

+ Healthy Working Community

WORKPLACE Health Directory

wakefield
City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council

Good health is good business!!

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For those in employment, work can have a positive effect on health in terms of physical, social and mental well being. It can also alleviate issues such as social exclusion and deprivation.

It should also be acknowledged however that work can have a damaging effect on health if risks created in the workplace are not adequately mitigated. Issues such as work related stress, musculoskeletal disorders, asthma and dermatitis are now much more prevalent than the still excessive rate of physical injury at work.

Employers can also assist in tackling wider public health issues such as obesity, healthy eating, exercise, smoking, drugs and alcohol by introducing small changes in working practices, employment arrangements and workplace facilities. Improving the health of their workforce (and customers) is a clear benefit to the employer in terms of improved productivity, reduced absenteeism and public relations.

Healthy Working Community is an initiative to bring all stakeholders together to deliver improvements to these issues. Stakeholders include the local authority, the Health and Safety Executive, the Primary Care Trust, employers, community groups, and other service providers.

The initiative consists of a concentrated effort by all identified stakeholders in a defined geographical area over a defined period to positively impact on public health issues.

We have produced this booklet as a guide to some of the free services available to local employers and to help you to access the support you need to make positive health changes at work for your employees.

Please use them because..... Good health is good business!

Musculoskeletal disorders

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are the most common occupational illness in Great Britain, affecting 1.0 million people a year. They include problems such as lower back pain, joint injuries and repetitive strain injuries of various sorts, which can lead to long-term sickness absence if not dealt with early on.

Employers are required to do the following;

- **Avoid** the need for hazardous manual handling, so far as is reasonably practicable;
- **Assess** the risk of injury from any hazardous manual handling that can't be avoided; and
- **Reduce** the risk of injury from hazardous

A risk assessment is a careful examination of what could cause harm to people in the workplace. Doing a risk assessment will help employers identify the significant risks in their workplace. A good risk assessment will help avoid accidents and ill health, which can not only ruin lives, but can also increase costs to business through lost output, compensation claims and higher insurance premiums.

However you cannot prevent all MSDs, so it is still essential to encourage early reporting of symptoms and make arrangements for the proper treatment and rehabilitation of anyone who does get injured. When an employee returns to work after an absence due to an MSD (or other illness or change in health), you may need to consider modifying the job, work system or workstation to avoid worsening their condition. Discussion with employees affected, colleagues and safety representatives can often identify a simple adjustment that would benefit the employee concerned and prevent others becoming ill or injured.

For advice on how to assess the risk of MSD'S in your workplace, on monitoring sickness absence and managing return to work after time off contact:

HSE Infoline
Tel: 0845 345 0055

www.hse.gov.uk/msd

Wakefield Council's Environmental Health Department
Tel: 0845 8506 506

Breathing in air containing asbestos fibres can lead to asbestos related diseases, mainly cancers of the lungs and chest lining. The time between first exposure to asbestos and the onset of disease can vary from 15 to 60 years. Past exposure to asbestos currently kills 3000 people a year in Great Britain. This number is expected to go on rising for the next ten years.

Although it is now illegal to use asbestos in the construction or refurbishment of any premises, thousands of tonnes of it were used in the past and much of it is still in place. As long as it is in good condition and is not being or going to be disturbed or damaged there is no risk. Asbestos is only a risk to health if asbestos fibres are released into the air and breathed in.

If you are responsible for maintenance and repair activities for a non-domestic building, either through contract or tenancy agreement or because you own the building, you have a responsibility to manage asbestos. Some of your responsibilities include;

- Identifying asbestos containing materials (ACM's) in the building
- Recording where they are
- Telling people where it is, especially those who might drill, saw or cut into the fabric of the building
- Drawing up a priority action list
- Reviewing the condition of asbestos materials periodically

If you have any concerns about ACM'S in your workplace or need advice on how to comply with the duty to manage asbestos, please contact:

Health and Safety Executive Infoline

Tel: 0845 345 0055

Wakefield's Environmental Health department

Tel: 0845 8506 506

www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos

Work-related stress

The HSE definition of stress is "the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them". Work-related stress is a major cause of occupational ill health. A total of 13.8 million working days were lost to work-related stress, depression and anxiety in 2006/07.

