

# UK Mindfulness Centres Collaboration

Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) Teacher Training for NHS Talking Therapies (formerly IAPT) Services

2025-2026



## **Introduction and context**

Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) is an evidence-based group intervention recommended by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence for the treatment for mild to moderate depression (NICE: 2022) and for relapse prevention for recurrent depression (NICE: 2004, 2009, 2022). The NICE guidelines for wellbeing at work (NICE: 2022) also recommend that "all employees" should be given access to mindfulness courses to support wellbeing. We have been delivering NHS England/Health Education England commissioned MBCT training for High-Intensity therapists working in NHS TT Services (formerly IAPT) since 2018. This training is designed to increase access to MBCT in those services across England.

The training currently on offer is for the 7<sup>th</sup> cohort and will be delivered partly online and partly face to face in 3 sites across England. Those three sites - in Leeds (North site), in Nottingham (Midlands site) and in London (South site) - will offer MBCT training from April 2025 (or from Jan 25 if not completed an MBCT course) to March 2026. NHS Talking Therapies services are invited to apply to the training programme in their assigned locality.

## **Who is eligible to apply for this training?**

This training is for High Intensity, CBT therapists who have worked in an NHS Talking Therapies Service as CBT therapists for at least one year, or High Intensity, fully BABCP accredited CBT therapists. For the first time this year, the training is also open to Step 3 counsellors who have completed the Counselling for Depression TT training. Applicants must be working in NHS TT Services.

Teaching MBCT requires a personal interest and experience in mindfulness meditation practices. Applicants are therefore required to demonstrate a commitment to an ongoing, regular personal mindfulness practice and will ideally have participated in an MBCT group as a participant. If applicants have not done MBCT as participants themselves, the training programme provides groups for trainees to attend online from Jan to March 2025. They will need to do this even if they have already done a different 8 week programme like MBSR or MSC.

## **MBCT Training**

The training programme consists of 12 days of required training (plus 2 optional, recommended days), a 5 day residential retreat, daily personal mindfulness practice and reflection, and supervised teaching of 2 MBCT groups in trainees' own services. This takes place over one year, although sometimes due to personal events or service issues, this can take a few months longer. (For more details about the training, please refer to the *Training Curriculum*).

### Twelve teaching days

Eleven days are held from March-July 2025 plus 1 day in Jan/Feb 2026.

The induction, days 1 and 10 are online (19<sup>th</sup> March, 2<sup>nd</sup> April and 2<sup>nd</sup> July) and cover the theories underpinning MBCT, issues of equality and diversity in mindfulness practice, the research evidence, outcome monitoring, assessment and recruitment to MBCT groups, the service user perspective, teaching online versus face to face and assessment of competence issues.

Days 2-9 (face to face in local sites) cover each of the 8 sessions of MBCT using a tripartite format: trainers demonstrate key features of each group session and then explain the theoretical underpinnings and rationales for each element; this is then followed by trainees practising those same elements in small groups and receiving intensive feedback from peers and trainers.

In addition, there is a further day online, specifically focused in developing the skill of Inquiry in MBCT. This is often the area of teaching trainees find hardest so an additional day has been provided. The date for this is to be confirmed .

In Jan/Feb 2026 (dates TBC), there is a 1 day pre-submission group workshop. This allows trainees to consolidate what they have learnt having taught one MBCT group and to support the delivery of their 2nd MBCT group which will be submitted for assessment.

Additional optional support is provided through the following days: Foundations of Mindfulness with Christina Feldman (19th September 2025 online) and the Sussex Mindfulness Centre annual conference (date TBC). SiTT Groups (<https://www.sitt.community/>) are also available to support the ongoing practice and reflection of trainee and qualified MBCT teachers.

### 5 day residential retreat

Trainees must attend a 5 day, mostly silent, mindfulness practice retreat. This is generously funded by NHS England. The training collaboration puts on a bespoke retreat for the trainee group at Ammerdown retreat centre (<https://www.ammerdown.org/>) near Bath which is scheduled for 21-26<sup>th</sup> September 2025. Other retreat options will be considered for those who have good reason to be unable to make these dates, or who have health or carer responsibilities that make this impossible to do. All retreats will be funded by the training programme up to the same value as the Ammerdown retreat although trainees will be responsible for the payment of any cancellation fees.

### Teaching 2 MBCT groups

Trainees teach 2 MBCT groups in trainees' services face to face or online with 6 hours of supervision per MBCT group provided by the training programme. They teach the groups either with a fellow trainee from their service or with a more experienced BAMBA-registered, MBCT teacher if one is working in that service, or if not, then bought in by the service.

### **Training programme completion**

Trainees complete the training when they fulfil the requirements of the course, including:

- 90% attendance at the required training days, and submission of any required reflective accounts.
- An assessment of competence in teaching MBCT based on a video recorded submission to assess all sessions of an MBCT group using the Mindfulness-based Interventions Teaching Assessment Criteria (MBI: TAC).
- Submission of group outcome data and training programme evaluations

- Acceptance onto the register of MBCT teachers held by the British Association of Mindfulness-Based Approaches (BAMBA).

Trainees need to achieve 'competence' on 5 out of the 6 domains of the MBI-TAC and not lower than the 'Advanced Beginner' category in the 6<sup>th</sup> domain. Trainees not achieving 'competence' on their assessment will be guided for re-submitting a second and final assessment following a subsequently taught group. Trainees not achieving 'competence' on re-assessment will be deemed to have not passed the training and will not be in a position to teach MBCT in NHS Talking Therapies Services.

