

6 March 2006

## **GP EMPLOYMENT ADVISER PROJECT LAUNCHES IN TYNESIDE**

A new project is launching in North Tyneside, which for the first time enables an employment adviser to be placed within doctors' surgeries to help patients get back into work, education or training.

Two surgeries in Wallsend are the first to offer this service, which is provided by employment charity Tomorrow's People. Garden Park Surgery and the Portugal Place Health Centre will now have an employment adviser based within their premises a half-day each week. Patients who are out of work for health reasons, but who would like independent, one-to-one confidential advice about getting into work now have access to the Tomorrow's People employment adviser within their surgery.

Surgeries and health professionals across North Tyneside, including Tynemouth, North Shields, Wallsend and Whitley Bay are being invited to participate in this voluntary scheme which is funded by The Links Foundation, a charitable trust set up by Working Links.

The project is based on Tomorrow's People's background of success running similar schemes across 80 GPs' surgeries, hospitals and health centres in various areas of the UK. This includes a surgery in Kentish Town, North West London where for the last four years it has had an adviser based on site at a busy GPs' surgery. So far nearly 200 patients have seen the adviser in London, and of those who have completed the programme, 87% have returned to employment or are back in education or training. On average, 82% are still in work 12 months on.

Brian Gibson, Tomorrow's People Operations Manager for Newcastle said: "The Government recently announced plans to mirror these schemes, piloting employment advisers within doctors' surgeries, as referred to in the recent welfare reform Green Paper. We welcome this initiative; however, our experience shows that many patients value our independence from Government. A project like this will only work if trust is built between the doctors, the employment advisers and the patients.

"Our project within GPs' surgeries can help free up health service resources by providing specialist employment expertise direct to patients. Support provided is one-to-one and confidential and includes confidence building and exploring options and training needs. Our scheme in London has saved the practice at least five GP consultations per patient, already saving the surgery thousands of pounds."

Funding partner Working Links, specialists at helping long term unemployed people back to work, deliver the North Tyneside New Deal and Action Team employment initiatives. Michael Martin from the North Tyneside Action Team said: "Working Links is dedicated to reversing the fortunes of deprived communities in the North East. We are delighted that Tomorrow's People are working out of GPs practices in North Tyneside. Many more jobless people will now be able to access quality support and rebuild their lives by finding fulfilling work opportunities."



The new Tomorrow's People initiative in Tyneside is designed to help the region's unemployed navigate their way back to work. Although the service can be accessed by anyone with health issues, it is hoped it will particularly help people in receipt of sickness related benefits in the region regain their confidence and get back into work.

Joanne Cocklin, Tomorrow's People employment adviser for North Tyneside explains: "There are no quick fixes when helping someone who has been on long-term sickness back into work. We begin with confidence building and then move on to retraining if necessary and provide support with CV writing, computer skills and interview techniques. We stay in touch with the clients even after they are in work or training, giving advice and liaising between the client and their employer."

Joanne adds: "We would like to hear from any North Tyneside GPs who would be interested in having any employment adviser at their practice. There is a definite link between being out of work and ill health and we expect this service to make a real difference to those out of work for health reasons."

Tomorrow's People, which has a 21-year track record of helping people out of long term unemployment, provides a number of additional programmes across Newcastle and North Tyneside, including mentoring. In addition to GPs' surgeries, outreach venues where Tomorrow's People provide one-to-one support include libraries, sports centres, Jobcentres and community centres.

Any GPs who would like to get in touch and find out more about the scheme, or people requiring employment advice, please contact Joanne Cocklin at Tomorrow's People by telephoning 0191 261 6242, email [newcastle@tomorrows-people.co.uk](mailto:newcastle@tomorrows-people.co.uk) or write to Tomorrow's People, 14 Akenside Hill, Quayside, Newcastle -upon-Tyne, NE1 3XP.

**-Ends-**

**Notes to Editors:**

- Tomorrow's People is a national charity that has helped change the lives of more than 390,000 people across the UK who had been resigned to long-term, even life-long, unemployment, since it was established in 1984. It helps the hardest to reach long-term unemployed, by giving individuals one-to-one support, helping them find the right job and more importantly, to stay there. On average, 76% of people helped by Tomorrow's People are still in employment 12 months on.
- The Links Foundation is a charitable trust established by the shareholders of Working Links to reinvest funds back into the communities that Working Links operates within. Established by Working Links in August 2003, The Links Foundation has allocated over a £1m to distribute among organisations committed to establishing facilities or services to improve conditions of life for people in their local communities. Across the UK, The Links Foundation has funded over 30 separate projects.

**Press enquiries:**

**Tomorrow's People**

Michelle Eastty

Media Relations Manager

Tel: 01424 203752 or mobile 07875 412325

[meastty@tomorrows-people.co.uk](mailto:meastty@tomorrows-people.co.uk)

[www.tomorrows-people.co.uk](http://www.tomorrows-people.co.uk)

Registered Office:  
Tomorrow's People Trust Limited  
4th Floor Rothermere House  
49/51 Cambridge Road  
Hove, East Sussex TN34 1DT