

# Press Release

April 2015

## NHS Trust staff given vital mental health and wellbeing support

Staff from the county's main provider of community and mental health services are being offered a wide range of support to prevent and manage mental health issues.

It was recently revealed that staff absences for mental health reasons across NHS Trusts in England had doubled, leading to calls for organisations to do more to support their employees. But between 2013 and 2015 sickness days attributed to mental health issues within Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust had stayed about the same, with no significant increase.

The Trust has developed a range of policies and support mechanisms to help its employees to enjoy a positive working environment and build up their personal resilience to stress triggers.

For example staff can take a Moodmaster course, which aims to help manage low level and short term emotional health problems such as periods of stress by teaching them simple tools and techniques to improve their emotional health.

The Trust has also recently published a series of self-help guides on subjects like bereavement, anxiety, depression (including post-natal), and low mood, which staff as well as the general public can access online (visit [www.hacw.nhs.uk](http://www.hacw.nhs.uk) and search for "Self Help Guides" under the A-Z). And it has signed up to the Mindful Employer Charter, which reinforces its commitment to showing a positive and enabling attitude towards employees and job applicants with mental health issues.

Other support tools that are available to the Trust's staff include access to free counselling, one-to-one and team sessions with its Health and Wellbeing Lead and signposting on to health and wellbeing, occupational health and health and fitness services.

**Kate Leese, Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust's Health and Wellbeing Lead said:** *"Staff are increasingly aware of the support that's available to them and so might feel more comfortable at reporting stress and mental health problems. However, we cannot be complacent and must continue to get the message out and make sure all staff are aware of the support we are offering.*

*"There is no 'one size fits all' model for supporting someone with a mental illness and so we have developed a wide range of support that can respond to the different needs of our staff."*

**John Bagnall, The Trust's Head of HR, added:** *"We recognise the essential contribution that our staff make to the everyday delivery of high quality safe care throughout Worcestershire. Frontline work in the NHS is rewarding but it can be emotionally challenging, so it's essential that those staff get the right support.*

*"The benefits are not only cost effective for the Trust in terms of reduced absence rates and increased productivity, but supporting our staff also ultimately leads to high quality, safe and effective services."*

**-Ends-**