exclusion criteria

1. Currently seeking or receiving treatment for a severe mental health condition
2. Having ever taken the Yoga4NHS course before
3. Having any physical or mental health condition which precludes safe participation in yoga /physical activity
4. Simultaneously participating in another research study
5. Unable to understand written English

Date of first enrolment

16/01/2025

Date of final enrolment

20/02/2025

Locations

Countries of recruitment

United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre**Study administered online**

United Kingdom

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Sponsor information

Organisation

University of Westminster

ROR

<https://ror.org/04ycpbx82>

Funder(s)

Funder type

University/education

Funder Name

University of Westminster

Alternative Name(s)**Funding Body Type**

Private sector organisation

Funding Body Subtype

Universities (academic only)

Location

United Kingdom

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

The data-sharing plans for the current study are unknown and will be made available at a later date.

IPD sharing plan summary

Data sharing statement to be made available at a later date