

Laura Smith is a dual-qualified Occupational Therapist and Registered Mental Health Nurse with more than twenty years of experience across the United Kingdom's National Health Service, and most recently an independent provider. Her career has taken her through community and acute hospital settings, the ambulance service, and a wide range of mental health environments, including inpatient wards, crisis pathways, and community teams. She has also worked extensively with national independent providers. This breadth of experience gives her a rare and genuinely system-wide understanding of how safety, quality, culture, and patient experience intersect in everyday practice.

Laura currently works as a Professional Nurse Specialist in Reducing Restrictive Practice, covering an independent healthcare provider across England, Scotland and Wales. In this role, she leads programmes that decrease aggression, prevent avoidable harm, and reduce the use of restrictive interventions while also strengthening staff wellbeing. She brings together frontline clinical experience, data-informed improvement, and compassionate leadership to create change that is both effective and sustainable. She also collaborates closely with operational colleagues to address the wider cultural, environmental, and organisational factors that influence staff and patient safety.

Laura has also worked as a Clinical Violence Prevention Specialist, supporting teams in managing complex behaviours, strengthening communication, and developing psychologically safe care environments. Her work in violence reduction was recognised nationally when they received the 2023 Healthcare Security Award for Violence Reduction Initiative.

Laura is a trained practitioner in Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) and a committed advocate for trauma-informed practice. She ensures that physical, psychological, and emotional safety are embedded into policy, education, supervision, and daily routines, with a strong emphasis on environments where patients can recover and staff can thrive.

In 2025, she further expanded her professional portfolio by qualifying as a Certified Healthcare Security Supervisor through the International Association for Healthcare Security and Safety. This additional specialism strengthens her ability to bridge clinical, safety, and operational domains and reflects her long-standing commitment to improving the safety, well-being, and recovery journeys of both patients and staff.

Across all her work, Laura is driven by the belief that compassionate leadership, effective communication, and shared understanding across disciplines create the conditions for healthcare to function at its best. As Chair of the IAHS UK Chapter, she continues to champion collaboration among clinical, safety, and organisational teams, both nationally and internationally, turning evidence into practical action and helping build cultures where people can thrive.