eWIN HOT TOPIC

NHS North West

ENCOURAGE STAFF
TO TAKE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR OWN HEALTH

INTRODUCTION

The NHS faces a huge challenge to reduce its sickness absence rate to an average of 3.4% throughout the year 2013/14. All NHS organisations have a part to play in helping to achieve this goal and 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 final in 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

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Healthier staff deliver better care to patients and are more productive. The previous Hot Topics have looked at how NHS organisations can best prevent workplace-related ill-health and when ill-health does occur what activities and actions can ensure timely return to work. This Hot Topic focuses on how staff can also help themselves.

NHS staff, in common with the general population, do not all always make the right lifestyle choices and many also have long-term health issues. Access to healthy lifestyle interventions can help staff prevent future ill-health, allow staff to better manage ongoing chronic health conditions and alleviate symptoms that may impact on their ability to work and enjoy life. There is a caveat however, in that risk factors for poor health do not solely lie within individuals' control, and that living and working conditions play a very important role.

NICE PUBLIC HEALTH WORKPLACE GUIDANCE

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence **(NICE)** has published evidence-based public health guidance on key areas for improving individual employee wellbeing in the workplace. It is recommended that all NHS organisations implement the following guidance which is based on the common principles of helping staff to make the best health choices, and encouraging them to participate in determining how best to achieve this. The **Health and Work Development Unit** have been auditing Trusts on their compliance, the results of which should inform Trust level Health and Wellbeing Strategies. See the second Hot Topic in this series – **Local Evidence Based Improvement Plans**

Click on each title be directed to more information on the NICE website.
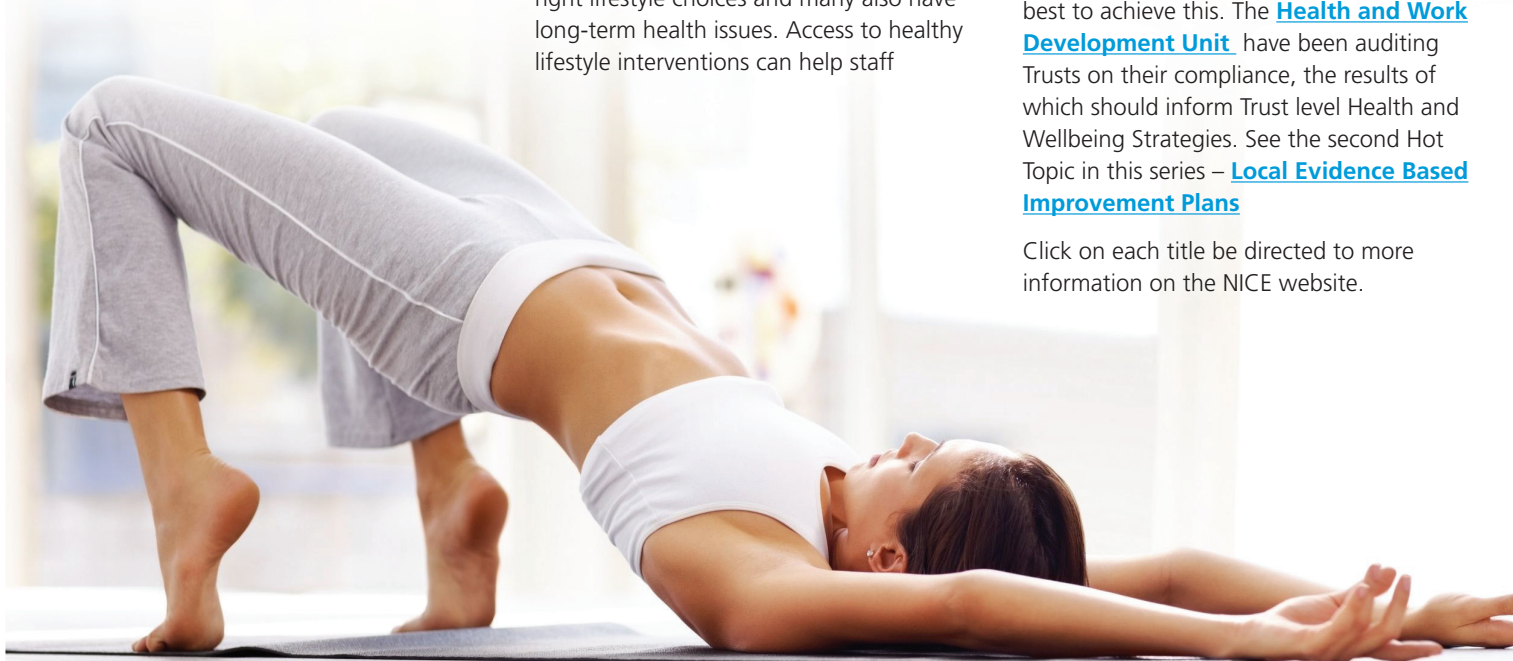
Obesity

Workplaces should provide opportunities for staff to eat a healthy diet and be physically active, through:

- Active and continuous promotion of healthy choices in; restaurants, hospitality, vending machines and shops for staff and clients

- Practices and policies, such as active travel policies for staff and visitors

- Supportive physical environment, for example improvements to stairwells and providing showers and secure cycle parking

- Recreational opportunities, including supporting out-of-hours social activities, lunchtime walks and use of local leisure facilities

Promoting mental well-being through productive and healthy working conditions

The recommendations cover strategy, assessing opportunities for promoting mental well-being and managing risk, flexible working and the role of line managers. They include:

- Promoting a culture of participation, equality and fairness that is based on open communication and inclusion.

