



# Health and wellbeing at work: a resource guide

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# Health and wellbeing at work: a resource guide

## Introduction

This document aims to support employers and employees to access information on improving health and wellbeing at work. Using the workplace as a setting to promote and support health and wellbeing makes good business sense and has many benefits for both employers and employees. Putting in place an effective workplace health programme that meets the needs of each business requires access to effective tools and information, which will help assess the needs of employees and assist with developing and implementing plans.

The Public Health Agency (PHA) recognises the importance of health and wellbeing at work and suggests that those responsible for assessing and addressing the needs of employees apply the World Health Organization (WHO) framework for developing a workplace health strategy.

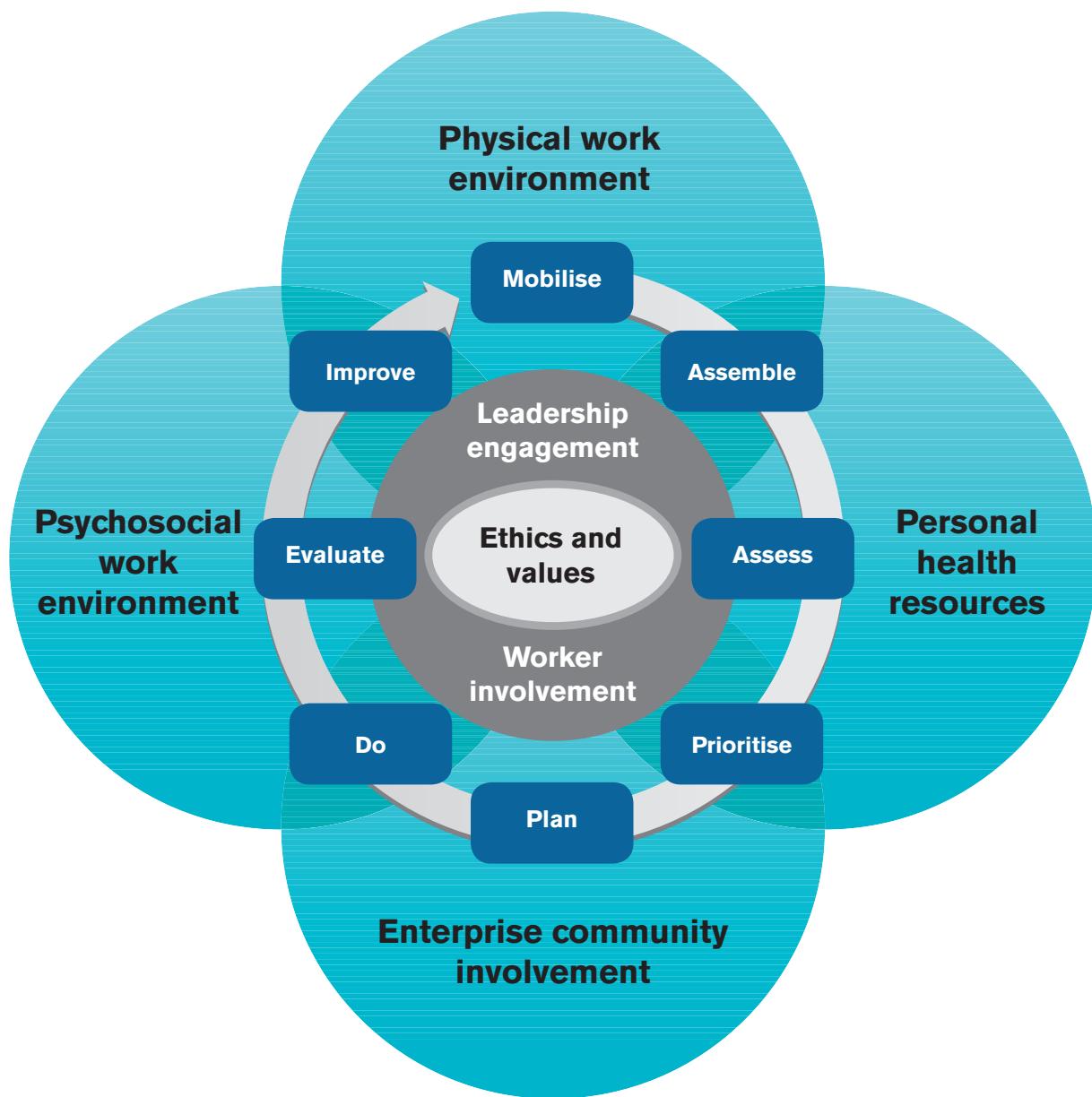
According to the WHO, the definition of a healthy workforce is:

*'... one in which workers and managers collaborate to use a continual improvement process to protect and promote the health, safety and wellbeing of all workers and the sustainability of the workplace by considering the following:*

- *health and safety concerns in the physical work environment;*
- *health, safety and wellbeing concerns in the psychosocial work environment, including organisation of work and workplace culture;*
- *personal health and resources in the workplace;*
- *ways of participating in the community to improve the health of workers, their families and other members of the community.'*<sup>1</sup>

## A model for healthy workplaces

The WHO has developed a model for healthy workplaces, which explains the four aspects involved, the eight step tool for taking action and the underlying principles that enable the creation of a healthy workplace.<sup>1</sup>



[www.who.int/occupational\\_health/healthy\\_workplace\\_framework.pdf](http://www.who.int/occupational_health/healthy_workplace_framework.pdf)

## Why do we need healthy workplaces?

Effective workplace health programmes can make a real difference to the health and wellbeing of employees, businesses and the communities in which people live and work. Research evidence shows that promoting health in the workplace improves the working environment and is beneficial to the organisation and its employees in the following ways:

- Reduction in illness-related absence and ineffectiveness caused by presence at work when ill.<sup>2</sup>
- Reduction in staff turnover.<sup>2</sup>
- Increased motivation among staff and improved working atmosphere, leading to more flexibility, better communications and improved use of resources.<sup>3</sup>
- Measurable increases in the quality of products and services, more innovation and creativity, and a rise in productivity.<sup>1</sup>
- More prestige, which improves the public image of the organisation and makes it more attractive as an employer.<sup>1</sup>

## How to create a healthy workplace programme based on the WHO model

The WHO has developed an easy-to-follow eight step tool for organisations developing a healthy workplace strategy. Organisations can adapt this to suit their workplaces.<sup>1</sup>

### Step 1: Mobilise

Before an organisation starts to develop a workplace health strategy, it is important to seek support from key stakeholders such as senior managers, employees, union leaders, human resources etc. It is necessary to gain the support of all involved. Before mobilising, it may be necessary to gather some information to convince stakeholders this is the right thing to do. Having done so, an organisation can then develop a comprehensive workplace health policy, signed at senior level and communicated clearly to all members of staff.

