Health and well-being

FACT SHEET

10 STEPS TO HEALTHY STAFF

Promoting staff health can:

- Boost productivity; lower absenteeism; reduce staff turnover; and improve morale;

So you’re bound to benefit from supporting employee health and well-being.

Here are ten tips for creating a healthy, energetic and productive workplace:

1. Limit work stress. Pressure can aid performance, but when converted into stress can damage well-being. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act (HSWA), you have a responsibility to ensure your staff don’t become ill through work stress. An open atmosphere which encourages them to speak to their manager will help prevent tension building up.

2. Enable life balance. Long hours and tight deadlines may be part of the job, but staff who spend too long at work become tense, tired and less productive. Monitor workloads to keep them sensible, and make sure employees take regular breaks and annual leave so they are getting away from work when they need to. Many employees now have the right to request flexible working and most employers are willing to consider requests from any staff who want to strike a balance between home and work.

3. Assess the risk. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations oblige every employer to conduct systematic health and safety risk assessments. These will limit the chance of work-related illness and injury happening in your business.

4. Train your staff. Make sure all employees have adequate training to develop appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviours relevant to their role and responsibility. Employees in some sectors, will need specialist training. Refresher training is also important to avert complacency.

5. Promote healthy food choices. A well-balanced diet improves energy, sleep, immunity and general well-being. Stocking healthy snacks in staff vending machines, changing canteen options and providing fresh fruit will all help to ensure your staff eat more healthily.

6. Encourage staff to walk, run or cycle to work. According to Deloitte’s Health of the Nation report, fewer than half the UK’s employees meet the recommended minimum target of 150 minutes of exercise a week. Providing secure cycle parking, a shower, subsidised gym membership or promoting lunchtime walks and fun runs can help staff stay energised.
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7. Support employees when they become ill. Sick staff often feel under pressure to return to work before they are fully recovered – putting their own health and even the health of colleagues at risk. Stay in contact while they are ill, delegate their work to someone else and reassure them they don’t need to return until they are ready.

8. Be fair. Bullying and discrimination can have a devastating effect on individuals and team morale. Ensure you have effective policies and procedures in place to help staff feel secure and nip emerging problems in the bud.

9. Optimise working conditions. The Health and Safety at Work Act also gives employees a legal right to expect minimum standards from workplace facilities and they are likely to perform better if they are comfortable. For example, providing clean toilets, drinking water, clean work areas, adequate space and lighting, and a comfortable working temperature.

10. Think ergonomically. Ten million working days are lost annually to musculo-skeletal disorders, such as back pain and repetitive strain injury. Ergonomic seats, keyboards, tools and so on, work with the human body to provide maximum comfort and support – and they could reduce absenteeism.