



North East and
North Cumbria
WorkWell Service

October 2026

WorkWell Sunderland

Information pack for GP surgeries in Sunderland to support communications with patients

As you may be aware, people in Sunderland who are struggling to stay in work because of their health can now access NHS WorkWell services and WorkWell advisers to support them to stay well and working. The following provides some information to support you in your communications with patients. Information for patients is also available on the ICB website at <https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/here-to-help-you/health-advice-and-support/workwell-service/nhs-workwell-sunderland>

Services in Sunderland are led by WorkWell advisers at Sunderland GP Alliance.

We are asking practices in Sunderland to refer eligible patients to the WorkWell service using [this referral form](#).

What's in this toolkit?

Item	Where to access it
Suggested script for staff in practices to help answer questions from patients and provide information when referring patients to the service.	https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/here-to-help-you/health-advice-and-support/workwell-service/nhs-workwell-sunderland
Suggested content to go on GP surgery websites.	https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/here-to-help-you/health-advice-and-support/workwell-service/nhs-workwell-sunderland
Answers to some frequently asked questions.	https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/here-to-help-you/health-advice-and-support/workwell-service/nhs-workwell-sunderland
Adverts you can use on digital screens in GP surgeries.	https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/here-to-help-you/health-advice-and-support/workwell-service/nhs-workwell-sunderland

NHS
North East and
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WorkWell Service

**Is your health making
it hard to work? We
can help.**

Ask your GP about the
free NHS WorkWell service.



Leaflet for GP surgery waiting areas. **Printed versions are being supplied to practices.**



<https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/here-to-help-you/health-advice-and-support/workwell-service/nhs-workwell-sunderland>

Digital copy of A4 information sheet - GPs/practice staff can hand to patient they have referred to the services. A print version is also available in the toolkit.

<https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/here-to-help-you/health-advice-and-support/workwell-service/nhs-workwell-sunderland>

Helping you stay well, and stay in work... If your health is making it hard to work – or return to work – a WorkWell coach can help. Listening to you WorkWell Sunderland is a free NHS service. Your coach will listen to your needs and support you. They will: • Work with you to create a plan • Keep in touch and help you stay on track • Put you in touch with services that can help • Meet with you locally, online or by phone You don't need to manage alone. Support for you We can help you with things like: • Getting fitter and healthier • Mental health or pain • Money, benefits or housing • Talking with your employer • Alcohol or drug problems • Counselling Who's this service for? Our service is for adults in Sunderland who: • Are struggling to stay in work because of health problems • Are not working because of health problems • Have had a fit note in the last six months • Live in the area and have the right to work in the UK If you feel you may benefit from this service but the above doesn't apply to you, please do still get in touch or speak to your GP. What happens next? You can refer yourself to a WorkWell coach by scanning the QR code. You can also be referred by someone else, like a GP. Your WorkWell coach will be in touch with you within five days. If you have any questions, call 07307 182 057 or contact the person who referred you. Visit www.northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/workwell-sland for more information. WorkWell Sunderland is commissioned by NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board and delivered by Sunderland GP Alliance.	
Animation about work coaches that can be added to websites and shared on digital screens in practices.	https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/here-to-help-you/health-advice-and-support/workwell-service/nhs-workwell-sunderland Or access on YouTube: https://youtu.be/Ztqi03IGBso

Suggested content for practice websites

Is your health making it hard for you to work?

Sometimes health problems like stress, back pain or long-term conditions make it hard to stay in work or return to work.

If you're finding it a struggle, our WorkWell advisers can help. It's part of a free NHS service called WorkWell.

Our advisers will listen to you, help you to make a plan, and put you in touch with services that can help.

This could include:

- Support from other health services to help you with
 - Getting fitter and healthier
 - Pain, like back pain or sore joints
 - Looking after your mental health
 - Women's health issues such as menopause, pelvic pain or heavy periods
 - Neurodiversity, like dyslexia or ADHD, which may affect how you learn and think
- Advice on benefits, money or housing
- Links to local groups and activities
- Talking to your employer

You don't have to manage alone.

Just ask **your GP** [\[edit/insert other posts as appropriate\]](#). You can also find out more by visiting this website (add link)

Suggested script for staff

Hi, I'm NAME from PRACTICE.

I am calling on behalf of your GP/nurse who has suggested you may find it helpful to get some extra support for your health problems.

There is a free NHS service called WorkWell that supports people whose health is affecting their ability to work. WorkWell advisers can help if health problems or difficult circumstances are making it hard for you to stay in work, return to work or find work.

The WorkWell advisers will listen to your needs; help you make a plan and help you stay on track with it.

They can help with all sorts of things, like:

- Support from other health services to help you with things like
 - Getting fitter and healthier
 - Pain, like back pain or sore joints
 - Looking after your mental health
 - Women's health issues such as menopause, pelvic pain or heavy periods
 - Neurodiversity, like dyslexia or ADHD, which may affect how you learn and think
- Advice on benefits, money or housing
- Links to local groups and activities
- Talking to your employer

...whatever will help you.

It's completely up to you, but we think you might find it helpful. We know from people who have used this service before, that they have found it helpful and supportive. Would you consider talking with a WorkWell adviser?

[Pause for questions – please use the FAQs below to help answer any questions and reassure people]

Follow-up conversation (where appropriate):

- Offer to email a leaflet or give a web address <https://northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/here-to-help-you/health-advice-and-support/workwell-service/nhs-workwell-sunderland>

Answers to frequently asked questions

Do I have to take part? No. It is your choice. You do not have to take part if you do not want to. Many people find the help on offer useful.

Will it affect me if I say no? No. It will not affect you. You can change your mind later. You can ask your GP or another health worker to refer you again.

Will this affect the benefits? No. The service is separate from Jobcentre Plus and the DWP. Taking part will not affect your benefits. What you say will not be used to make decisions about your benefits.

What happens to my information?

If you agree to take part:

- A short form is filled in with your details
- This is sent safely to a WorkWell adviser.
- They will call you for a chat first.

Your information is:

- Kept safe
- Only shared if you agree

Sometimes information is used to help improve the service, but

- Your name is not used
- It will affect you or your benefit/s

Who can see my medical notes?

Only NHS staff who are allowed to see them.

When will a WorkWell adviser contact me?

They will contact you as soon as they can. Usually within 5 days, often sooner.

Can I use this service, if I'm working?

Yes. You can use it if you:

- Are working and struggling
- Are off sick
- Are not working (out of work in last 6 months)

Is it only for certain health problems?

No. It is for many different needs. For example, help with:

- Getting fitter and healthier
- Looking after your mental health
- Women's health, such as menopause, pelvic pain, or heavy periods
- Family or caring worries
- Things like dyslexia or ADHD
- Money or housing
- Talking to your employer

Your WorkWell adviser will talk with you and make a plan that suits you.

These are just examples. Your WorkWell adviser will talk to you and come up with a personalised plan that suits you best.

How long can I get support for?

As long as you need. There is no set end date.