Singing is the best medicine for staff!

A hospital choir has helped one of Colchester’s biggest employers win two awards for the way it looks after the health and wellbeing of staff.

The Health and Wellbeing Good Practice Award has been awarded to Colchester Hospital University NHS Foundation Trust, which also achieved Staying Healthy at Work (SHaW) accreditation.

Both awards come from Investors in People, a business improvement tool administered by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills and supported by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

The awards, which were made after a rigorous review, were welcomed by Sheila Boyle, Head of Health and Wellbeing at the Trust – the department known previously as occupational health.

“Earlier this year my team asked staff what they would like us to do to promote their health and wellbeing,” she said.

“Two of the ideas, that have now been implemented successfully, were to establish a staff choir and to set up a running club for people of all abilities.

“What has also been key to helping us achieve these awards is the support of senior management and their commitment to the health and wellbeing of staff.”

Mrs Boyle said the Trust had taken many other initiatives, including a Staff Off Sick (SOS) scheme.

This involves occupational health nurses contacting staff on the first day of absence to offer support. This has proved particularly helpful for staff who have mental health or musculoskeletal issues.

Marilyn Martin, Assistant Royal College of Nursing Officer (Essex), said: "This is an excellent achievement for the Trust and reflects the hard work and efforts of the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Team.

“The Royal College of Nursing realises the importance of such services in supporting staff to undertake their valuable and demanding roles.”

Following assessment, the Trust also last month maintained its Investor in People accreditation, which means it is regarded as an employer or choice.

The Trust employs 4,200 staff, mostly at Colchester General Hospital and Essex County Hospital, but also elsewhere, such as Clacton Hospital and in the community.

19 July 2013