As well as reducing sickness absence costs to an organisation, tackling stress can have a positive effect on:

- Employee commitment to work
- Staff performance and productivity
- Staff turnover or intention to leave
- Staff recruitment and retention
- Customer satisfaction, and
- Organisational image and reputation

The Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards will help you, your employees and their representatives manage the issue sensibly and minimise the impact of work-related stress on your business. The Standards simplify the risk assessment process for stress and identify the primary causes of stress at work, namely;

- The **demands** of your job
- Your **control** over your work
- The **support** you receive from managers and colleagues
- Your **relationships** at work
- Your **role** in the organisation
- **Change** and how it is managed

For more information on how to deal with stress in your workplace contact:

HSE Infoline
Tel: 0845 345 0055

Wakefield Council's Environmental Health Department
Tel: 0845 8506506

www.hse.gov.uk/stress

Contact dermatitis is inflammation of the skin caused by contact with a range of materials. These include detergents, toiletries, chemicals and even natural products like plants, foods and water (if contact is prolonged or frequent). It can affect all parts of the body, but it is most common to see the hands affected.

The signs and symptoms of the different types of dermatitis are similar. Dry, red and itchy skin is usually the first sign. Swelling, flaking, blistering, cracking and pain can follow. Adverse reactions can occur within minutes or days of contact, depending upon the type of dermatitis.

Certain workers are at greater risk of developing the condition. They include healthcare workers, hairdressers, beauticians, printers, those in cleaning, catering and construction and workers using metalworking fluids. However, dermatitis can occur in just about any workplace.

Following three simple steps can prevent dermatitis:

- Avoid contact with materials that cause dermatitis
- Protect the skin
- Check for early signs of dermatitis

For more information and guidance on how to deal with dermatitis in your workplace contact:

HSE Infoline

Tel: 0845 345 0055

Wakefield Council's Environmental Health Department

Tel: 0845 8506 506

www.hse.gov.uk/skin

Occupational asthma

Asthma is a serious health problem. It is the most commonly reported occupational respiratory disease in Great Britain but if spotted early, complete recovery is possible. Symptoms include severe shortness of breath, wheezing, coughing and chest tightness.

The symptoms can develop right after exposure to a workplace substance but sometimes symptoms appear several hours later, possibly at night. This can make any link with workplace activities unclear.

Occupational asthma is an allergic reaction that can occur in some people when they are exposed to respiratory sensitisers, for example isocyanates, wood or flour dust in the workplace. Not everyone who becomes sensitised goes on to get asthma. But once the lungs become hypersensitive, further exposure to the substance, even at quite low levels, may trigger an attack.

Work-related asthma, or asthma made worse by work, is broader and includes substances in the workplace that irritate the airways of individuals with pre-existing asthma.

This includes people who have had asthma since childhood. Respiratory irritants may trigger attacks in those with occupational asthma or pre-existing asthma.

There are many things you can do as an employer to reduce the risk of occupational asthma in your workplace.

Further information can be obtained from:

Health and Safety Executive Infoline

Tel: 0845 345 0055

Wakefield's Environmental Health Department

Tel: 0845 8506 506

www.hse.gov.uk/asthma

In the context of work, not only does drug, alcohol and other substance misuse damage the misuser's health, but it can cost employers through absenteeism and sickness absence, reduced work performance and productivity, damaged customer relations and deterioration of relationships between employees. It may also increase the risk of accidents.

Employers are encouraged to adopt a substance misuse policy, in consultation with their staff. It should aim to support affected employees rather than punish them, though your policy must say that possession or dealing in drugs at work will be reported immediately to the Police.

The prospect of tackling alcohol and substance misuse can be daunting but acting to prevent problems before they occur is often more effective than dealing with a problem that has become too serious to ignore. Any business, however small, can take practical steps to minimise the risks associated with inappropriate drinking.

For advice contact:

HSE Infoline

Tel: 0845 345 0055

www.hse.gov.uk/alcoholdrugs

Wakefield Council's Environmental Health Department

Tel: 0845 8506 506

Wakefield Integrated Substance Misuse Service

(Provides integrated substance misuse treatment and care to the Wakefield District).

Tel: 01924 23933

www.wisms.org.uk

Physical activity

Being physically active involves moving your body and using energy so that you start to feel warm and breathe a bit deeper than usual and increases your heart rate. In order to feel the benefits of a healthier lifestyle, adults should build up to at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on 5 or more days of the week.

