Good Health
Good Business
in Bedford Borough
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“131 million days were lost due to sickness absences in the UK last year”

We spend a large proportion of our adult lives at work and therefore the workplace offers a major opportunity to drive health improvement. A healthier workforce will not only feel better but will perform better too resulting in a reduction in absenteeism and staff turnover, improved productivity and higher profits for your business.

“Bedford Borough Council wants everyone to be able to make healthier choices, regardless of their circumstances, and to minimise the risk and impact of illness”

The Bedford Borough Public Health team can help you to improve the health of your employees and of your business. We want to support positive health management rather than just managing the consequences of absence in the workplace. This information pack contains details of initiatives we can provide including Workplace Health Champions, NHS Health Checks and the Heartbeat Award, as well as signposting to support services for smoking, tobacco and alcohol use, physical activity and mental wellbeing. These topics are particularly important considering that in Bedford Borough:

- 17.4% of adults smoke
- 21% of adults drink alcohol to a harmful level
- 22.6% of adults consulted their GP about a mental health problem
- 23.1% of adults are estimated to be obese
- 42% of adults do not meet physical activity guidelines

1 PHE Health Profile 2014
2 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Bedford Borough Council 2013
3 Public Health Outcomes Framework 2014
Events Calendar

There are many national health awareness campaigns that you can support and promote within your workplace. We have outlined some of the key campaigns that occur each month throughout the year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Campaign</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Alcohol awareness ‘Love your liver’</td>
<td>British Liver Trust <a href="http://www.loveyourliver.org.uk">www.loveyourliver.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>‘National Heart Month’</td>
<td>British Heart Foundation <a href="http://www.bhf.org.uk">www.bhf.org.uk</a></td>
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<td>March</td>
<td>No Smoking Day</td>
<td>British Heart Foundation <a href="http://www.nosmokingday.org.uk">www.nosmokingday.org.uk</a></td>
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<td>April</td>
<td>Bowel Cancer Awareness Month</td>
<td>Bowel Cancer UK <a href="http://www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk">www.bowelcanceruk.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>National Walking Month</td>
<td>Living Streets <a href="http://www.livingstreets.org.uk">www.livingstreets.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mental Health Awareness Week</td>
<td>Mental Health Foundation <a href="http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk">www.mentalhealth.org.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Diabetes Week</td>
<td>Diabetes UK <a href="http://www.diabetes.org.uk">www.diabetes.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>National Childhood Obesity Week</td>
<td>MEND <a href="http://www.mendcentral.org/ncow">www.mendcentral.org/ncow</a></td>
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<td>August</td>
<td>World Breastfeeding Week</td>
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<td>September</td>
<td>Blood pressure awareness ‘Know your Numbers!’</td>
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<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Stoptober</td>
<td>NHS <a href="http://www.stoptober.nhs.uk">www.stoptober.nhs.uk</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>National Cholesterol Month</td>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Alcohol Awareness Week</td>
<td>Alcohol Concern <a href="http://www.alcoholconcern.org.uk">www.alcoholconcern.org.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>World AIDS Day</td>
<td>National AIDS Trust <a href="http://www.worldaidsday.org">www.worldaidsday.org</a></td>
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</table>
Your Feedback

Feedback from Stop Smoking workplace group:
“The group sessions were very interactive, real life, supportive and actually a bit of a competition with yourself and others. Without those weekly sessions I believe I would still be buying and smoking 20 to 25 cigarettes a day, which I had previously done for 27 years”
(Sean, Belron UK Limited)

Feedback from workplace health awareness displays:
“Our health fairs provide a great way of re-energising employees and boosting moral. By encouraging employees to engage in new interests and hobbies, we are helping to create a better work life balance”
(Sheila, Unilever)

Feedback from Workplace Health Champions training:
“Workplace Health Champions provide options – they know they are not health professionals - but they are able to keep the communications open and give employees access to local services thus helping them to stay healthy”
(Julie, E.ON)

Feedback from workplace health awareness displays:
“I think it gave people a lot to think about and will hopefully help to change a few bad habits. We’ve certainly had some really positive feedback and we will definitely look to do something similar in future”
(Claire, BPHA)

Feedback from Stop Smoking workplace group:
“The whole idea of stopping to smoke is as frightening as the consequences of not stopping. The group meetings were the tipping point towards the achievement of a lifelong wish. If I hadn’t been attending the meetings and having conversations with colleagues which shared the same issues I would surely still be a smoker today. I found it to be the most encouraging and helpful aid of the whole quitting process”
(Joel, Belron UK Limited)
Responsibility Deal

An opportunity to showcase your health and wellbeing initiatives in the workplace

As many of us lead unhealthy lifestyles, more people are being diagnosed with chronic conditions such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes and cancer. The Government’s Public Health Responsibility Deal, launched in March 2011, is free to join and invites businesses to work in partnership to tackle these challenges by actively supporting the workforce to lead healthier lives.

