



Better Health at Work Award – Primary Care support

- Employers have a key role to play in maintaining and improving the health and wellbeing of their workforce and supporting people to remain at work, including those with existing health conditions. It is also evident, however, that many employers need and value support in order to fulfil this vital role
- In recognition of the importance of a focus on the health and wellbeing of the workforce, as reflected in the NHS Long Term Plan and NHS People Plan, 1.6wte posts have been funded by Health Education England/North of England Commissioning Support with the support of the NENC ICS Prevention Board, to provide dedicated workplace health leads for Primary Care organisations, to add capacity to the established [Better Health at Work Award](#) (BHAWA) programme
- It was primarily aimed at offering structured support to staff in GP practices, but pharmacies and dental practices have also been encouraged to engage
- The delivery model had to adapt during COVID-19 and became a virtual offer of training and support and use of an e-portal developed by the TUC, who co-ordinate the overall BHAWA programme
- The offer was open to all primary care organisations across the NENC ICS footprint, however engagement with the Deep End Programme was a key consideration from the start in order to ensure that members were aware of the opportunity to benefit from the free support and resources available



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- The posts began in January 2021 in particularly challenging circumstances, when services were under severe pressure, but when staff wellbeing was a major concern. The timing was therefore a risk in terms of engagement, however, it proved to be the right decision and the ongoing impact of COVID-19 on staff made this offer of support more important than ever
- In these circumstances, the postholders made remarkable progress, exceeding the original target of 40 organisations achieving 52 in year one, now standing at 71 practices/ workplaces signed up so far in 2022, contributing to COVID recovery efforts
- A huge amount of engagement has taken place, including with CCGs, Practice Managers, PCNs, Healthwatch, Directors of Public Health and Local Pharmacy Committees as well as targeted efforts to reach GP practices in the most socio-economically deprived areas and those areas currently under-represented
- An additional output has been the development of resources that can be used by the whole BHAWA programme, including a resource for Social Care organisations. This offer is unique to the North East & North Cumbria, however our experience has been shared with other parts of the country and BHAWA referenced in national publications
- The posts are currently funded until end May 2023 and now sit within the Health & Wellbeing pillar of the Workforce workstream of the ICS

Contacts for further information: snichol@tuc.org.uk / charlotte.wood60@nhs.net / jack.lyon@nhs.net