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

**Submission date**
10/02/2025

**Recruitment status**
No longer recruiting

**Registration date**
11/02/2025

**Overall study status**
Completed

**Last Edited**
09/04/2025

**Condition category**
Mental and Behavioural Disorders

[ ] Prospectively registered
[ ] Protocol
[ ] Statistical analysis plan
[ ] Results
[ ] Individual participant data
[ ] 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

### 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

### Primary study design
Interventional

### Study design
Mixed-methods unblinded randomized controlled trial with 1:1 allocation

### 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 (PHD-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
-

# 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