The Responsibility Deal currently covers four network areas:
• Alcohol
• Food
• Physical Activity
• Health at Work

Each network area has a wide range of pledges and businesses can become a partner by signing up to just one pledge, but the more you can commit to, the greater the impact and benefit. A wealth of evidence shows that a fitter, healthier workforce is more engaged, efficient and productive.

What can you do?
• Sign up to one or more of the Health at Work Pledges, including:
  - Healthier staff restaurants
  - Smoking cessation
  - Staff health checks
  - Mental health in the workplace

Support available:
• A range of services on offer that will form evidence for the pledges
• Backing from Bedford Borough Public Health team to develop health and wellbeing in your workplace

For more information about the Responsibility Deal or to find out which businesses have already signed up visit: www.responsibilitydeal.dh.gov.uk
Workplace Health Champions

Workplace Health Champions act as a point of contact and support within your organisation

Workplace Health Champions are your own employees who can champion health issues in your business. They will have a basic understanding of the principles of health and wellbeing and will be keen to promote healthy lifestyle behaviours to colleagues. Workplace Health Champions can have a positive effect on your business by:

- Working to actively support workforce health and wellbeing
- Initiating wellbeing events such as walking groups, sport tournaments or health promotion campaigns and activities
- Sharing information about health and wellbeing with colleagues
- Signposting colleagues to local health services if appropriate

What can you do?

- Allocate around 2 hours per month to support your Workplace Health Champion(s)
- Ensure your Workplace Health Champion(s) have line management support
- Host health promotion campaigns and activities throughout the year

Support available:

- Free 1 day training for your employees to gain a Royal Society of Public Health (RSPH) qualification in ‘Understanding Health Improvement’
- On-going membership of Workplace Health Champions network

Visit link for further information about the qualification:
www.rsph.org.uk/en/qualifications/qualifications/qualifications.cfm/Level-2-Award-in-Understanding-Health-Improvement

Email carol.wells@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk for more details of upcoming Workplace Health Champions training.
NHS Health Checks

This may be your chance to get a free ‘midlife MOT’

We can all be at some risk of developing heart disease, stroke, diabetes and kidney disease and an NHS Health Check can help you lower your risk of developing these common, but often preventable, diseases. NHS Health Checks are available to anyone between 40-74 years who have not been diagnosed with any of the above diseases or who have risk factors such as medication controlled blood pressure or cholesterol.

Those who are eligible will be invited by their GP once every five years to have this ‘midlife MOT’ and will be given support and advice to help reduce or manage any potential risks. But you don’t have to wait to be invited; an Outreach Team supports local GPs to deliver NHS Health Checks in the community and the team can be invited to deliver them in your workplace for your eligible staff.

What can you do?
• Arrange for staff to book pre-set appointments on agreed dates
• Make available a suitable room for the NHS Health Checks to take place
• Allow staff to attend the 30 minute appointment during working hours

Support available:
• Free NHS Health Check sessions delivered by the Outreach Team in your workplace
• Access to materials and resources for internal campaigns

Visit link for further information about NHS Health Checks: www.nhs.uk/nhshealthcheck or email natasha.farleigh@bedford.gov.uk if you would like to arrange a session in your workplace.
Stop Smoking Service

Three 15 minute smoking breaks cost 195 working hours a year, per employee

Tobacco smokers generally have poorer health and on average take 4.4 days more time off sick than non-smokers. An estimated 34 million days a year are lost in England and Wales through sickness absence resulting from smoking-related illness. The average total cost to businesses for smoking breaks and sick leave for an employee earning £20,000, is £2,500 a year!

You may also have employees who use smokeless or chewing tobacco (Paan, Gutkha, Zarda, Naswar, Tulsi etc.) which is linked to various health risks, such as oral cancer, gum disease and heart disease, similar to smoking.

What can you do?
• Promote Bedford Borough's Stop Smoking Service to your employees
• Support National Campaigns; Stoptober (October) and No Smoking Day (March)
• Enable 7 week quit groups to be run by the Stop Smoking Service for your staff within the workplace
• Introduce a smoke free workplace policy
• Encourage staff to self-refer to the Stop Smoking Service

Support available:
• Health awareness display stands providing information about the service and the dangers of smoking
• Workplace group sessions within the place of work for groups for 5-15 people which involves a 1 hour session each week over 7 weeks, where clients will receive a tailored quit plan and free specialist support and products (at a prescription charge unless exempt), plus continued telephone support
• 1:1 quit sessions held within the local community which offer a tailored 12 week quit plan, including free specialist support and products (at a prescription charge)
• Education and support for employers and their employees regarding illicit tobacco, including health implications and guidance around legislation and the law

Email stop.smoking@bedford.gov.uk if you would like to arrange support in your workplace, or visit link for more information: www.smokefreebedfordshire.co.uk
Alcohol Awareness

Around 200,000 people go to work in the UK with a hangover every day

Alcohol related absence accounts for up to 17 million working days lost annually. The consequences include poor employee performance, ranging from loss of productivity, difficulty concentrating, tiredness and mistakes. Alcohol is also a factor in up to one in four workplace accidents. Drinking at home is particularly likely to be underestimated because the quantities consumed are not measured and are likely to be larger than those dispensed in licensed premises.

