



Workplace Wellbeing Award North Yorkshire



Employer
Guide





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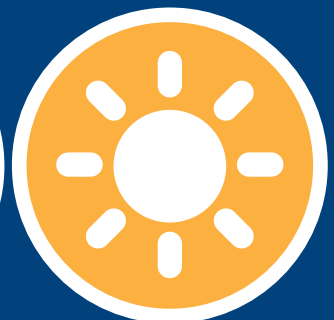
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Why is workplace health and wellbeing important?

From an employers' perspective there are many benefits to investing in workplace wellbeing, as healthy staff are more productive, take less time off sick and are less likely to need to retire early.

Nationally, there is a growing body of evidence to show that workplaces with health and wellbeing programmes have:

- improved the health of their staff, enhanced their productivity and have a more sustainable and motivated workforce
- reduced absenteeism and presenteeism
- reduced workplace health risks, helping to meet their duty of care
- improved employee job satisfaction and retention
- financial benefits which outweigh the costs
- staff who are better equipped to deal with change and manage stress
- enhanced their reputation and standing in the local community



Locally, North Yorkshire County Council is the region's largest employer with a workforce exceeding 15,000 people. It has benefitted from the introduction of a number of wellbeing initiatives including a healthy workplace group which promotes health campaigns and staff led activities. The Council has also signed up to be a Mindful Employer which demonstrates a commitment to recruit and retain staff who have mental health issues. As a result there has been an increase in employee engagement, a positive culture change around attitudes towards mental health and a reduction in staff absenteeism.

Nationally the workforce is ageing with a third of all workers aged 50 or over. As the State Pension Age has been raised there is a greater need to manage long-term conditions in the workplace, to ensure that the ageing workforce is a healthy one.

Some key facts about workplace health and wellbeing:

Costs of ill health: The 2017 Britain's healthiest workplace report, found that productive working days lost due to physical and mental health issues cost the UK economy approximately **£77.5 billion a year**.

In the UK **118.6 million working days** were lost to sickness or injury in 2020 (ONS), which equates to 3.6 days lost per worker. (NB. this figure is affected by furloughed workers). There are four main reasons for sickness absence in the UK; the 2020 figures are:

- Minor illnesses, **26.1 million** days lost
- Other conditions (includes covid-19) **23.5 million** days lost
- Musculoskeletal problems, **20.8 million** days lost
- Mental health conditions **15.9 million** days lost

While the overall rate of sickness absence has fallen since 2009, absence due to self-reported work-related stress, anxiety or depression has increased with the year 2019/20 significantly higher than the previous year. (HSE, 2020)

In Yorkshire and the Humber **2%** of working days are lost due to sickness, compared with a national sickness absence rate of **1.8%** for the UK as a whole. (ONS, 2020)



Workplace Wellbeing Award North Yorkshire

The Workplace Wellbeing Award North Yorkshire

Our aim is to make North Yorkshire a more productive and healthier place to work, by encouraging employers to commit to improving the health and wellbeing of their workforce, and by recognising those who have already made that commitment.

We want to help you create a culture of health and wellbeing that aligns with your organisation's overall goals, enhances your reputation, and makes your organisation a great place to work.

Improved employee health and wellbeing has been shown to bring benefits to organisations which include reduced sickness absence, reduced staff turnover, increased employee satisfaction, a higher company profile, and higher productivity¹.

The Workplace Wellbeing Award is for organisations who want to be recognised for their achievements in improving the health and wellbeing of their staff.

The Award scheme

The Award scheme supports and recognises your commitment to the health and wellbeing of the people who work for you. It's free to join, and is open to all public, private and voluntary sector organisations irrespective of size.

There are three levels to the award, Bronze, Silver and Gold, each containing different 'elements' which are the individual standards you need to meet to achieve an award. We want to reward you for the progress you make, so once you have achieved Bronze, we hope you will progress to Silver and then to Gold. If you choose to progress, we'll ask you to maintain the standards you have already achieved at Bronze and Silver. All levels of achievement are accessible to your organisation regardless of size, and no-one is ever precluded from accessing Silver or Gold – it's completely up to you how high you want to aim.

Even small changes can make a big difference, and you may already meet some of the elements and be well on your way to achieving your award.

¹ C Black, *Working for a Healthier Tomorrow* (2008)

PricewaterhouseCoopers, *Building the case for wellness* (2008)

The Award levels explained

Bronze

At Bronze level, we will ask you to put in place core ‘building blocks’ to help raise awareness of the importance of health and wellbeing at work. Through engagement with your staff, you’ll identify your most relevant issues, and begin to address them. You will be taking important steps towards a planned and integrated approach to improving the health and wellbeing of your workforce.

Silver

As well as maintaining the good work already achieved at ‘Bronze’, you will further develop your core building blocks, and encourage everyone to become engaged in improving their health and wellbeing across a range of topic areas.