### Step 2: Assemble

Once the key stakeholders have been mobilised, the next step is to assemble the required resources. The team who will implement the workplace strategy should be identified – this group can be referred to as the healthy workforce team. In large organisations, the team should include people from all sectors, eg health and safety professionals, human resources personnel, engineers, medical professionals, trade union representatives etc. The team should also have suitable gender representation. For small organisations, it is a good idea to include experts from outside organisations as much as possible, such as representatives from community or occupational health clinics. This is also a good time to pinpoint the other resources that will be required, eg places to meet and a budget.

## **Step 3: Assess**

When the team has been assembled, their first task will be to assess two main things, the present situation and the desired future for both the organisation and its workers. Evaluating the present situation of the organisation will be done differently depending on its size. Large organisations should gather some baseline data on employee demographics, workplace injuries and illnesses, disability, staff turnover and any issues that have arisen from workplace inspections and risk assessments. If a risk assessment has not been carried out, now would be the time to do it. As well as evaluating the present situation, it is a good idea to assess the overall health of workers. This can be done through a confidential staff survey such as an online assessment tool.

When the present situation has been evaluated, it makes sense to outline the desired future for the organisation and its workers. For large organisations, this could involve some benchmarking exercises to determine how similar organisations are doing. It is also a good idea to ask workers for their thoughts and ideas on what could be improved. For small organisations, it is a good idea to look at what other local organisations are doing.

## **Step 4: Prioritise**

When all this information has been collected, the team need to prioritise which issues they are going to tackle as there may be too much to deal with at once. Before issues are prioritised, it is necessary to set some criteria for making decisions. It is a good idea to consult with major stakeholders on which actions should be prioritised.

## **Step 5: Plan**

Next is the planning stage. The size of the organisation is very important when deciding how far ahead you should plan. The plan should set out things such as general activities and broad timescales. It is not necessary to have a list of specific actions right away but there should be some long-term goals and objectives. From this, an annual plan should then be established with higher priority aims. This should be done for the first three to five years. Once the annual plan is complete, it is time to set out specific actions to achieve each of the goals. The budget, facilities and resources required need to be included in these action plans.

## **Step 6: Do**

This step simply means implementing the action plan. Responsibilities should be assigned in the plan. A sample action plan is available in the appendix.

## **Step 7: Evaluate**

Evaluation is important to examine what is working and what isn't, and to learn what improvements could be made. Evaluations should be carried out for both long-term and short-term goals.

## **Step 8: Improve**

This involves making changes based on the evaluation results to improve the overall performance of the programmes. However, it is also important to acknowledge the success of the programmes.



# Physical work environment

The physical work environment is defined by the WHO as:

*"The part of the workplace facility that can be detected by human or electronic senses, including the structure, air, machines, furniture, products, chemicals, materials and processes that are present or that occur in the workplace and which can affect the physical or mental safety, health and wellbeing of workers."<sup>1</sup>*

Northern Ireland is governed by health and safety legislation. This legislation includes the *Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978*: [www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1978/1039](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1978/1039) and the *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000*: [www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2000/388/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2000/388/contents/made). Despite this legislation, many work-related accidents and illnesses occur each year.

Actions that will help ensure a safe and healthy physical work environment include:

- implementing a health and safety policy, which is well communicated and understood by all employees;
- ensuring health and safety is included in the induction of employees;
- having a health and safety manual for employees and a health and safety staff handbook;
- health and safety training for all staff, particularly those who work with equipment at work;
- mandatory use of protective equipment by all employees working in high-risk environments;
- performing regular safety checks and routine maintenance on machines and equipment;
- employee involvement in identifying workplace hazards and input on how to minimise or reduce risk;
- regular and ongoing risk assessments alongside good housekeeping;
- adequate employee breaks to ensure they can work safely and be more productive;
- adequate hygiene and catering facilities for employees (toilets, staff area etc);
- regular fire drills and fire safety training for all staff;
- ensuring emergency procedures are in place, documented and understood;
- ensuring any hazard controls are defined, documented and understood;
- installing good lighting and ventilation in work areas;
- ensuring designated employees have current certificates in first aid.

There are a number of organisations that can offer information, support and tools to help maintain a healthy and safe physical work environment.

## **Health and safety**

### **Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI)**

HSENI is the lead agency in Northern Ireland for promoting health and safety standards in the workplace. Their website provides a number of resources and services to employers, employees and CEOs/directors.

HSENI resources relating to the physical work environment include:

*Leading health and safety at work:* [www.hseni.gov.uk/indg417\\_leading\\_health\\_and\\_safety\\_at\\_work.pdf](http://www.hseni.gov.uk/indg417_leading_health_and_safety_at_work.pdf)

*Health and safety at work: Protecting lives, not stopping them:* [www.hseni.gov.uk/joint\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.hseni.gov.uk/joint_strategy.pdf)

HSENI has also developed information and support, including websites and resources, for particular business sectors:

Stay farm safe: <http://farmsafe.hseni.gov.uk/>

Construction industry: <http://www.buildhealthni.com/>

**Website:** [www.hseni.gov.uk](http://www.hseni.gov.uk)

**Telephone:** 028 9024 3249

**Email:** [mail@hseni.gov.uk](mailto:mail@hseni.gov.uk)

### **Northern Ireland Safety Group (NISG)**

NISG promotes safety in the workplace to organisations throughout Northern Ireland. They provide information and support to businesses through events and meetings for employers and employees.

**Website:** [www.nisg.org.uk](http://www.nisg.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 028 9336 8928

**Email:** [info@nisg.org.uk](mailto:info@nisg.org.uk)

### **Health and Safety Works Northern Ireland (HSWNI)**

HSWNI is a small business advisory service of the HSENI, which aims to specifically help Northern Ireland small businesses:

- improve their workplace health and safety management;
- understand their legal responsibilities;
- compete effectively in the marketplace.

**Website:** [www.healthandsafetyworksni.gov.uk](http://www.healthandsafetyworksni.gov.uk)

**Telephone:** 0300 020 0030

**Email:** [hswni@detini.gov.uk](mailto:hswni@detini.gov.uk)

## **Health Matters (Health and Safety) Ltd Northern Ireland**

Health Matters Northern Ireland offers accredited health and safety training to employers throughout Northern Ireland.

