

# News Release

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For immediate release



## **NHS DIRECT WORKING WITH TEACHING CARE TRUST PLUS TO PILOT UNIQUE LONG-TERM CONDITIONS PROGRAMME**

NHS Direct will be working with NHS Blackburn with Darwen Teaching Care Trust Plus to pilot a service that will help prevent local people developing long-term conditions. This new innovative approach has been designed by NHS Direct and is the only one of its kind in the UK.

The web-based NHS Wellness programme will be piloted from September 2010, aiming to provide motivational support to over a thousand patients identified by the Teaching Care Trust Plus as being at risk of developing a long-term condition in order to reduce their likelihood of developing health problems.

Delivered by a combination of a web-based motivational Wellness programme and telephone support via NHS Direct's trained health coaches, the service will use NHS Direct's expertise and existing infrastructure. It will integrate with local NHS and third sector campaigns and services such as the NHS Health Checks programme, Re:refresh (free exercise for all), and the 'Dragon's Apprentice Scheme.'

Patients will be able to choose how they access the Wellness programme, via the web, telephone and eventually IVR to gain access to health education and information. Trained health coaches will work with patients to help them tackle their lifestyle choices and the risks associated with them, addressing areas such as smoking, alcohol use, exercise and healthy eating.

Benefits are expected for the wider health community too, as patients will be supported to improve their health, which will, in the longer term, reduce pressure on carers and primary and secondary care service providers.

Ruth Rankine, Director of Strategy and Planning, NHS Direct, said:  
"We are really excited to be working with NHS Blackburn and Darwen Teaching Care Trust Plus to pilot such a revolutionary service. Our aim is to provide patients at risk of developing long-term conditions with the support they need to make changes that will improve their future lives, and, in turn, help reduce the demand on already pressurised face to face services such as GPs."

Vanessa Hollings, Director of Transformation at NHS Blackburn and Darwen Teaching Care Trust Plus, said:  
"We are committed to improving the health and wellbeing of our population. We pride ourselves on our passion to deliver high quality, innovative services and the Wellness programme will offer us a fantastic opportunity to promote healthy lifestyle choices across the borough."

The Wellness programme builds on the experience NHS Direct has gained over the last three years developing commissioned services, Birmingham and Nottingham

OwnHealth. This model is different to the Wellness programme as OwnHealth primarily uses nurses and allied health professionals to deliver motivational support over the telephone, and there is greater focus on patients with existing long-term conditions.

Once complete, the pilot will be evaluated by an external evaluation team before being considered for national launch.

## **ENDS**

For further information please contact Lisa Gaskell on 0207 599 4223 or the press office mobile on 07876 596932.

### *About NHS Direct*

- NHS Direct aims to provide remotely delivered care, over the phone and on the web, which is increasingly valued by patients and the wider health and social care system.
- The NHS Direct health information and advice line handles 14,000 calls a day. That's over 5 million calls a year.
- Its web services are used 350,000 times every month. These include five online health and symptom checkers (with web chat facilities) covering colds and flu, contraception advice, men's sexual health, mental health and an initial assessment; plus an online enquiry service.
- NHS Direct employs over 3,400 staff, over 1,400 of whom are trained nurses.