- Using frameworks such as Health and Safety Executive management standards for work-related stress to promote and protect employee mental well-being.

Smoking cessation

Employers should undertake the following as a minimum to support staff to quit smoking:

- Develop a smoking cessation policy, provide employees with information on local stop smoking support services, publicise the interventions above and allow staff time off to attend smoking cessation services

- Provide advice on the best interventions through a smoking cessation service which can apply to services based in Occupational Health Departments

Promoting physical activity in the workplace

- Develop an organisation-wide plan and introduce and monitor a multi-component programme to encourage and support employees to be more physically active.

- Encourage employees to walk, cycle or use another mode of transport involving physical activity to travel part or all of the way to and from work

- Help employees to be physically active during the working day. For example, by encouraging them to take the stairs or walk to external meetings.

Physical activity and the environment

Seven recommendations cover strategy, policy and plans, transport, public open spaces, buildings and schools. They include:

- Ensure planning applications always prioritise the need for every member of staff to be physically active as a routine part of their daily life.

- Ensure that physically active transport users are given the highest priority when developing or maintaining streets and roads.

- Plan and provide a comprehensive network of routes for walking, cycling and using other modes of transport involving physical activity.

- Ensure public open spaces and public paths can be reached on foot, by bicycle and using other modes of transport involving physical activity.

All of the above guidance should be viewed in conjunction with the NICE Guidelines on **Behaviour Change at Population, Community and Individual Levels** which includes information on the competency and skills needed to support successful changes

PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSIBILTY DEAL

Organisations can sign up to the Public Health Responsibility Deals at **www.responsibilitydeal.dh.gov.uk/** For NHS organisations this Deal provides an opportunity to help embed the wider health and wellbeing agenda and links to the work they will already be undertaking to deliver the NICE guidelines.

There are four Health at Work Collective Pledges with the strap line: *"We will actively support our workforce to lead healthier lives"*

The pledges are:

1. Chronic conditions
2. Occupational Health Standards
3. Health and well-being Report
4. Healthier staff restaurants

WORKPLACE WELLBEING CHAMPIONS

Workplace Wellbeing Champions are individuals drawn from the workforce who are engaged, trained and supported to inspire their work colleagues to lead more healthy lives, by motivating them to get involved in healthy social activities, create groups to meet local needs and signpost people to relevant support and services.

Currently NHS is providing training the trainer courses for trusts to allow them to deliver accredited training to develop their own champions. Further details are available at **www.nhschamps.co.uk**

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SELF CARE RESOURCES

NHS Choices offers a wide range of information to individuals and has a wide range of information for those suffering from acute symptoms to those with chronic long term conditions and can be promoted to staff as a valuable resource.

Further self care courses are available and may be offered in your locality through Health Improvement Services. There is also some non-workplace focused information available from **Self Care Connect.**

A case study on reducing absence through the use of self care is available from **NHS Employers.**

LOCAL HEALTH IMPROVEMENT SUPPORT

In all localities there are Health Improvement/ Public Health providers who will provide a variety of assistance to Trusts, dependent on the assessed local need. Promotional materials and support to develop services for staff are often available reflecting key public health topics e.g. sexual health, obesity, smoking cessation, physical activity, healthy eating, mental health, alcohol and sustainable development.

Locally supplied resources can help support a year round health promotion calendar of events and promotional activity. Staff health needs should be considered when putting together a calendar.

In some areas primary care activities are available in the workplace setting where a need can be demonstrated, for example Health Trainers and Smoking Cessation may be willing to offer services onsite. Assistance might also be available in running self care courses or training, and in delivering brief interventions to support behaviour change.

There is no central point of contact at present for local services however a search facility on NHS Choices will give an **initial contact**

USEFUL WEBSITES

Health & Work Development Unit
http://www.fom.ac.uk/standards-for-occupational-health-services/hwdu

Obesity Guidance
http://guidance.nice.org.uk/CG4

Promoting mental well-being Guidance
http://guidance.nice.org.uk/PH22

Smoking cessation
http://guidance.nice.org.uk/PH5

Promoting physical activity in the workplace
http://guidance.nice.org.uk/PH13

Physical activity and the environment
http://guidance.nice.org.uk/PH8

Behaviour Change at population, community and individual levels
http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/pdf/PH006guidance.pdf

Public Health Responsibility Deal
http://responsibilitydeal.dh.gov.uk/

NHS Champs
www.nhschamps.co.uk

NHS Choices: Self Care
http://www.nhs.uk/Planners/Your-health/Pages/self-care-week-2012.aspx

Self Care Connect
http://www.selfcareconnect.co.uk/

NHS Choices: Initial Contact
http://www.nhs.uk/ServiceDirectories/Pages/ServiceSearchAdditional.aspx?SearchType=PCTSvc&ServiceType=Trust

CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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