Completing this training course enables graduates to meet the training criteria required by the national Good Practice Guidelines (GPGs) in teaching mindfulness-based approaches: <https://bamba.org.uk/good-practice-guidelines/> and to join the register of mindfulness teachers held by the British Association of Mindfulness-Based Approaches (BAMBA). Joining the BAMBA register is a requirement set by NHS England for all MBCT teachers in NHS Talking Therapies (see p.100 of the NHS TT manual: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/NHS-talking-therapies-manual-v7-1.pdf>). Please note that ongoing requirements for the BAMBA register for CPD, supervision, personal practice and retreat must be met each year to maintain registration.

### **Application process**

Services may have already agreed with NHS England on a provisional number of trainee places. NHS England has given approval for that number to be slightly increased if services have one or two additional people they want to put forward for the training. All applicants are subject to a selection process involving an application form and online interview by the training programme staff. The service lead also needs to complete a single application form to cover all the applicants from their service. The training programme and NHS England want to allocate places equitably across the country and also support services to build sustainable MBCT capacity. Our experience is that services that sustain MBCT provision tend to have at least 2 MBCT teachers. The training itself requires either 2 trainees to run their training MBCT groups together or run their training groups with a more experienced MBCT teacher in the service.

- Step 1: Applicants and service leads read this training information document.
- Step 2: The Head of Service identifies suitable trainees from within their service equal to, or slightly greater than, the number agreed with NHS England.
- Step 3: The Head of Service completes a *service application form*.
- Step 4: Each NHS TT staff member put forward as a prospective trainee by their Head of Service completes a *trainee application form*.
- Step 5: The *service application form* and *trainee application form(s)* with *Equality Monitoring form(s)* are all submitted together to the relevant training site (see table below for information).

Application forms should be completed electronically and emailed to the relevant training lead **by 28<sup>th</sup> October 2024**. Shortlisted applicants will be interviewed online between early November and mid-December 2024.

<b>Geographical Area covered</b>	<b>Training Venue</b>	<b>Training dates for 2025. In training venues unless stated online.</b>	<b>Email address for completed application forms</b>	<b>Contact details for further information/ questions about this training</b>
<b>South England</b> (Greater London, Kent, Isle of Wight, Surrey, E.Sussex, W.Sussex, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Somerset, Bristol, Gloucestershire, Swindon, Wiltshire, Dorset, Devon, Cornwall)	Greencoat Place conference centre, 24 Greencoat Place, London, SW1P 1RD <a href="http://www.greencoatplace.org/">http://www.greencoatplace.org/</a>	Induction: 19 <sup>th</sup> March 10-11am online (all sites) Day 1: 2nd April online (all sites) Days 2&3: 24-25 April Inquiry day: 8 May online (all sites) Days 4&5: 15-16 May Days 6&7: 5-6 June Days 8&9: 26-27 June Day 10: 2nd July online (all sites)	<a href="mailto:smc@spft.nhs.uk">smc@spft.nhs.uk</a>	Robert Marx <a href="mailto:robert.marx@spft.nhs.uk">robert.marx@spft.nhs.uk</a> ;
<b>Central England</b> (Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Peterborough, Norfolk, Suffolk, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Rutland, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands)	Nottingham University, Jubilee Conference centre, Nottingham. NG7 2PU <a href="https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/conference/fac-eng/ecce16/venue/how-to-get-there.aspx">https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/conference/fac-eng/ecce16/venue/how-to-get-there.aspx</a>	Induction: 19th March 10-11am online (all sites) Day 1: 2 <sup>nd</sup> April online (all sites) Day 2: 16th April Day 3 : 17th April Day 4: 30th April Day 5: 1st May Inquiry day: 8th May online (all sites) Day 6: 21st May Day 7: 22nd may Day 8: 11th June Day 9: 12th June Day 10: 2nd July online (all sites)	Kate Feenan: <a href="mailto:Kathryn.Feenan@nottshc.nhs.uk">Kathryn.Feenan@nottshc.nhs.uk</a>  (back up: Tim Sweeney <a href="mailto:tim.sweeney@nottshc.nhs.uk">tim.sweeney@nottshc.nhs.uk</a> )	Kate Feenan: <a href="mailto:Kathryn.Feenan@nottshc.nhs.uk">Kathryn.Feenan@nottshc.nhs.uk</a> or Tim Sweeney <a href="mailto:tim.sweeney@nottshc.nhs.uk">tim.sweeney@nottshc.nhs.uk</a>
<b>North England</b> (Yorkshire, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, County Durham, Cheshire, Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Merseyside, Cumbria, Isle of Man)	All days online	Induction: 19th March 10-11am (all sites) Day 1: 2nd April (all sites) Day 2: 8th April Day 3: 29th April Inquiry Day: 8th May (all sites) Day 4: 13 <sup>th</sup> May Day 5: 20 <sup>th</sup> May Day 6: 3 <sup>rd</sup> June Day 7: 10 <sup>th</sup> June Day 8: 17 <sup>th</sup> June Day 9: 24 <sup>th</sup> June Day 10: 2 <sup>nd</sup> July (all sites)	<a href="mailto:tewv.mindfulness@nhs.net">tewv.mindfulness@nhs.net</a>	Paul Bernard <a href="mailto:paul.bernard@nhs.net">paul.bernard@nhs.net</a> and Jo Cromarty <a href="mailto:jo.cromarty@nhs.net">jo.cromarty@nhs.net</a>