

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 23 April

NHS Westminster invests £700K to double therapists in the community

NHS Westminster is investing more than £700,000 over the next year to create psychological therapy services for people with anxiety and depression to help them get the right treatment when they need it.

NHS Westminster has also been successful in securing Department of Health funding through the Working for Wellness programme and this will mean a further £350,000 in 2009, rising to £600,000 in 2010 ensuring more local psychological services. This Department of Health money will fund a number of trainee posts in Westminster.

The range of psychological therapies provided in Westminster will be extended and more sessions will be on offer to ensure patients do not suffer long waits.

Cognitive behavioural therapy, which has been found to be one of the most effective ways of treating depression will be offered as part of the increased range of treatments in the form of self help; and individual and group programmes. The sessions will help patients with mild to moderate depression and anxiety. People will be able to self refer or be referred by their GP.

Chief Executive Michael Scott said "One in four of us suffer from mental illness at some time in our lives. With the current pressures of the recession we are making sure treatment is available to get people back to health and work as soon as possible."

With this investment the primary care team of therapists will increase from 14 to 28 and recruitment is underway. The trainee posts will be open to graduates and to people who have life experience in mental health issues. Full training will be given through accredited psychology courses.

In Westminster it is estimated that 37,000 people may have mild to moderate depression and anxiety disorders.

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Notes to Editors: For more information please contact NHS Westminster's Communications Department 020 7150 8243

Further details are also available from the website <http://www.iapt.nhs.uk/>
NHS Westminster (Westminster Primary Care Trust) is the NHS body responsible for health services in Westminster. It came into being on 1 April 2002. We share our boundaries with the City of Westminster, extending to Regent's Park in the north, Queen's Park in the west and Covent Garden in the east. Our southern boundary follows the north bank of the River Thames. While we serve 244,000 residents, there are a million people who live, work and visit Westminster each day and can use our services.