**Website:** [www.healthmattersni.com](http://www.healthmattersni.com)

**Telephone:** 028 9002 0044

**Email:** [info@healthmattersni.com](mailto:info@healthmattersni.com)

## **Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)**

IOSH is a health and safety membership organisation working to create a world of work that is safe, healthy and sustainable. Their website offers a number of free resources for businesses on the topic of workplace health. These include:

- an occupational health toolkit, which includes information, guidance, factsheets, case studies, training materials and access to presentations aimed at helping tackle workplace health issues;
- various documents and publications on workplace health;
- information to help employees gain an IOSH health and safety qualification, which allows them to carry out IOSH training on health and safety within the workplace.

**Website:** [www.iosh.co.uk](http://www.iosh.co.uk)

**Telephone:** 0116 257 3100

**Email:** [techinfo@iosh.co.uk](mailto:techinfo@iosh.co.uk)

## **St John Ambulance (SJA)**

SJA in Northern Ireland offers a number of first aid training courses for the workplace, which include:

- emergency first aid at work;
- first aid at work;
- National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH) General Certificate in occupational health and safety;
- IOSH managing safety;
- IOSH working safely.

**Website:** [www.sja.org.uk/sja/about-us/st-john-ambulance-in-your-area](http://www.sja.org.uk/sja/about-us/st-john-ambulance-in-your-area)

**Telephone:** 028 9079 9393

## **The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)**

RoSPA is a national organisation with one of its branches in Belfast. They offer safety advice and training to workplaces throughout Northern Ireland.

**Website:** [www.rospa.com/about/aroundtheuk/northern-ireland](http://www.rospa.com/about/aroundtheuk/northern-ireland)

**Telephone:** 028 9050 1160

**Email:** [enquiryni@rospa.com](mailto:enquiryni@rospa.com)



# Psychosocial work environment

As well as ensuring the physical work environment is safe and healthy for employees, the WHO places great importance on ensuring there is the same standard of psychosocial work environment.

The WHO defines this as:

*"The organisation of work and the organisational culture; the attitudes, values, beliefs and practices that are demonstrated on a daily basis in the enterprise/organisation, and which affect the mental and physical wellbeing of employees. These are sometimes generally referred to as workplace stressors, which may cause emotional or mental stress to workers."*<sup>1</sup>

A poor psychosocial work environment can be caused by a number of factors such as poor work organisation, the organisational culture, poor communication, lack of constructive feedback and lack of support for work/life balance. This can result in stress, alienation and job dissatisfaction, which are all detrimental to staff mental health.<sup>3</sup>

However, employers can take a number of steps to promote a positive psychosocial work environment and prevent stress at work, including:

- commitment from management to support the health and wellbeing of employees as part of the core values and overall business planning of the organisation;
- mechanisms to regularly record and monitor staff satisfaction, absenteeism, staff turnover and/or productivity levels;
- employee assistance programmes (eg services that can be provided by an outside organisation, aimed at meeting the needs of employers in the management of employees' psychosocial health);
- human resource policies that cover health and wellbeing, work/life balance and bullying and harassment;
- effective communication systems throughout the business or organisation;
- jobs that are clearly defined, where everyone understands how their role contributes to the overall business/plan/objectives for the organisation;
- training systems that ensure staff have the skills and knowledge required for their role;
- appraisal systems that recognise and reward staff/organisational achievements;
- flexibility to allow employees to deal with work/life conflicts, working schedules and work location (as much as possible);
- commitment to ensuring that workloads, scheduling and demands made on employees are reasonable;
- appropriate measures and support for disabled members of staff, or those returning to work after a long period of absence;
- systems to address the impact of shift work on employees' health and wellbeing.

A number of organisations provide information and support to the workplace on dealing with stress at work and promoting a healthy psychosocial work environment.

## **Psychosocial aspects**

### **Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS)**

ACAS aims to improve organisations and working life through better employment relations. They help by supplying up-to-date information, independent advice and high quality training, and working with employers and employees to solve problems and improve performance. ACAS have produced an online tool which is available free and is designed to help organisations check that they have the right people management policies in place.

**Website:** [www.acas.org.uk](http://www.acas.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 020 7396 0022

**Email:** [acas@ecgroup.co.uk](mailto:acas@ecgroup.co.uk)

### **Northern Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities (NICEM)**

NICEM works to bring about social change through partnership and alliance building, and to achieve equality of outcome and full participation in society. Its aims are to promote good race relations, eliminate racial discrimination and promote racial equality.

**Website:** [www.nicem.org.uk](http://www.nicem.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 028 9023 8645 / 028 9031 9666

**Email:** [patrick@nicem.org.uk](mailto:patrick@nicem.org.uk)

### **Stronger Together Network**

The Stronger Together Network is a network of professionals (both paid and unpaid) representing organisations that work predominantly with culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Its aims are to share information and knowledge, provide a central shared resource to connect service providers within the sector, and identify new opportunities for partnership and innovation. There are currently more than 130 members from BME organisations and groups, BME individuals, and the community, voluntary and public sectors.

**Website:** [www.strongertogetherni.org](http://www.strongertogetherni.org)

**Telephone:** 028 8775 0211

**Email:** [info@strongertogetherni.org](mailto:info@strongertogetherni.org)

### **Belfast Migrant Centre**

The Belfast Migrant Centre is a consortium of UNISON, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, the Polish Association (NI) and NICEM, under the Welcome House Project. The overall aim is to tackle racism and eliminate barriers against new and settled migrant communities in Northern Ireland. The centre provides outreach services and helps victims of racial harassment and those in crisis situations, with bi-lingual staff to prevent language barriers.

**Website:** [www.belfastmigrantcentre.org](http://www.belfastmigrantcentre.org)

**Telephone:** 028 9043 8962

**Email:** [info@belfastmigrantcentre.org](mailto:info@belfastmigrantcentre.org)

## **Equality Commission for Northern Ireland**

The Equality Commission is an independent public body established under the Northern Ireland Act 1998. It is responsible for implementation of legislation on:

- fair employment;
- sex discrimination;
- equal pay;
- race relations;
- sexual orientation;
- disability.

The commission provides an employer training programme on specific equality, policy and practice areas. The training programme can be viewed at: [www.equalityni.org/training](http://www.equalityni.org/training)

**Website:** [www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)

**Telephone:** 028 9050 0600

**Email:** [information@equalityni.org](mailto:information@equalityni.org)

## **Stress**

### **HSENI**

The HSENI has produced excellent tools for managers and employees on developing a positive psychosocial work environment and recognising and preventing stress in the workplace.

These resources include management standards for work-related stress and examples of a stress policy and a stress management toolkit.