Increasing the amount of physical activity you do will have many benefits to your health. Regular physical activity can help reduce your risk of:

- Heart disease
- Depression
- Colon and breast cancer
- Obesity and overweight
- High blood pressure
- Adult onset diabetes
- Osteoporosis
- Stroke
- Falls and injuries

Small healthy living changes can really make a difference to the way you feel. To be able to promote and raise awareness of the benefits of increasing physical activity levels, we can provide workshop type sessions to measure various aspects of an individual's health e.g. Blood pressure, height and weight, etc.

To find out more about physical activity opportunities at work contact:

Chris Wathen (Physical Activity Project Manager)

Tel: 01977 665798

e-mail: chris.wathen@wdpct.nhs.uk

Sports and Active Lifestyles

Wakefield Council's Sports and Active Lifestyles Service can offer the following to encourage employees to get active.

- Taster sessions in the workplace, eg, boxercise, circuit training, aerobics, pilates
- Office based resistance demonstrations using office equipment
- Fitness testing (including blood pressure, height, weight, grip strength, body composition)
- Services of the Golf Development Manager

For more information on how the service can work with your organisation contact:

**Ian Smales (Health and Fitness Officer),
Sport and Active Lifestyles Service
Tel: 01977 465650**

Health walks

Why walking works?

Being more active at work...

- Increases your energy at work and throughout the rest of the day
- Burns more energy and you will continue to burn calories even when the exercise stops
- Enhances your mood and gives you the 'feel good factor'
- Boosts your concentration which will increase your productivity
- Reduces stress and tension
- Improves immunity which helps to prevent you from feeling unwell
- Increases socialising with workmates - taking a lunchtime walk makes work more fun

How can you increase walking at work?

- Set up a lunchtime health walk for your colleagues. Come along to a free one day guidance session, which will provide you with the information that you will need to set up a walk
- Take some time out after work and join one of the evening or weekend health walk groups (health rides also available)
- Take the family on a fun orienteering activity. Find your way around one of the walking routes available at www.wakefield.gov.uk/TransportAndTravel/RoadSafety/HealthyTransport/default.htm
- Set up a pedometer challenge for workers in your office
- Avoid the stress of sitting in traffic and walk (or cycle) to work instead of using the car
- Try taking the stairs instead of the lift

To find out more about walking contact:

Helen Brook (Health Walks Project Manager)

Tel: 01924 306693 / 07881 500155

e-mail: helenbrook@wakefield.gov.uk

Just as there are things we can do to help our physical health there are also things we can do to look after our mental health - which may help stop you from getting stressed at work or feeling as if things are on top of you.

Here are our top tips for a healthy mind:

1) Get active!

Try to be active as part of your daily routine. It doesn't have to be too strenuous, a spot of gardening or a quick walk counts.

2) Feed your mind

Eat a balanced diet, including your 5-a-day. Try to avoid too much caffeine and only drink alcohol in moderation.

3) Find ways to relax

Take time to unwind. Try reading, listening to music, getting outdoors or even just a long hot bath!

4) Don't be isolated

Enjoy time with your friends and family. Consider a new hobby or think about joining in with community activities.

5) Ask for help

Don't struggle alone. Remember, 1 in 4 of us will experience a mental health problem, it's not that unusual! Talk to your doctor or another health professional about ways to help you cope.

Want to find out more and have a say in your local NHS?

South West Yorkshire Mental Health NHS Trust provides specialist mental health services to local people. It's important that we have services that are the best they can be and that meet local needs - so any of us would feel happy using them. By becoming a member of your local NHS Trust, you can not only have your say about NHS services but you can also discover more about mental wellbeing.

It's free to join and you don't have to do anything as a member, unless you want to! We will even send you a magazine every couple of months, packed full of the latest info and tips on looking after your mind.

To find out more information:

Tel: 01484 343395 or e-mail: membership@swyt.nhs.uk
www.southwestyorkshire.nhs.uk

Smoking

Smoking is one of the biggest causes of death and illness in the UK. It increases the risk of many medical conditions, some of which may be fatal and others causing irreversible chronic damage to your health. The more you smoke, the greater your risk of becoming ill and if you do smoke, giving up is probably the greatest single step you can take to improve your health.

The **Wakefield Stop Smoking Service** can offer Free and confidential advice from friendly specialist advisors who can support you through your quit attempt. Our specialist team can help you obtain Nicotine Replacement Therapy Product, Zyban and Champix on prescription. We offer group support, 1-1's and also provide evening groups and drop-in sessions. We have a quit shop in Wakefield City Centre where people can call in and receive the full support of the service.

