

# Work And Vocational advice (WAVE) trial



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## Thank you!

The WAVE trial team would like to say thank you to all the practice staff and patients who participated in the WAVE trial.

We recruited 130 patients into the trial. Of these people 66 were offered the vocational advice intervention and 64 carried on with usual primary care



### What the WAVE trial aimed to do

The WAVE trial aimed to find out whether adding a Vocational Advice intervention to usual primary care helped people who had been off work due to illness to get back to work more quickly than usual primary care.

Patients could take part if they had any health condition and had been off work sick for at least 2 weeks but less than 6 months

### Results

The trial was stopped early as the COVID-19 pandemic changed the way people requested fit notes from primary care.

However, 130 people were included in the trial which allowed us to do an exploratory analysis. This analysis meant we could test whether it was likely that the vocational advice intervention was helpful in supporting people back to work after they had been off sick



- People who received vocational advice in addition to usual primary care had 4.8 days less absence over six months than those who had usual primary care only.
- But the number of days people had off varied a lot.



- The vocational advice intervention were less likely to have sick leave, less likely to go to work when unwell (presenteeism) and were more productive at work

Participants felt that the person-centred, individual approach to vocational advice allowed VSWs to spot and address challenges to working and to support participants' to become more confident in managing their return to work.

The vocational advice intervention was independent from employers and healthcare and people thought this was important because it allowed open discussions and planning for return to work.



### Conclusion

The WAVE trial showed that a vocational advice intervention may help people get back to work if they have time off sick. It may also be cost effective, reduce the number of people going to work when they are not well and help people to be productive when they are in work.

Recent changes have seen the introduction of work coaches to some general practices which is similar to the WAVE Vocational Advice intervention.