



WORKPLACE HEALTH CHAMPIONS



What are Workplace Health Champions?

Workplace health champions are members of staff who promote health and wellbeing within the organisation, working closely with management, HR and employees to develop health and wellbeing initiatives utilising skills, interests and passions of staff.

The Workplace Health Champion is a voluntary role. A workplace health champion is someone in the workplace who would generally have an enthusiasm for and interest in health & wellbeing, have the ability to be approachable and helpful and have a basic understanding of healthy lifestyles.

What will a Health & Wellbeing Champion do?

A workplace health champion will become the Health and Wellbeing 'eyes and ears' of the Organisation. They will:

- Spot areas of improvement in the physical workspace and engage with line managers to develop solutions
- Offer signposting to services where colleagues could get information and support to improve lifestyle issues.
- Engage external speakers to come into the organisation to hold workshops on health and wellbeing of staff.
- Promote national health and wellbeing events throughout the organisation such as putting up publicity posters, giving out leaflets for health campaigns (Stoptober, Stress Awareness Day)
- Promote healthy activities within the immediate works environment, for example walking or running groups, stair challenges etc.
- Promote wellbeing activities, e.g. reading groups, cooking / baking groups, arts and crafts etc.
- Support managers and HR to promote health and wellbeing activities within the workplace (and take part!)
- Support staff to take up health and wellbeing opportunities in the workplace
- Be the point of contact in the team for any colleague who wants to know and find out more on health and wellbeing activities
- Act as conduit between management and staff

Training and support

Workplace Health Champions will be able to attend a days training course offered by Barnsley Council. This training course has been designed to be accessible to all employees regardless of their qualifications and skills; in fact the best skills for the role are to be personable and approachable to both managers and staff. The training will cover background to health and behaviour change, practical experience of supporting staff and action planning to take the work forward.

How much time does the Health Champion role require?

Employers should allow paid time for Workplace Health Champions to undertake their role as follows:-

- to attend the training course (1 day)
- to attend meetings with management staff to develop and plan ideas for the workplace
- to support and run activities
- to attend quarterly local network meetings with other businesses where ideas can be shared and learning can be taken forward

Workplace health champions should let their manager know when they are undertaking work connected with the champion role.

How long is the health champion role for?

As long as a Health Champion would like, there is no time limit. From time to time the employer may check if the health champion wants to continue.

What happens if a health champion wishes to opt out from the role?

It's a voluntary role- life changes, health champions may move roles , lose interest or have things going on in their own life that make it difficult to commit to being a Workplace Health Champion. That's fine the Champion just needs to let the employer know.

Why is the workplace health champion role important?

Over the last 10 years there has been a growing body of evidence supporting the business case for improving health and wellbeing in the workplace.

There are many benefits to employers for having improved health and wellbeing in the workplace – reduced sickness absence, increased productivity, improved morale and generally happier staff that stay with the business.

Poor employee health costs a business huge amounts of money through sickness absence, relief cover costs, loss of productivity, time to attend hospital appointments, loss of reputation and image (when production deadlines are not met)

Our population is changing we are living longer and working longer into retirement. By 2024 almost 40% of our population will be over 50. Older workers (those over 50) have valuable skills and expertise so employers may need to make adjustments to keep older workers in work.

Chronic disease such as diabetes, heart disease and respiratory disease are also on the increase. It is estimated that three quarters of 68 year olds will not have a disability free life expectancy.

Employers are key players in being able to deliver the public health messages as they have a captive audience – their staff.

It makes sense to educate staff and keep them healthy. Through sensible lifestyle choices together with condition management most of us can lead normal and productive lives.

Healthy habits in the workplace can make a big impact on employee wellbeing.

We're all responsible for the lifestyle choices we make, but employers and employees alike can make healthy choices easier for their staff and themselves.

A business culture of support and flexibility, healthy adaptations to the workplace, and on-site wellbeing activities all encourage the workforce to take positive steps for healthy living.

By investing in staff wellbeing this will create a healthier workforce that feels valued and rewarded with greater benefits all round.