HSENI resources on managing stress in the workplace can be accessed at: [www.hseni.gov.uk/resources/publications.htm](http://www.hseni.gov.uk/resources/publications.htm)

**Website:** [www.hseni.gov.uk](http://www.hseni.gov.uk)

**Telephone:** 028 9024 3249

**Email:** [mail@hseni.gov.uk](mailto:mail@hseni.gov.uk)

### **British Heart Foundation**

The British Heart Foundation has developed a 'Health at work' programme and provides very useful resources on stress and other aspects of health improvement as part of the *Health at work: Mission very possible toolkit*, which explains how to promote a positive psychosocial work environment by delivering a successful workplace health and wellbeing programme.

More information on the British Heart Foundation and the 'Health at work' programme can be found on the website below.

**Website:** [www.bhf.org.uk/healthatwork/](http://www.bhf.org.uk/healthatwork/)

**Telephone:** 0845 130 8663

**Email:** [ni@bhf.org.uk](mailto:ni@bhf.org.uk)

## **Labour Relations Agency**

The Labour Relations Agency (LRA) is a non-governmental public body responsible for improving employment relations in Northern Ireland. The LRA provides an impartial and confidential employment relations service to industry, commerce and public services.

**Website:** [www.lra.org.uk](http://www.lra.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 028 9032 1442

**Email:** [info@lra.org.uk](mailto:info@lra.org.uk)

## **Aware Defeat Depression**

Aware Defeat Depression is a Northern Ireland charity that offers information and support in relation to mental illness. They provide a varied education programme that promotes knowledge and development of understanding on the importance of mental health and depression. The programmes also help encourage help-seeking behaviour in the people who attend.

**Website:** [www.aware-ni.org/education](http://www.aware-ni.org/education)

**Telephone:** 028 9035 7820

**Email:** [help@aware-ni.org](mailto:help@aware-ni.org)

## **Parent support**

### **Employers for Childcare**

Employers for Childcare is a charity that works with employers and encourages family friendly policies in the workplace. Their aim is to make it easier for parents with dependent children to get into, and stay in, work.

**Website:** [www.employersforchildcare.org](http://www.employersforchildcare.org)

**Telephone:** 028 9267 8200

**Email:** [info@employersforchildcare.org](mailto:info@employersforchildcare.org)

### **Parenting NI**

Parenting NI was established as Parents Advice Centre and is a leading parenting support organisation committed to delivering high quality services. Parenting NI has a regional remit to promote positive parenting by providing support, training and information on family issues, and influencing policy, provision and practice at all levels.

**Website:** [www.parentingni.org](http://www.parentingni.org)

**Telephone:** 028 9031 0891

**Email:** [sandra@parentingni.org](mailto:sandra@parentingni.org)

## **HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)**

HMRC provides guidance on childcare support for employers and employees, How you can help your employees with childcare: <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/helpsheets/e18.pdf>

HMRC also provides online help services that enable employees to find out about available support and childcare vouchers or tax credits they should be getting: [www.hmrc.gov.uk/calcs/ccin.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/calcs/ccin.htm)

**Website:** [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk)

**Telephone:** 0845 605 5999

## **Kith & Kin Financial Well-being C.I.C**

Kith & Kin Financial Well-being is a unique social enterprise that provides employees with access to financial information, education and advice. This is done by organising on-site financial well-being training seminars and clinics.

- Financial Well-being training to employees
- On-site financial clinics where staff can pre-book individual appointments.

**Website:** [www.kithandkinfinance.org](http://www.kithandkinfinance.org)

**Tel:** 028 9087 7777

**Email:** [info@kithandkinfinance.org](mailto:info@kithandkinfinance.org)

## **Carers**

### **Carers Northern Ireland**

Carers Northern Ireland is a charity that:

- supports carers;
- provides information and advice about caring;
- influences policy through research based on carers' real life experiences;
- campaigns to make life better for carers;
- helps carers remain in paid work.

They also provide a helpline service for carers.

**Website:** [www.carersuk.org/about-carers-northern-ireland](http://www.carersuk.org/about-carers-northern-ireland)

**Telephone:** 028 9043 9843

**Email:** [info@carersni.org](mailto:info@carersni.org)

## **Disability**

### **Disability Action**

Disability Action is a charity that works to ensure the rights of disabled people. The organisation has branches throughout Northern Ireland and works with the Department for Employment and Learning (DELNI) on their Workable NI programme, which helps disabled people. The support they offer includes:

- assistance on job matching and job finding;
- workplace support for disabled employees;
- support for employers, including various training opportunities;
- job coaching.

**Website:** [www.disabilityaction.org](http://www.disabilityaction.org)

**Telephone:** 028 9029 7880

**Email:** [hq@disabilityaction.org](mailto:hq@disabilityaction.org)

### **Royal National Institute for Blind People (RNIB)**

The RNIB offers services to employers, which include:

- help ensuring the workplace is equipped and accessible to blind and partially sighted employees;
- advice and training on equipment and computer software that can help blind and partially sighted people do their job;
- visual awareness training for staff who work with blind and partially sighted colleagues.

**Website:** [www.rnib.org.uk/aboutus/contactdetails/nireland/Pages/nireland.aspx](http://www.rnib.org.uk/aboutus/contactdetails/nireland/Pages/nireland.aspx)

**Telephone:** 028 9032 9373

**Email:** [employmentni@rnib.org.uk](mailto:employmentni@rnib.org.uk)

### **DELNI Occupational Psychology Service**

The occupational psychology service offers employment assessments that help identify people who are ill and disabled, to help them make decisions about:

- what career route to take;
- the steps needed to progress into work;
- support to retain work.

**Website:** [www.delni.gov.uk/.../occupational-psychology-services](http://www.delni.gov.uk/.../occupational-psychology-services)

**Telephone :** 028 9025 2365

**Email:** [ops@delni.gov.uk](mailto:ops@delni.gov.uk)

## Action on Hearing Loss (new name for RNID)

The Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID) is now known as Action on Hearing Loss. This organisation provides a range of services including:

- support for people with hearing loss and tinnitus;
- day-to-day care for people who are deaf;
- communication services and training;
- practical support to help people protect their hearing.

At a strategic level, Action on Hearing Loss campaigns for policy change and supports research into hearing loss.

