

10. Sustaining transformation: A healthy NHS workforce

Delivering the objectives in the Mental Health Forward View is not just a question of recruiting and training the right number of staff to improve access. It must also be about ensuring that the NHS looks after its most important asset – its staff – and focuses on promoting their health and wellbeing to improve satisfaction, productivity and retention.

In March 2016, NHS England introduced a £450 million financial incentive focused on improving staff health and wellbeing. To gain access to the money, NHS trusts were asked to improve the health and wellbeing schemes on offer to staff, take action on unhealthy food sold on NHS premises and improve the uptake of the flu vaccination amongst staff.

Mental health support for staff working in the NHS is a key part of this scheme, with £150 million in incentives available for the successful introduction of health and wellbeing schemes, including in relation to mental health. To access this money, providers will be required to take three specific actions on mental health over the course of the next year:

- develop plans to improve the mental health support for all staff;
- implement an improved set of mental health initiatives for staff to access in the workplace; and,
- ensure that locally agreed uptake rates and access metrics are met.

In addition to this, NHS England pledged £5 million in September 2015 to support the development of health initiatives for NHS staff. NHS England is currently supporting 12 pilot organisations in improving staff health and wellbeing, with particular emphasis on mental health, through the NHS Healthy Workforce Programme. The mental health initiatives include:

- **Stress management:** providing the pilot organisations with enhanced line manager training to improve mental health awareness in the workplace. The training specifically deals with stress management by improving line managers' confidence and ability to deal with a range of difficult work-based scenarios.
- **Psychological therapies:** providing additional capacity and training to enable staff to rapidly access evidence-based psychological therapies. This includes helping the organisations who currently have 24/7 telephone-based therapies to enhance these services.

- **Mindfulness:** The Healthy Workforce Programme has partnered with the creators of the mindfulness app 'Headspace' – supporting staff in maintaining their wellbeing. Headspace has provided the 12 pilot sites with a free one-year subscription to the app for all staff.
- **NHS health checks:** providing checks to all staff, including questions on mental health.

The programme will share case studies and the results of an independent evaluation in 2017 to enable other NHS organisations to learn lessons from implementation within an NHS context to help ensure that by 2020 the NHS consistently offers world leading mental health support for its staff.