We also provide a **Workplace Service**, where our specialist advisor will come into your company and work with you to arrange the best support for your staff to enable them to quit smoking.

To find out more contact:

Tel: 01977 465449

www.wakefielddistrictpct.nhs.uk/services/stopsmoking

Smokefree England

On 1st July 2007, England introduced a new law to make virtually all enclosed public places and workplaces in England smokefree.

For information and advice on how to comply with the Smokefree regulations, please visit:

www.smokefreeengland.co.uk

Wakefield's Smokefree Co-ordinator

Tel: 0845 8506506

Your local NHS Health Trainers can offer you:

- Free information on how to improve your health
- Confidential guidance and support for people aged 16 and over
- The chance to meet new people and visit new places

We can help you to:

- ✓ Stop smoking
- ✓ Drink sensibly
- ✓ Improve your diet
- ✓ Reduce stress
- ✓ Do more exercise
- ✓ Make healthy choices

The health trainer service is a free confidential service

How can I find out more information?

By contacting the main office

Tel: 01977 665717

You can also e-mail any queries or recommendations

e-mail: healthtrainers@wdpct.nhs.uk

How can I make an appointment?

By contacting our main office Mon to Fri 9am - 5pm or by leaving your name and telephone contact details on our 24hr confidential answer machine.

Tel: 01977 665717

This Wakefield District Primary Care Trust programme combines advice and support about weight management, physical activity, and health and nutrition in a friendly, relaxed setting. We can train a member of staff to deliver this programme with on-going support and advice.

To find out more:

Tel: 01977 665876

Healthy Eating

A better diet can have a big impact on your health - now and in the years to come. It can help reduce your risk of coronary heart disease as well as some cancers. It can also stop you gaining weight, which is great news because being obese means a higher risk of diabetes, arthritis and high blood pressure. Along with stopping smoking and being more active, eating healthily really is one of the best ways you can help keep disease at bay.

Helping to protect yourself from health problems is one very good reason to think about eating healthily. There may be other reasons that are just as important to you personally, people often say they want to feel better, have more energy, sleep better and generally have a more positive sense of well-being.

The Community Food & Health Team can offer Free and confidential advice. We can provide workshop type sessions for staff to raise awareness of the health benefits of eating a balanced diet and 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day. We also work together with Catering Managers/Cooks to provide them with ideas on how to reduce salt, fat and sugar in the meals they serve.

To find out more about Healthy Eating in the workplace, contact:

Carrie Fennell (Community Food & Health Worker)

Tel: 01977 604398

Mob: 07963184153

e-mail: carrie.fennell@wdpct.nhs.uk

Fire can seriously affect your health

7 people died from accidental dwelling fires in West Yorkshire last year but that is only half of the story. Behind every death there may be a family with a person missing, a family without a bread winner, an employer maybe losing a trained employee and a life unfulfilled. Many could have saved themselves by asking the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service to make an appointment to give them advice in their home and fit free smoke detectors.

The advice will raise awareness of fire and health and safety issues in the workplace which will also benefit the employer.

To arrange a free Home Fire Safety Check:

Tel: 0800 587 4536 (free phone) and leave your address details.

Employers

If you would like the Service to visit your work premises to offer home safety advice to your employees:

Tel: 01924 334056

Access to work

Access to Work provides advice and practical support to disabled people and their employers to help overcome work related obstacles resulting from disability. It is a programme designed to make grants towards costs. It can help people in paid work, part-time, self employed, permanent or temporary, if the disability or health problem affect the kind of work done, and is likely to last 12 months or longer.

An Access to Work grant is available when additional costs are incurred because of disability. It cannot be used to provide anything usually provided by employers or required under legislation for all their employees.

For more information, contact your nearest Regional Access to Work Business Centre:
Tel: 0113 214 2345

Health Development Unit Training Courses

The Health Development Unit of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council provide a variety of nationally recognised training courses as well as courses to suit individual needs. We provide a variety of courses in the following subjects:

- Food Safety
- Health and Safety
- COSHH
- Manual Handling
- Risk Assessment
- Display Screens
- First Aid
- Healthy Eating

For more information contact:

**Health Development Unit
Lower Building Newton Bar
Leeds Road
Wakefield
WF1 2TX**

Tel: 01924 305971

Fax: 01924 306419

E-mail: hdu@wakefield.gov.uk

Web: www.wakefield.gov.uk/healthdevelopment

This booklet was produced by:

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