**Website:** [www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk](http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk)

**Telephone :** 028 9023 9619

**Textphone :** 028 9024 9462

**Email:** [information.nireland@hearingloss.org.uk](mailto:information.nireland@hearingloss.org.uk)



## Personal health resources

The WHO defines personal health resources in the workplace as:

*"A supportive environment, health services, information, resources, opportunities and the flexibility an enterprise provides to workers to support or motivate their efforts to improve or maintain healthy personal lifestyle practices, as well as to monitor and support their ongoing physical and mental health."*<sup>1</sup>

The WHO recognises the importance of the workplace as a setting to promote healthy lifestyle practices such as healthy eating, physical activity, and avoiding smoking and alcohol abuse. There are a number of things an organisation can do to promote a healthy lifestyle. These should start with a process of employee engagement that assesses the needs of staff and asks them what they believe their healthy workplace programme should include. Employees are then included in decision-making and planning, and feedback about the programme is actively encouraged.

Specific actions to support employees to use personal health resources in the workplace and adopt a healthier lifestyle include:

1. healthy food choices in the canteen or refrigeration to allow employees to store healthy lunches;<sup>4</sup>
2. flexible working hours to give employees the opportunity to take breaks for exercise, eg walking groups at lunchtime, yoga or exercise groups at work;
3. employers adopting a green travel plan, designed to reduce car dependency for commuter and organisation travel, which can also increase employees' physical activity levels (eg cycle to work schemes);<sup>6</sup>
4. providing information and education on health-related topics in the workplace through training, staff notice boards, leaflets, emails or wage packet inserts;<sup>6,7</sup>
5. health checks and assessments in the workplace, either through company occupational health services or an outside organisation that provides this service;<sup>8</sup>
6. raising awareness about health issues by participating in national campaigns, eg No Smoking Day, Bike2Work Week, World Mental Health Day etc.

There are a number of organisations that offer help, support and information on how workplaces can promote healthy lifestyle practices to their employees.

## General support for workplace health

### **Business in the Community Northern Ireland (BITC)**

BITC is a membership organisation for successful companies committed to doing business in a responsible way that helps them impact positively on their people, the planet and the place where they're located. In Northern Ireland, they have a growing membership of almost 250 companies. BITC has a number of tools and services that can support employers from the initial stages of developing a strategic wellbeing plan to the challenge of sustaining programmes that address the wellbeing of employees.

**Website:** [www.bitc.org.uk/northern\\_irland/](http://www.bitc.org.uk/northern_irland/)

**Telephone:** 028 9046 0606

**Email:** [info@bitcni.org.uk](mailto:info@bitcni.org.uk)

## **PHA health and wellbeing at work resources**

The PHA is the lead organisation in Northern Ireland for health protection and health and social wellbeing improvement. The PHA is committed to addressing the causes and associated inequalities of preventable ill-health and lack of wellbeing. Support for workplace health within the PHA sits with the health improvement division and four key themes have been identified:

- Give every child and young person the best start in life.
- Ensure a decent standard of living for all.
- Build sustainable communities.
- Make healthy choices easier.

The importance of creating an environment that encourages and supports health is critical and the PHA is committed to working across a range of settings to ensure that healthier choices are made easier for individuals.

The PHA has developed resources and a workplace health and wellbeing online assessment tool for employees. The online assessment tool is completely confidential and the overall results can then be used by employers to develop a workplace health and wellbeing action plan. In completing the assessment tool, employees are provided with the opportunity to think about their own health and wellbeing and are then signposted to available information and support. The online assessment tool is free to access and can be found at: [www.healthatworkni.org](http://www.healthatworkni.org)

The PHA has individual websites on key health topics including:

**Healthy eating:** [www.enjoyhealthyeating.info](http://www.enjoyhealthyeating.info)

**Physical activity:** [www.getalifegetactive.com](http://www.getalifegetactive.com)

**Alcohol:** [www.knowyourlimits.info](http://www.knowyourlimits.info)

**Mental health:** [www.mindingyourhead.info](http://www.mindingyourhead.info)

**Smoking:** [www.want2stop.info](http://www.want2stop.info)

**Obesity:** [www.choosetolivebetter.com](http://www.choosetolivebetter.com)

An extensive list of information leaflets and other resources on various health issues can be viewed by searching on: [www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications)

The PHA provides leaflets aimed at employees on the following:

- healthy eating;
- mental health;
- physical activity.

These can be viewed online at: [www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications)

These resources may also be available from local health promotion resource centres. To request copies, contact the health promotion resource centre in your local Health and Social Care Trust (HSCT).

Belfast and South Eastern HSCTs – Tel: 028 9056 5862, Email: [hazel.fisher@belfasttrust.hscni.net](mailto:hazel.fisher@belfasttrust.hscni.net)

Northern HSCT – Tel: 028 2563 5375, Email: [andrea.graham@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:andrea.graham@northerntrust.hscni.net)

Southern HSCT – Tel: 028 3741 2889, Email: [cst.training@southerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:cst.training@southerntrust.hscni.net)

Western HSCT – Tel: 028 7186 5127, Email: [patricia.concannon@westerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:patricia.concannon@westerntrust.hscni.net)

**Website:** [www.publichealth.hscni.net](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net)

**Telephone:** 028 9032 1313

## Foyle Health at Work (Derry Healthy Cities)

The Foyle Health at Work initiative encourages employers in the areas of Strabane, Derry/Londonderry and Limavady to promote positive attitudes to the holistic health of their employees and not just their physical health and safety. Foyle Health at Work actively supports employers to develop and implement workplace health and wellbeing action plans, with the aim of improving working conditions and enabling staff to remain in employment longer.

**Website:** [www.foylehealthatwork.com](http://www.foylehealthatwork.com)

**Telephone:** 028 7161 1384

**Email:** [sabrina@derryhc.com](mailto:sabrina@derryhc.com)

## Lisburn City Council Partnership

Lisburn City Council, in partnership with the PHA and other agencies that support businesses, has launched a new and innovative workplace health partnership called 'Invest in Health Profit in Business'. This is a support service that works with local businesses and provider organisations/agencies to improve the health and wellbeing of employees and employers.

**Website:** [www.lisburncity.gov.uk/investment-and-business/employee-wellbeing/](http://www.lisburncity.gov.uk/investment-and-business/employee-wellbeing/)

**Telephone:** 028 9250 9484

**Email:** [hazel.king@lisburn.gov.uk](mailto:hazel.king@lisburn.gov.uk)

## Cardiovascular disease and stroke

### Northern Ireland Chest Heart and Stroke (NICHS)

NICHS is a registered charity working in Northern Ireland to reduce the number of people affected by chest, heart and stroke illnesses. As part of this work to raise awareness, they provide information talks and nurse health assessments to workplaces throughout Northern Ireland. This involves a team of nurses going into workplaces and carrying out health checks on a number of different things, such as cardiac risk factors, cholesterol and body composition. More information on these services can be found by contacting NICHS.

