There is a healthy desire in the charity sector to work with other charities in providing benefits for staff. So when NCVO members Leonard Cheshire Disability and Compaid were looking for a benefits provider that understands the charity sector, they chose HSF health plan.

Mark Strong, Compensation and Benefits Manager at Leonard Cheshire says “As a charity which aims to change attitudes to disability and support disabled people, how we allocate money for employee benefits is important to us, and in seeking a low-cost healthcare insurance scheme for our employees we found an organisation that had the same ethos as us with HSF health plan. It is a wide-ranging health cash plan that donates all of its profits to charitable causes.”

Charity workers take more sick days off work than private sector workers, according to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). On average, UK charity workers take 8.3 days off ill each year compared to 6.7 days for private sector workers.

Stephen Elsden, Chief Executive of Compaid, a charity that provides computer access and training for disabled people, says, “We were looking to improve the overall package of benefits for our staff to help improve retention and reduce sickness absence. HSF health plans are very keenly priced with a much higher perceived value amongst staff. Introducing the plans has also had the important effect of improving general staff morale.”

A charity can seem like an ideal place to work, but it will have the same demands on people as any workplace and indeed, in these financially difficult times when less money is being given to charities, the job can be very stressful. The union Unite, which has 60,000 members in the not-for-profit sector, said that its research suggested 9 out of 10 voluntary sector workers felt their wellbeing was being undermined by the financial problems facing charities. Unite also reminded employers that they have a legal obligation to manage and prevent workplace stress.

In all industries, stress is often implicated in employee absence, with 13.8 million days of absence per year attributable to workplace stress, according to CIPD, which last year reported that one in five people experience a high level of stress at work, at a cost of £9.6 billion to British business.

Mark Strong says, “The plan has been consistently well thought of by our employees with a good take-up rate. The dental and optical cover is particularly popular, as is the birth grant cover. Those employees who have taken up the HSF health plan have often described how valuable it is to them and their families.”

“Importantly for us, HSF health plan carries out all of the administration, which keeps down our costs and helps our employees when they need to make a claim. They are a great organisation to work with and I would highly recommend HSF health plan to any organisation which wants a healthier, happier workforce.”

HSF health plans cover a wide range of benefits for as little as around £1 per week. It is also the only cash plan provider that covers partners and children for no extra cost. This means that if any of the family needs optical or dental treatment, chiropractic or physiotherapy care or specialist consultations, then they can reclaim the cost up to their plan maximum. In addition, all plans enable covered family members to talk with a GP by phone 24 hours a day or by webcam during office hours. They can also talk with a stress counsellor or legal advisor.

HSF health plan is a preferred supplier of NCVO. If you would like to know how HSF health plans can support the health of your workforce, please call HSF health plan on 0800 917 2208 or email them on ncvomembers@hsf.eu.com