



NOTICE: 29 NOVEMBER 2018

SOCIAL FINANCE TO TEST NEW BACK TO WORK PILOT IN LEICESTER AND NEWCASTLE

Social Finance has been awarded government innovation funding to offer support in GP surgeries to people with health conditions return to work

The Department of Work and Pensions has awarded Social Finance £236,000 from its Work and Health Challenge Fund to run a one-year trial to test **The Link** initiative. Social Finance's innovative programme aims to integrate Allied Health Professionals into GP led primary care teams. They will support patients with mental health or musculoskeletal conditions to manage their health better and liaise with employers to make adjustments or plans for a suitable return to work.

Dr Rob Hampton, GP and Occupational Physician in Leicester said, said: "The Link trial addresses current challenges in the Fit Note system, which does not provide for vocational rehabilitation. By placing extra support in GP surgeries, we can help patients with mental health or musculoskeletal issues manage their conditions and their return to work more effectively."

The Link will operate in five GP surgeries in Leicester and three GP surgeries in Newcastle. It will serve approximately 300 patients. In Newcastle, there will also be support for debt problems, housing or family issues. Social Finance will be working in partnership with Leicester City Health GP Federation and Newcastle Healthy Futures, a partnership between 3 GP practices, Mental Health Concern, Changing Lives, and Newcastle University.

Adam Swersky, Social Finance Director for Health and Employment, said: "The Challenge Fund is a huge opportunity to try new ideas for supporting people with health issues to stay in work. GPs, employers, and health and work experts all have a role to play. Our project builds on best practice from Australia, Canada, USA and our experience of UK delivery of IPS to better join up services that help people back to work in a supportive and sustainable way."

Each year 300,000 people leave work because of a health condition or disability. This new programme, designed by Social Finance, will be evaluated and its results will be shared following the trial.

The Challenge Fund is a joint initiative between the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health and Social Care. The £4m fund will be shared between 19 different initiatives.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/millions-awarded-to-help-people-with-health-conditions-stay-in-work>