

GP HEALTH SERVICE

Who heals the healers?

Until now... unless you were a GP in London, the answer has been NO ONE.

Yet GPs are no less susceptible to mental health problems than the 1:4 risk affecting our whole population. Medical training and the culture of our working environment tends to de-humanise us over time. And to a busy practice, an unwell GP is a major inconvenience too.

In truth,

We are statistically at HIGHER risk of these problems than our own patients,

We are more prone to drug and alcohol misuse,

and as a profession we have higher suicide rates too.

Among females GPs, suicide rates are twice the rate of the general female population.

Burnout is not an age-related phenomenon either.

There is growing evidence of a significant increase in young GPs suffering burnout and thus leaving our profession.

Something we cannot just stand back and watch unfold. Devastating for the individual and their family. And an avoidable loss to the workforce.

SO... The good news

We now have a new service just for ourselves.

GP Health Service. launched on 30 January 2017 across the whole of England.

Not a proposal, but a live functioning service, that in its first week, has already been accessed by 20 GPs. This rate of uptake is predicted to continue - and has been planned for.

The evidence is clear that GPs also have better outcomes from treatment than average patients.

Once a GP patient engages, they tend to recover fast, and stay well.

Since 2008 London GPs have had access to the Practitioner Health Programme - PHP.

About 3000 doctors have used the PHP service.

88% of them remain in, or returned to work during contact with PHP.

So:

Why do GPs not seek help?

EMBARRASSMENT

STIGMA

LACK OF PRIVACY

FEAR OF LOSING CREDIBILITY, OF BEING SEEN AS A FAILURE

PREJUDICE WITHIN THE PROFESSION ITSELF OR WITHIN THEIR WORKPLACE

AND UNDOUBTEDLY, THE ISSUE OF INADEQUATE LOCAL SERVICES,

GPH, the Health Service for GPs is:

FREE

CONFIDENTIAL

VIA SELF-REFERRAL ONLY

THE PROVIDERS ARE ALREADY IN POST, ALL ACROSS ENGLAND

AND IT IS AVAILABLE, AND ACCESSIBLE, TO ALL GPs AND GP REGISTRARS - NOW.

My role as Lead for East of England, includes ensuring awareness of this new service, AND improving the return to work support systems. A particular passion of mine. Support systems which do not yet exist for GPs that are not yet eligible for the Induction and Returners Scheme that opens its doors after a two year absence from clinical practice. Nothing structured is available in THE GAP between falling ill/leaving a job and that two year mark. During which time the compounding loss of confidence and professional self-belief leads many doctors to just give up altogether.

What an unholy waste of a trained doctor.

The retention of our existing GPs is so very much more cost-effective than any other route to workforce growth - including Mr Hunt's pipe dreams of magically creating thousands more GPs from scratch.

Let's instead look after ourselves, and look after each other. And keep on doing so.

So to GPH, GP Health Service. What exactly is it?

Available to any GP on any Performers List, via a single telephone call or email.

Initial assessment of need is usually completed within 48hours and then appropriate face to face fuller assessment and access to treatment is arranged - all at the GP patients own convenience, the GP patient choosing, when, where, who they see from a range of highly skilled clinicians identifiable via the booking app.

It is available 8-8 weekdays, 8-2 Saturdays. It is fully funded (from GPFV monies)

And whilst it is NOT an emergency service, it IS designed to be a timely one. Available at a time of need for the individual

And I stress again - it is absolutely CONFIDENTIAL.

It is also not a substitute for routine NHS GP care, or Occupational Health services.

It is something additional.

Importantly, GPH also functions independently from the regulatory bodies, such as the GMC.

A clear memorandum of understanding is in place between GPH and the GMC - and this ensures that a GPs personal health issues can stay in the health sector.

Most GP patients will have common problems like anxiety, stress, depression, burnout, OCD, Bipolar Disorder, drug or alcohol misuse, though often occurring in combination.

Self-medication with alcohol is commonplace.

50% of junior doctors drink over the recommended amount.

1 in 10 at hazardous levels. It is easy to see why, when the workplace is so very stressful.

Please.... note down the email address, and the phone number. Look at the GPH website

Be aware, be open, and share this information with your GP friends and practice colleagues.

No one can be forced to seek help. But those who need it can often be guided in the right direction by a kind colleague. One day, it could be you.



GP Health Service

The NHS GP Health Service

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 **Health for Health Professionals - PHP**

Supporting the health of health professionals

Thank you. Any questions?

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