What can you do?
• Offer all employees information about responsible drinking
• Develop a workplace alcohol policy
• Change the culture – promote “It’s okay NOT to drink”
• Offer appropriate support and assistance, if required, for employees who are affected by problematic drinking or alcohol issues

Support available:
• Signposting to Community Alcohol Liaison Service who provide a free and confidential service for adults over 18 years of age in Bedfordshire who are concerned about their drinking or who are experiencing problems with alcohol
• Health awareness display stands providing information about the Community Alcohol Liaison Service and the dangers of alcohol
• Education and training opportunities for staff
• Help and advice for families and friends of people with alcohol issues
• Advice, support and information on how to stop, or cut down, your alcohol consumption

Email emily.slater@canpartnership.org.uk or contact Community Alcohol Liaison Service (CALS) on 07974 140235 or 07858 083944 if you would like to arrange support in your workplace.
Bedford Borough Heartbeat Award

Enabling your staff to make the right choice at mealtimes

Eating a balanced diet both inside and outside of the work environment can help maintain weight and will contribute towards lowering the risks of ill health. Being overweight can be a trigger for many health problems including musculoskeletal disorders, respiratory complaints and heart disease, all of which can impact your employee’s functional ability. The Bedford Borough Heartbeat Award is a prestigious award available for catering teams who show commitment to provide healthier food choices, use favourable cooking methods and actively promote healthier options.

The award has a two-tier award rating; Red Heartbeat Award (good) and Gold Heartbeat Award (excellent).

The award requires caterers to:
• Have an existing Food Hygiene Rating of 3-5 and;
• Provide healthy food and drink options

What can you do?
• Offer healthier meals, snacks and drinks in the workplace canteen
• Provide vending machines that offer healthier alternatives
• Ensure relevant information leaflets are available to staff e.g. Change4Life
• Display Bedford Borough Heartbeat Award certificate in your workplace

Support available:
• Free nutritional assessment and certificate to display in your workplace
• Access to materials and resources for internal campaigns

Email natasha.farleigh@bedford.gov.uk for more details about the Bedford Borough Heartbeat Award.
Physical Activity

Employees can spend a large proportion of time physically inactive in the workplace, particularly in office environments.

Current recommendations are that adults should take part in moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes a day, five days a week. Many of the leading causes of disease and disability such as heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes are all associated with an inactive lifestyle. Over time, regular activity can also help to alleviate long-term depression which is one of the main causes of sickness absence. The British Heart Foundation states that employers who promote physical activity report the following effects on their workforce:

- A positive impact on stress, back pain and mental health
- Lower rates of absenteeism and quicker return to work after illness
- Fewer injuries in the workplace
- Greater staff retention
- Improvements in corporate image, communications, morale and working atmosphere

What can you do?

- Promote workplace physical activity challenges for your staff to take part in such as walking programmes, stair climb contests or sporting competitions
- Take part in the free to join online ‘Workplace Challenge’ programme being rolled out by team BEDS&LUTON
- Encourage active travel to/from work and sign up to the tax free cycle scheme
- Provide opportunities for active breaks, walking meetings and flexible working
- Offer corporate membership to local sports facilities

Support available:

- Access to materials and resources for internal campaigns
- Signposting to available activities that staff can take part in
- Free ‘Pat Do Something’ app for smartphone to find activities, clubs and societies in and around Bedfordshire

Visit link for further information about tax free cycle scheme: www.cyclescheme.co.uk
For more information about ‘Workplace Challenge’ programme please email: jo@teambedsandluton.co.uk or register at: www.workplacechallenge.org.uk
Stress and Mental Wellbeing

Our mental wellbeing is as important as our physical health

Stress can be a normal part of working life but excessive pressures or demands at work and at home can exceed a person’s capacity and capability to cope. High stress levels can lead to a range of symptoms from backache and stomach upsets to anxiety and depression. The costs of neglecting stress in your business can be high. The unexpected absence of just one staff member can affect productivity, and efforts to secure cover can be costly and time-consuming. Stress often has a cumulative effect; as one member of staff becomes ill it places added pressures and stress on those covering for them.

What can you do?
• Provide opportunities to encourage suggestions and ideas to improve the work environment
• Encourage your workforce to access support and training opportunities
• Encourage staff to support each other
• Incorporate wellbeing courses and awareness into employee development and training
• Offer an Employee Assistance Service

Support available
• Signposting to training opportunities
• Health awareness display stands providing information about mental wellbeing
• A wide range of projects, groups or clubs for staff to attend
• Leaflets, books and on-line self-help information

Visit link for further information: www.bedsandlutonmind.org.uk
or call Mind BLMK 0300 330 0648
Notes
Contact info

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