

Fourth Step

Perhaps as part of your worries, or maybe because of them, you may start to have financial concerns. Any doctor who has ever practiced as a GP in Somerset is eligible for help from the **Somerset Local Medical Benevolent Fund**. This is an old fashioned mutual insurance fund set up by GPs in the county in 1949 (now closed to subscription as it has built up a large capital sum) that makes grants to GPs and their families who face a drop in income due to illness or other problems. You do not need to have serious financial problems to be eligible, so contact one of the trustees or Secretary via the LMC office for advice sooner rather than later .

Other sources of help include:

BMA Charities: Including the Cameron Fund. Tel: 020 7388 0796

Royal Medical Benevolent Fund: Helps GMC registered doctors and their dependents in need. Tel: 020 8540 9194

The Royal Medical Foundation: Helps medical practitioners and or their families who find themselves in financial hardship - in particular through educational awards for their children. Tel: 01372 821010

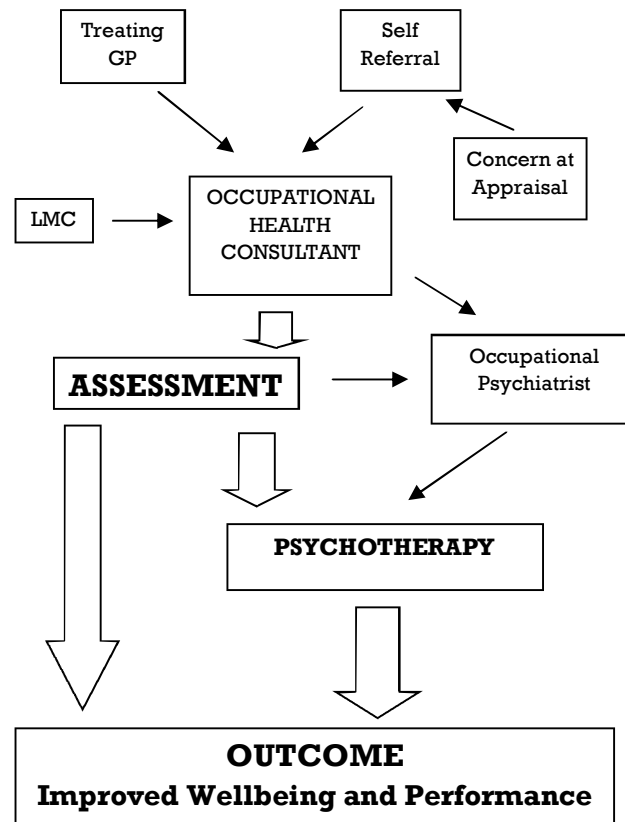
www.royalmedicalfoundation.org

Please can you make sure that all doctors who work in any capacity in your practice see this leaflet?

Thank you

SOMERSET OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE FLOW CHART FOR GP SUPPORT

A confidential and voluntary service for health and Psychological/Emotional matters affecting work performance



**SOMERSET LOCAL MEDICAL
COMMITTEE**

Phone: 01823-331428

Fax: 01823-338561

E-mail: lmcoffice@somerset.nhs.uk

**SOMEONE
YOU KNOW
NEEDS THIS
LEAFLET**



**Sources of
Help For
General
Practitioners**

Someone you know needs this leaflet

Most GPs are well adapted to managing their stressful jobs – or so we think. But the reality is that too many of us avoid dealing with the problems that our working lives generate. We cope by working 12 hour days, or drinking just a bit more than we should, or not getting round to taking any exercise, or perhaps not giving our families the attention they need. Then one day you see a patient with an apparently minor illness in evening surgery. On your desk next morning is a fax from the Out of Hours Service : “Collapsed and died at home – coroner informed.” And suddenly the world caves in around you.

Sometimes it is less dramatic. Just a slow but inexorable slide in performance. Too irritable to care, and too tired to bother. And eventually your partners notice and settle into an anxious huddle until one is delegated to come and talk to you.

What next?

Despite the way you are thinking there are a lot of people who care, and a lot of people who will help. This is not something you should deal with on your own .

First Step

Call the LMC Secretary, Dr Harry Yoxall on 01823 331428 (office hours), 07796 267510 (anytime), 01823 421396 (out of hours). Your LMC subscription pays him to be there when needed.

Next Step

Talk to your partners, practice manager, or other colleagues. Listen to their advice about whether you should be at work. You have an obligation to them, to your patients, and to yourself not to stay at work if either it is making you ill, or your performance is not up to scratch. If you are struggling because of work or home pressure then be open about it. Think about putting something in writing, especially if you have some thoughts about what would help you. Doctors are often surprised by the support their colleagues can and will give.



Talk to your own GP. If you are worried about confidentiality then discuss this with him or her at the start of your consultation. The LMC has a list of GPs who have experience and skill at caring for professional colleagues and we can arrange for you to register with one of these, away from your home area if necessary.

Contact Occupational Health. Somerset has an outstanding OHS for GPs and primary care staff. You can contact their consultants Dr Tony Steele-Perkins or Dr Tim May via Taunton (01823 345800), for a consultation, and onwards case management as mutually agreed. The recommended flow chart is on the next page.

Third Step

Do you want to find further help and advice yourself? One of these may be able to help:

The Royal Medical Benevolent Fund has a very useful general site with links to many other organisations <http://www.support4doctors.org>

BMA Counselling Service: 24-hour support with immediate access to trained counsellors. Tel: 08459 200169

Doctors for Doctors- BMA: Doctors facing difficulties due to addiction and/or mental and physical health problems. Personal telephone and/or face-to-face discussion of problems. 08459 200 169

www.bma.org.uk/

Doctors Support Network: Doctors who have mental health problems themselves offer support through the network. The group believes that contact with and support from other doctors can help recovery and help those who are beginning the slow process of re-establishing themselves after a breakdown or other mental crisis.

Tel 0870 3210642

www.dsn.org.uk

The Sick Doctors Trust: Confidential and comprehensive service for doctors with chemical dependency and their families
Tel: 0870 444 5163

www.sick-doctors-trust.co.uk

The British Doctors and Dentists Group: Doctors recovering from chemical dependency monthly group meetings. Tel: 01252 316976 or 020 7487 4445

BMJ Careers Chronic illness matching scheme: Provides the opportunity for doctors who have a chronic illness or disability to receive informal careers advice from another doctor.
www.bma.org.uk/public/chill.nsf

Samaritans: Tel: 08457 90 90 90