

Version 1

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Northumberland Skills' Employability Service

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

As you may be aware, people in Northumberland 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 Northumberland are provided by Northumberland County Council's Northumberland Skills' Employability Service. The following provides some information to support you in your communications with patients.

General Information for patients is also available on the website www.northumberlandskills.co.uk/worksupport

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.	See below.
Suggested content to go on GP surgery websites.	See below.

Adverts you can use on digital screens in GP surgeries.



This can be downloaded from our toolkit using the link below.

www.northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/toolkits/northumberland-skills-employability-service-toolkit/

Posters for waiting areas in GP surgeries - one simple version and one more detailed. **Printed versions are being supplied to practices.** For any queries email nencicb.comms@nhs.net



Digital copy of A4 information sheet - GPs/practice staff can hand to patient they have referred to the services. **Printed versions are also being supplied to practices**



The digital copy can be downloaded from our toolkit using the link below.

www.northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/toolkits/northumberland-skills-employability-service-toolkit/

Animation about work coaches which can 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/northumberland-skills-employability-service-toolkit/

Or accessed 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, the Northumberland Skills' Employability Service can help.

It's a free NHS service and we can arrange for you to meet a Work Smart Live Well Employment Coach to see how they can help you.

An advisor 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 the Northumberland Skills' Employability Service. You can also find out more by watching this animation (<https://youtu.be/Ztqi03IGBso>) and visiting this website www.northumberlandskills.co.uk/worksupport

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 'Northumberland Skills' Employability Service' 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 Work Smart Live Well Employment Coach 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 and other 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 from people who have used this service before, that they have found it helpful and supportive.

Would you consider talking with a Work Smart Live Well Employment Coach?

[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
- Web address is www.northumberlandskills.co.uk/worksupport
- Reassure this is an NHS service but is provided by Northumberland County Council.
- They can be contacted on 01670 623894 or by emailing worksupport@northumberland.gov.uk

Answers to frequently asked questions

Is taking part compulsory? No. It is completely up to you. Deciding to speak to a Work Smart Live Well Employment 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.

Will it count against me if I choose not to use Northumberland Skills' Employability Service? 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. Northumberland Skills' Employability Service is separate from Jobcentre Plus and the DWP and taking part will not affect your benefits. Information you share with us 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 team.
- They will then contact you by phone for a first chat.

Your information is:

- Kept safe and secure on Northumberland Skills' Employability Service 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?

Northumberland Skills' Employability Service does **not** have access to your full medical records.

- Notes from your conversations with a Work Smart Live Well Employment Coach 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 Working Well contact me?

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

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

Yes. The service 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. We support 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 Work Smart Live Well Employment Coach will talk to you and come up with a personalised plan that suits you best.

How long can I get support for?

Support is **not time limited**. Your Work Smart Live Well Employment Coach can support you for as long as you need, at a pace that works for you.