**Website:** [www.nichsa.com](http://www.nichsa.com)

**Telephone:** 028 9032 0184

**Email:** [mail@nichsa.com](mailto:mail@nichsa.com)

## **Diabetes**

### **Diabetes UK (Northern Ireland)**

Diabetes UK raises awareness about the signs of diabetes and provides information and support to people living with diabetes and their families. Diabetes UK has a Northern Ireland branch, which is involved in promoting a healthy lifestyle among employees and will attend workplace health events and provide information and support to employees.

**Website:** [www.diabetes.org.uk/NorthernIreland](http://www.diabetes.org.uk/NorthernIreland)

**Telephone:** 028 9066 6646

**Email:** [n.ireland@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:n.ireland@diabetes.org.uk)

## **Cancer**

### **Cancer Focus NI**

Cancer Focus NI (formerly the Ulster Cancer Foundation) helps people who are living with cancer, funds cancer research and offers advice and information to people on how to lower their risk of cancer and live a healthy lifestyle. Programmes include:

- breast awareness;
- bowel cancer;
- weight management;
- stopping smoking;
- physical activity for health.

Specialist health promotion staff use resources such as the skin scanner and body composition scales to deliver tailored programmes in workplaces. Sessions are interactive, positive and tailored so that participants see how they can improve their health. Men or women-only sessions can be provided on request.

**Website:** [www.cancerfocusni.org](http://www.cancerfocusni.org)

**Telephone:** 028 9066 3281

**Email:** [behealthy@cancerfocusni.org](mailto:behealthy@cancerfocusni.org)

## Action Cancer

Action Cancer in Northern Ireland offers services to workplaces including:

- counselling;
- complementary therapy;
- MOT health checks;
- health promotion services including 'Cook it';
- smoking cessation services;
- men's health and health action awards.

The Action Cancer Big Bus services workplaces and will travel anywhere in Northern Ireland to offer health advice. There are charges for some of these services.

**Website:** [www.actioncancer.org](http://www.actioncancer.org)

**Telephone:** 028 9080 3344

**Email:** [info@actioncancer.org](mailto:info@actioncancer.org)

## Smoking

### Stop smoking services

Smoking is the single greatest preventable cause of ill health and premature death in Northern Ireland, killing around 2,300 people each year. Of these deaths, approximately 800 are the result of lung cancer, which is now the most common cause of cancer death in both men and women. Other illnesses for which smoking is a major risk factor include coronary heart disease, stroke and other diseases of the circulatory system.

The PHA is responsible for developing public information campaigns that highlight the dangers of smoking and signpost smokers to services that will help them quit. Further information on smoking and the workplace can be found on the PHA's 'Want 2 Stop' website, which is specifically aimed at those who wish to find out more about stop smoking services. The PHA also has a number of publications related to stopping smoking, which can be accessed at: [www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications) by searching using the word 'smoking'.

**Website:** [www.want2stop.info](http://www.want2stop.info)

**Smokers' Helpline service:** 0808 812 8008

## **Physical activity**

### **Physical activity initiatives**

The PHA recommends 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week for adults and 60 minutes every day for kids as this is crucial for good health and wellbeing. Employees can try to fit in some walking or cycling as part of the daily journey to work and businesses can create a workplace travel plan. If the total trip distance is too far, get off the bus a bit early or park the car a bit further away. Further information on getting active is available from the PHA physical activity website: [www.getalifegetactive.com](http://www.getalifegetactive.com)

There are several organisations that can provide information and support to workplaces that would like to support their employees to get active:

- Travelwise: [www.travelwiseni.co.uk](http://www.travelwiseni.co.uk)
- Cycle to work scheme: [www.cycleni.com](http://www.cycleni.com)
- Outdoor physical activity opportunities: [www.outdoorni.com](http://www.outdoorni.com)

### **Council leisure centres**

Leisure centres are available in all council areas in Northern Ireland. The majority provide opportunities for both indoor and outdoor physical activity, with a wide range of sports usually on offer. To find out what is available in your area, visit your local council website. A full list of council contact details and web addresses can be found at: [www.nidirect.gov.uk/local-councils-in-northern-ireland](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/local-councils-in-northern-ireland)

### **Sustrans**

Sustrans is a UK charity that enables people to travel by foot, bike or public transport on more of the journeys they make every day. Sustrans works with families, communities, policy makers and partner organisations so that people are able to choose healthier, cleaner and cheaper journeys, with better places and spaces to move through and live in.

**Website:** [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 028 9043 4569

**Email:** [belfast@sustrans.org.uk](mailto:belfast@sustrans.org.uk)

## Nutrition

### Food Standards Agency Northern Ireland

The Food Standards Agency is an independent government department responsible for food safety and hygiene across the UK. They work with businesses to help them produce safe food, and with local authorities to enforce food safety regulations. The Northern Ireland branch of the Food Standards Agency provides policy advice and carries out food law enforcement activities.

**Website:** [www.food.gov.uk/northern-ireland](http://www.food.gov.uk/northern-ireland)

**Telephone:** 028 9041 7700

**Email:** [infosani@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:infosani@foodstandards.gsi.gov.uk)

### British Dietetic Association (BDA)

The BDA provides a service called 'Nutrition in the workplace' to help businesses throughout the UK:

- improve employees' health and wellbeing;
- boost productivity;
- reduce absenteeism.

The service includes nutrition workshops and food demonstrations, all designed to meet the needs of individual companies and tailored to meet agreed objectives and budgets. Workshops are interactive, engaging the employees to look at their own meal and snack intake and relating the health messages back to them throughout the seminar.

**Website:** [www.bda.uk.com/workplacehealth/workshops](http://www.bda.uk.com/workplacehealth/workshops)

**Telephone:** 0121 200 8030

**Email:** [workplacehealth@bda.uk.com](mailto:workplacehealth@bda.uk.com)

## **Sexual health**

### **The Family Planning Association (FPA)**

The FPA is a sexual health charity and their mission is to help establish a society in which everyone can make informed choices about sex, relationships and reproduction so they can enjoy sexual health free from prejudice or harm. The FPA provides a confidential sexual health service and helpline, and also supplies information booklets on:

- contraception methods;
- common sexually transmitted infections (STIs);
- pregnancy choices;
- abortion;
- planning a pregnancy.

