New employment support service launches for people struggling with their mental health

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15 January 2024, Durham

From today (15 January) anyone accessing NHS Durham & Darlington Talking Therapies will be given the opportunity to work with an employment advisor.

The Health Foundation (2021) found that 43% of people who are unemployed reported poor mental health.

The new Durham & Darlington Employment Service aims to address this by bringing together therapists and employment advisors, to help people to find, stay in or return to work.

The team offers a range of support including interview practice, access to training, and help to speak to employers about mental health issues in the workplace.

The employment advisors will work alongside Talking Therapies therapists, who offer support to anyone living in County Durham and Darlington experiencing common mental health problems such as stress, anxiety or depression.

Tracey Furlong, Senior Employment Advisor for the service, said: “We offer specialist and compassionate support to people who have struggled with problems like stress, anxiety, and depression.

“We understand how poor mental health can impact employment and we aim to help people feel confident and empowered to achieve their goals, whether it’s to go back to work, or completely change career.”

Greg Hawman, service manager for Durham & Darlington Talking Therapies, said: “The new employment advisors are a great addition to the Talking Therapies service. Finding employment and feeling supported in the workplace has many benefits for our mental health, from giving us a sense of purpose to introducing structure into our daily lives.

“They will help a lot of people suffering with stress, anxiety and depression get the employment support they need to start, stay and succeed in work.”

The service is commissioned by Tees, Esk & Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) and delivered by Mental Health Matters, who helped over 3,400 people return to work, find employment, or access training and volunteering opportunities last year.

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