



Version 1

8 January 2026

NHS WorkWell Services 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 coaches to support them to stay well and working. Services in Sunderland are provided by Sunderland GP Alliance.

The following provides some information to support you in your communications with patients.

Information for patients is also available on the ICB's website here www.northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/workwell-sland

What's in this toolkit?

Item	Where to access it
Script for staff in practices to help answer questions from patients and provide information when referring patients to the service.	See below
Suggested content to go on GP surgeries websites.	See below
Answers to some frequently asked questions	See below

<p>Adverts use on digital screens in GP surgeries.</p> 	<p>This can be downloaded from our toolkit using the link below.</p> <p>www.northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/toolkits/workwell-sunderland/</p>
<p>Leaflet for GP surgery waiting areas. Printed versions are being supplied to practices.</p>	
<p>Digital copy of A4 information sheet – GPs/practice staff can hand to patient they have referred to the services. Printed versions are being supplied to practices</p>	 <p>This can be downloaded from our toolkit using the link below.</p> <p>www.northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/toolkits/workwell-sunderland/</p>

Animation about work coaches which can be added to websites and shared on digital screens in practices.	This can be downloaded from our toolkit using the link below. www.northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/toolkits/workwell-sunderland/ Or accessed on YouTube. https://youtu.be/Ztgi03IGBso
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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, an NHS WorkWell coach can help.

It's a free NHS service and we can arrange for you to meet a WorkWell coach/advisor to see how they can help you.

A WorkWell coach 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, like pain or mental health teams
- Advice on benefits, money or housing
- Help with talking to your employer or making changes at work
- Links to local groups and activities

You don't have to manage alone.

Just ask **your GP [edit/insert other posts as appropriate]** about WorkWell. You can also find out more by watching this animation (<https://youtu.be/Ztgi03lGBso>) and visiting this website www.northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/workwell-island

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's a new service called WorkWell which can help if health problems or difficult circumstances are making it hard for you to work.

It's a free NHS service and we can arrange for you to meet a WorkWell coach/advisor to see how they can help you. They can 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

- Money worries
- Mental health or health issues
- Housing problems
- Helping you talk with your employer about making adjustments

...whatever will help you.

It's completely up to you, but we think you might find it helpful.

We know that people who have used this service or similar services, have found it helpful and supportive.

Would you consider talking with a WorkWell advisor?

[Pause for questions – please use FAQs below to answer questions if appropriate]

Follow-up conversation (where appropriate):

- Offer to email a leaflet or give a web address
- Web address is www.northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/workwell-sland
- Reassure this is an NHS service, but is provided by Sunderland GP Alliance .
- NHS WorkWell services for our area can be contacted on 07307 182 057

Answers to frequently asked questions

Is taking part compulsory? No. It is completely up to you. Deciding to speak to a WorkWell coach or take part in services is **your choice**. You do not have to take part if you do not want to. We do know that lots of people have found this type of service very helpful though.

Will it count against me if I choose not to use WorkWell? No. Saying no won't affect you in any way. If you change your mind later, you can always talk to your GP or healthcare professional about being referred again.

Might the information I give be used against me by the benefits system? This is a really common worry, and the answer is no. WorkWell is separate from Jobcentre Plus and the DWP and taking part will not affect your benefits. Information you share with WorkWell is not used to make decisions about your benefits.

What happens to my information?

If you agree to a referral:

- A short referral form is filled in with some basic details about you and what support you might need.
- This is sent securely to your local WorkWell team.
- They will then contact you by phone for a first chat.

Your information is:

- Kept safe and secure on WorkWell systems
- Only shared with other support services if you agree and it's part of your plan

Some information may be used (without your name or details that identify you) to help improve the service, but this won't affect you or your benefits.

Who will have access to my medical notes?

WorkWell does **not** have access to your full medical records.

- Notes from your conversations with the WorkWell provider will be recorded and stored securely on their system.
- Your GP will be updated at the agreed point, so they know you are getting support.

Any information used to help improve or review the service will be handled safely and confidentially.

How quickly will WorkWell contact me?

After your referral, the WorkWell team will aim to contact you **as soon as possible**. In most cases, this is within 5 days and often earlier.

Can I use WorkWell if I'm already working?

Yes. WorkWell is for people:

- In work and struggling
- Off sick

- Or out of work

Support can include help with:

- Talking to your employer
- Making changes at work that help you stay well
- Mental health and long-term health conditions

Is it only for certain health problems?

No. WorkWell supports people with lots of different needs, including:

- Mental health
- Long-term or ongoing conditions
- Pain or mobility issues
- Women's health
- Neurodiversity
- Caring or family pressures

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

Is WorkWell a new service?

Yes. WorkWell is a **new NHS-led service**. It brings together health, work and wellbeing support, all in one place, and it's completely **voluntary**.

How long can I get support for?

Support is **not time limited**. WorkWell can support you for as long as you need, at a pace that works for you.