Details about contraception clinics, sexual health and Genito Urinary Medicine (GUM) clinics, and sexual assault referral centres are also available from the FPA. Training courses on understanding and managing sexual harassment in the workplace can be provided:

**Website:** [www.fpa.org.uk](http://www.fpa.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 0845 122 8687

**Email:** [beverly@fpa.org.uk](mailto:beverly@fpa.org.uk)

### **The Rainbow Project**

The Rainbow Project is a health organisation that works to improve the physical, mental and emotional health of gay, bisexual and non-heterosexual men in Northern Ireland. It is the largest organisation of its kind in Northern Ireland and has two centres, one in Belfast city centre and the other in Londonderry.

**Website:** [www.rainbow-project.org](http://www.rainbow-project.org)

**Telephone:** 028 9031 9030

**Email:** [info@rainbow-project.org](mailto:info@rainbow-project.org)

### **Sexual orientation and gender identity**

'Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender – Creating Inclusive Workplaces' is a new e-learning programme that has been developed by the PHA in partnership with the Southern HSCT and informed by the experiences of individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgender (LGBT) and their carers.

The programme has been designed to be used by individuals working in any setting, including staff and management. We hope it will better inform individuals and organisations about the issues faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, and encourage workplace settings to be more LGBT inclusive. We hope you can take time to complete the 45 minute programme and promote it to other colleagues within your workplace.

**For further information see:** [www.lgbtelearning.hscni.net](http://www.lgbtelearning.hscni.net)

### **LGBT Northern Ireland**

This website provides information on different organisations and services dedicated to supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and their families across Northern Ireland.

**Website:** [www.lgbtni.org](http://www.lgbtni.org)

## **Alcohol and addiction**

### **Addiction NI**

Addiction NI offers a bespoke service to employers to deal with drug or alcohol problems in the workplace. Services they offer include:

- support to develop policies on alcohol and drugs in the workplace;
- awareness training;
- treatment for those who have alcohol or drug dependency;
- screening tools to help identify those at risk of alcohol misuse.

**Website:** [www.addictionni.com](http://www.addictionni.com)

**Telephone:** 028 9066 4434

**Email:** [enquiries@addictionni.com](mailto:enquiries@addictionni.com)

### **PHA alcohol and drugs directories of services**

There are four Drug and Alcohol Coordination Teams (DACTs) in Northern Ireland and each team has produced a directory of services available in its area. To find out which services are available in your area, visit: [www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/drug-and-alcohol-directories-services](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/drug-and-alcohol-directories-services)

## **Mental health and wellbeing**

### **Action Mental Health (AMH)**

AMH works with employers to highlight that health, work and wellbeing are closely and powerfully linked and need to be addressed together. AMH provides opportunities to be as active as possible – physically, socially and mentally – and encourages clients to adopt a healthier lifestyle and widen their social networks. AMH also gives people the tools they need to:

- build a better future;
- set personal goals;
- learn coping skills;
- become more employable.

**Website:** [www.amh.org.uk](http://www.amh.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 028 9182 8494

## Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health (NIAMH)

NIAMH is the largest and longest established independent charity that focuses on mental health and wellbeing services in Northern Ireland. It provides support services to people with experience of mental illness through supported housing, day support and advocacy services. NIAMH also provides therapeutic support through employee assistance programmes, and specialist therapeutic services delivered in a wide variety of contexts. In addition, it undertakes research in topics such as suicide, mental health service evaluation, and mental health needs assessment.

**Website:** [www.niamh.co.uk](http://www.niamh.co.uk)

**Telephone:** 028 9032 8474

## Lifeline

Lifeline is the Northern Ireland crisis response helpline for people who are experiencing distress or despair. This service is available to anyone in Northern Ireland and employees should be made aware of it. Lifeline counsellors are experienced in working with trauma, suicide, self-harm, abuse, depression and anxiety. Callers will receive confidential, immediate help on the phone. Should they need further support, Lifeline can provide a face-to-face counselling appointment or complementary therapy locally within seven days. People living in Northern Ireland can call Lifeline for free, 24/7, 365 days a year.

**Website:** [www.lifelinehelpline.info](http://www.lifelinehelpline.info)

**Lifeline:** 0808 808 8000

## Carecall

Carecall is an organisation that specialises in promoting people's mental health and wellbeing at work. It offers advice on:

- stress;
- anxiety;
- depression;
- alcohol and drug problems;
- bullying;
- harassment;
- bereavement;
- financial or legal worries;
- domestic violence;
- relationship problems;
- changes at work or in life.

To access Carecall's services, your organisation must become a member. Services include training and confidential telephone counselling.

**Website:** [www.carecallsolutions.com](http://www.carecallsolutions.com)

**Telephone:** 028 9024 5821

**Email:** [j.conaghan@carecallwellbeing.com](mailto:j.conaghan@carecallwellbeing.com)



# Enterprise community involvement

The WHO defines this as:

*"The activities, expertise, and other resources an enterprise engages in or provides to the social and physical community or communities in which it operates; and which affect the physical and mental health, safety and wellbeing of workers and their families."*<sup>1</sup>

The WHO places a great deal of importance on ensuring that businesses have a positive impact on the communities in which they are situated. Employee engagement can help improve the health and wellbeing of workers and individuals who live in these communities. Ways in which businesses can get involved include:

- drawing up a sustainable development plan for the organisation;
- working to reduce the organisation's carbon emissions and waste;
- making highly efficient use of resources such as energy, water, land and products;
- protecting green space and biodiversity;
- making sure procurement supports and facilitates a reduction in resource use and waste;
- specifying environmental and social standards through the procurement process to influence supply chains and drive innovation;
- supporting a strong and sustainable local economy by involving local suppliers in appropriate procurement opportunities;
- working positively with key stakeholders to ensure local decisions (eg on planning or transport) are good for health and sustainability;
- understanding the local community and involving its representatives and members in decision-making and scrutiny;
- supporting local communities and economies wherever possible;
- introducing equality practices in the workplace to protect vulnerable groups;
- encouraging workers to volunteer for non-profit organisations during work hours;
- working with building contractors to ensure sustainable development objectives are properly specified, understood and delivered;
- supporting a strong and sustainable local economy by involving local suppliers in building projects.

The following are organisations that provide information and support to workplaces in the area of enterprise and community involvement.

## Volunteer Now

Volunteer Now works to promote, enhance and support volunteering throughout Northern Ireland. The website is updated regularly with volunteering opportunities across Northern Ireland. As well as highlighting general volunteering opportunities, Volunteer Now also works to promote employer-supported volunteering. Employees involved in volunteering schemes not only give back to the community, but also benefit from positive mental health effects.

