



HIGH IMPACT CHANGES FOR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING: LOCAL EVIDENCE-BASED IMPROVEMENT PLANS

INTRODUCTION

The NHS faces a huge challenge to reduce its sickness absence rate to an average of 3.4% over the year 2013/14 and all NHS organisations have a part to play to help meet this. To achieve this goal, each Trust needs to develop a clear focus on staff health and well-being, as outlined in the Department of Health's [NHS Health and Well-Being Improvement Framework](#).

This hot topic is the second of a series of five documents, linked to the high impact changes:

1. Strong visible leadership
2. **Local evidence-based improvement plans**
3. Supported by improved management capability
4. Access to better, local high quality accredited occupational health services
5. Staff are encouraged, and enabled, to take more personal responsibility

organisation will provide a baseline to measure the impact of the strategy you develop.

Three initial steps are outlined below to guide you in sourcing your baseline data.

1. Step One: Intelligently monitor your organisation sickness absence rates

When monitoring sickness absence in your organisation it is important to have a consistency of method to monitor progress and produce informative data reporting. Calculating the sickness absence rate allows you to monitor your organisation's performance without being impacted by small staff fluctuations. To identify your baseline sickness absence it would be sensible to monitor three elements of sickness absence; your organisation's overall rate, the long-term rate, and the short-term rate. [See Sickness Absence Hot Topic](#) for methodology.

2. Step Two: Deep dive to identify hot spot areas

Sickness absence data can be analysed in different ways such as by gender, area of work, staff group or Afc band. By setting up a regular reporting process around specific breakdowns, you will be

able to identify patterns or hot spots that require further investigation. At this point, you will want to explore the reasons for sickness absence to effectively target hot spot areas

3. Step Three: Triangulate with Staff Survey data

The annual NHS Staff Survey provides a wealth of data on the health and well-being of your organisation's staff and is a valuable resource. It allows you to view a detailed report on your own organisation covering areas from work life balance to health and safety to bullying and harassment. Triangulating the results of the staff survey with your data on reasons for sickness absence provides a wider understanding of the health and well-being of you staff. [See 2011 staff survey results](#)

Key metrics for local monitoring of staff health and wellbeing were listed in the NHS Health and Well-being Improvement Framework (p20). These provide a good basis on which to add your indicators of local need.

LOCAL EVIDENCE-BASED IMPROVEMENT PLANS

It is vital to develop and implement an evidence-based staff health and well-being improvement plan to meet your organisation's needs.

ORGANISATION'S HEALTH NEEDS

To improve and protect the health of your staff, maximising the benefits of a healthy workforce to your organisation, you need to define your priorities and identify where you should target health and well-being action. Completing a needs assessment for your





HOT TOPIC

Other information sources

- Health and Safety data e.g. RIDDOR and risk reduction/management activities. These are particularly pertinent to stress and physical violence, both of which are key causes of absence.
- Occupational Health and counselling services should collect and provide data on the rates of service use for hot spots areas to help identify whether services are being accessed appropriately and whether they are having an impact. The NHS Employers publication *Your Occupational Health Service* details metrics for monitoring services.
- Data from mental wellbeing or counselling services on prevalence, return to work and satisfaction of service users should also be collected as a minimum.
- Audits undertaken by external assessors can provide valuable information on the health of your organisation. For example, the audit of workplace NICE Guidelines compliance undertaken by the Health, Work and Development Unit was widely taken up and provides an excellent template for further actions.
- Questionnaires can be used to target hot spots where you might want to investigate further, or on a larger scale to help direct your strategy. This qualitative information can be powerful alongside analysis of data you routinely collect. The East Midlands Public Health Observatory has recently produced [Health, Work and Wellbeing: Defining the priorities: Workplace Health Needs Assessment for Employers](#), a validated assessment survey with guidance on analysis.
- Focus groups in hotspot areas can also give detail on what problems are affecting the health of staff and have the advantage of being able to generate potential solutions while being a more active form of engagement.

INVOLVE THE RIGHT PEOPLE

In our first hot topic – [High Impact Changes: Strong Visible Leadership](#) we looked at the need for strong leadership and visible support for health and well-being to demonstrate commitment to staff health and well-being. One way to ensure this is for the group developing the Health and Well-being Strategy to have senior level members, including the Board

member with direct responsibility for the agenda.

There is a wide range of activities that fall under the heading of staff health and well-being. In order to reflect that diversity and ensure effective implementation and monitoring of the strategy we recommend that the following roles are included in your group structure;

- Human Resources with strategic lead
- Human Resources with operational lead
- Workforce analyst
- Occupational Health Manager
- Health and Safety Manager
- Staff side representation
- Representatives from key staffing groups/areas
- Counsellors/mental health practitioners involved in your mental health pathway
- Health Improvement Practitioners from local Health Improvement Services providers

DEVELOP AN IMPROVEMENT PLAN

A comprehensive staff health and wellbeing strategy needs to look at three sets of complementary activities, required at an organisational and management level, to meet the identified need. These are prevention, promotion of health and well-being and rehabilitation

- **Prevention:** The prevention of ill health, caused or exacerbated by work. This includes providing a safe and healthy working environment both physically and mentally and providing the policy environment that fosters the principles of good work and the [NHS Constitution](#).

Useful documents to consider:

- [NICE Guidelines PH22 Promoting Mental Wellbeing at Work](#)
- [HSE Management Standards and tools](#)
- **Promotion of health and well-being:** Using the workplace to promote improved health and well-being e.g. compliance with;

- [PH 13 Promoting physical activity in the workplace](#)
- [Workplace interventions to promote smoking cessation](#)
- [CG 43 Obesity- Guidance on the prevention, identification, assessment and management of overweight and obesity in adults and children](#)
- [PH 24 Alcohol- use disorders: preventing the development of hazardous and harmful drinking \(not in HWDU NICE audit\)](#)
- [PH 8 Promoting and creating built or natural environments that encourage and support physical activity](#)
- [NICE public health guidance for the workplace organisational audit](#)
- **Rehabilitation:** Processes to help staff stay in, or return to work after illness e.g.
- [SEQOHS](#) accreditation of services
- Access to fast track physiotherapy and counselling.
- Access to Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.
- Self referral for mental wellbeing pathways
- Compliance with PH 19 Management of Long Term Sickness Absence and Incapacity for Work

EXAMPLE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

We have provided you with a [worked example of a local evidence-based improvement plan](#) based on an identified need to improve levels of stress, anxiety and depression, utilising the NICE Guidelines as the framework.

STILL TO COME

In the third Hot Topic we will look at building the capacity and capability of management at all levels, to improve the health and well-being of their staff.

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