**Website:** [www.volunteernow.co.uk](http://www.volunteernow.co.uk)

**Telephone:** 028 9023 2020

**Email:** [info@volunteernow.co.uk](mailto:info@volunteernow.co.uk)

## Invest NI

As the regional business development agency, Invest NI's role is to build the local economy. It is part of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment and provides strong support for business by effectively delivering the Government's economic development strategies. Invest NI offers the Northern Ireland business community a single organisation providing high-quality services, programmes, support and expert advice. Invest NI also offers advice, training, consultancy and financial support on resource efficiency issues.

**Website:** [www.investni.com](http://www.investni.com)

**Telephone:** 028 9069 8000

**Email:** [eo@investni.com](mailto:eo@investni.com)



## Examples of good practice

### The Harvey Group PLC, Newtownabbey

The Harvey Group is a building service organisation that employs 60 people. The workforce is 90% male and 10% female, and represented by all age groups. As part of their workplace health programme, they identified the needs of their staff to be:

- physical activity;
- healthy eating;
- more communication with the company;
- health assessments for staff.

The organisation then got to work on improving these areas. They achieved this through a number of different measures, including the following:

- Running a step-o-meter challenge, during which staff were given a pedometer to count their steps every day for four weeks. The person with the most steps was then given vouchers for their local supermarket. A walking group was also set up.
- Fruit and vegetables were sold to staff at a reasonable price, supplied from the local fruit and veg shop. Employees were also provided with written advice on healthy eating to enforce the message of five portions a day.
- A telegraph, with details of what was happening within the company, was sent out to each staff member on a regular basis, in order to improve communication.
- Health assessments with NICHs were set up for all members of staff.

One of the issues the organisation faced was that certain programmes took a while to set up and sometimes the organisation appeared to be resisting change. However, the programme worked well overall.

Benefits of the programme include the following:

- A marked improvement to staff's overall lifestyle practices.
- Increased physical activity and consumption of fruit.
- Improved communication with employees and better understanding of company business due to the telegraph.
- At the company's annual Christmas dinner, leaflets on men's and women's cancers were distributed to staff. Cancer Research were invited along to give a presentation and donations were also collected. This resulted in £752 being raised for the charity.

## Housing Rights Service, Belfast

The Housing Rights Service is an organisation that works to promote the rights of those who are in need of housing in Northern Ireland. It employs 25 full-time and three part-time workers. As part of their workplace health programme, they identified key areas of need. These included:

- improving the health and safety standards of the work environment;
- stress management issues;
- promotion of physical activity;
- promotion of healthy eating;
- general promotion of health and wellbeing awareness.

The organisation then worked to improve these areas. Steps taken include the following:

- Members of staff attended first aid training courses.
- One employee attended accredited training on stress awareness.
- Stress management was incorporated into the organisation's overall health and wellbeing policy.
- Promotion of the existing employee assistance programme and counselling service, which included a briefing for all staff and an induction for new staff members.
- Taking part in a step-o-meter challenge. This had a positive effect on staff team building and morale.
- Setting up a walking group, which has participated in a number of charitable walks including the Race for Life.
- The local health and social care trust gave an information session on healthier eating.
- A section of the office was dedicated to health promotion, which included leaflets on healthy eating, smoking cessation, alcohol limits and cancer.
- Action Cancer provided information sessions for staff.
- NICHS provided health checks for staff.
- An external organisation came in to provide a range of relaxation therapies for staff.
- One member of staff attended a health fair at Belfast Castle and reported back to the office.

One of the main problems they faced when trying to implement this programme was finding the necessary resources.

The main benefits for staff and the organisation include the following:

- There is greater awareness of general health and wellbeing and healthy lifestyle practices. Absenteeism has also dropped.
- The programme has highlighted the importance of management when it comes to staff health and wellbeing. As well as this, there has been a noticeable improvement in staff morale and team building.

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# Appendix: Sample workplace health and wellbeing action plan

## 1: Maintain a safe and healthy physical work environment

Objective	Key actions	Timescales	Person(s) responsible	Budget needs	Progress	Evaluation
To ensure workstations are safe and minimise the risk of injury in the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete risk assessments of workstations</li> <li>• Undertake any ergonomic adjustments that may be required</li> <li>• Maintain safe workstations and implement tidy desk policies</li> </ul>	Feb 2013 Mar 2013 Ongoing	Health and safety officer   Line managers	Replacement office furniture	Review date Feb 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain records of assessments</li> <li>• Record sickness levels for back pain/injury</li> </ul>

## 2: Promote a positive psychosocial work environment

Objective	Key actions	Timescales	Person(s) responsible	Budget needs	Progress	Evaluation
To provide a supportive work environment for employees and reduce the risk of workplace-related stress	Develop and implement a communication strategy to support effective communication throughout the organisation	Commence June 13	Senior management or Chief Executive	n/a	Draft document circulated for comment among all staff by Aug 13	Staff survey pre- and post-strategy
	Assess the health and wellbeing of employees, including levels of stress in the workplace	Mar 14	Human resources or workplace health and wellbeing lead		All staff to have participated by July 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report to management board</li> <li>• Collective results communicated to all staff</li> <li>• Action plan to be developed to address needs</li> </ul>

### 3: Provide personal health resources in the workplace

Objective	Key actions	Timescales	Person(s) responsible	Budget needs	Progress	Evaluation
To improve the health and wellbeing of employees by increasing levels of physical activity and offering support to overweight and obese employees who would like to achieve a healthy weight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage employees to participate in a survey to assess preferred options</li> <li>Source local support to deliver a workplace health-based physical activity programme</li> <li>Signpost employees to available support for attending weight loss programmes</li> </ul>	Jan 13	Workplace health and wellbeing lead	Costs for pilates sessions once a week	Sessions to be made available on a pilot basis commencing Feb 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of staff participating in sessions recorded</li> <li>Number of staff referred by GP to weight loss programme recorded</li> <li>Weight loss recorded</li> </ul>

### 4: Support organisational involvement in the community

Objective	Key actions	Timescales	Person(s) responsible	Budget needs	Progress	Evaluation
To support the local community by providing time and skills on a voluntary basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scope local community projects that would like to benefit from organisational involvement</li> <li>Agree actions and allow time off for staff to volunteer</li> </ul>	June 13	Business lead or Chief Executive, and workplace health and wellbeing lead	Staff time in lieu	Community projects identified by end of June 13 and volunteering offered	Feedback from community projects and employees



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Tel: 028 9032 1313. [www.publichealth.hscni.net](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net)