Some examples of what each topic covers:

Get Active

- Encouraging and supporting staff to engage in physical activity
- Informing staff of the benefits of physical activity on their health and wellbeing

Healthier Eating Choices

- Making healthy food choices available in workplace based facilities
- Encouraging and supporting staff to manage their weight through a healthy diet

Alcohol/Smoking/Substance Misuse Support

- Making staff aware of the availability of local support services
- Ensuring organisational policies in relation to alcohol/tobacco/drugs are clearly communicated to staff

Improving Mental Health

- Raising awareness of mental health and reducing stigma
- Providing support to staff to manage and minimise work related stress

Back Care (musculoskeletal)

- Supporting staff to minimise the risk of musculoskeletal complaints
- Encouraging staff to take breaks and reduce the amount of time sitting in one position

Your organisation’s health and wellbeing priority which will have been identified through feedback from your workforce



Gold

Long term commitment and a proven track record of at least a year are the keys to achieving Gold. We will ask you to demonstrate your long term and integral commitment to promoting and improving the health and wellbeing of those who work for you. You will continue to build on your achievements at Bronze and Silver, and embed them into your organisation. You will put systems in place to monitor, review and identify ongoing opportunities to improve current practices across the strands.

You will play an active part in promoting the health and wellbeing of the wider, local community, and through peer group support to other interested organisations.

The accreditation process

Once your application has been submitted you will have up to 12 months per level to work towards accreditation and gather the evidence you need.

We will support and guide you to meet the requirements of the award, and will provide a list of the suggested documentation that you need to submit as evidence for the award level you are working towards. We will invite your wellbeing lead and champions to give a presentation to an independent accreditation panel, showcasing how you have met each element of the award; how you have worked to change corporate culture and the positive impact in outcomes for your organisation. The presentation will be followed by a discussion with the panel.

Your presentation can be creative and may include a variety of supporting evidence such as documents, staff survey results, posters and photographs.

The accreditation panel will be made up of public health team members and where possible either an industry specialist working in the same field as your organisation, or a representative from a business support organisation.

We will work with you to help you achieve your award, in a way that works best for you and is most appropriate for your organisation.

When you're ready, and you've submitted your evidence we will endeavour to respond to you within two weeks of receipt. We will assess it to confirm that it meets the requirements of the level you are working towards, and will arrange the date for you to give your presentation.

We will help with any outstanding questions, and any follow up action which may be needed. Once that's all done, confirmation of the award will be sent and you will be presented with your award.



Our accreditation approach:

Will be flexible

We want to ensure all good health and well-being practices can be recognised as part of the award. We know that small steps can make a big difference, and our approach will reflect this.

Will be adaptable to the size and type of your organisation

We understand that the evidence provided for meeting the requirements for the award may vary depending on the size of your organisation. We will ensure that no organisation is precluded from being able to achieve any stage of the award, regardless of its size or nature. We appreciate that what works for a large organisation probably won't work for a smaller one, so we will listen to you at all stages of the accreditation process about what is realistic and practical, whilst still working with you to ensure the evidence you provide meets the requirements of the award.

Will seek to establish if the difference is felt by your staff.

Whilst we consider and assess your evidence as you work towards your award, we know that even with the very best health and wellbeing practices and procedures in place, positive effects will only be achieved if your staff are aware of the measures you take, have confidence in them, and feel they have made a difference. We would therefore expect to see evidence of staff feedback during the accreditation process.

The accreditation process will be carried out in a fair, consistent and systematic manner.

We will do this by always considering the same principles, for every element of the award, and for every participating organisation. We believe this will ensure our approach is methodical, whilst always incorporating the flexibility needed to accommodate every type and size of organisation.

Your evidence

Some things to consider before submitting your evidence:

Credible – is your evidence reliable and genuine? Is it something you actually use in your organisation and can you demonstrate this?

Relevant – is your evidence relevant to the requirements of the element? Is it applicable and pertinent to what we are asking you to do?

Current – is your evidence up to date? Does it demonstrate current practices, or recent events and activities?

Sufficient – is your evidence enough? Can you back it up? If we speak to your workforce, will they know about it?



What your evidence might look like:

Documentary – examples of documented evidence include photos, posters, newsletters, notes from meetings, policy documents, quality manuals, hand written notes, business diary entries, action plans and so on. The range of evidence you provide will depend on the size and nature of your organisation. For example, a larger organisation may be able to show us how they promoted an event via their intranet; for a smaller organisation this could be a poster on a notice board, or an email circulated to all staff.

Workforce feedback – this could take the form of staff surveys, consultation groups, or simply notes from staff meetings or informal discussions.

Assessor observation – we will make observations as part of an informal site ‘walk round’. This will entail looking for physical evidence in the work environment, which may include things like notice boards, signage to indicate location of drinking water, clean meal preparation areas (if applicable), identification of any health and wellbeing information campaigns/activities, and so on.

We appreciate that your evidence may fall into more than one category – this is fine, we expect an amount of overlap and will take this into account.

What the accreditation process doesn't cover

Any legal obligations in respect of employment law and employee health and safety are not included in this award scheme.

The accreditation process therefore does not consider whether the organisation is legally compliant, and the assessor cannot be held responsible should there be any gaps in compliance.

Compliments, complaints and suggestions

All feedback we receive is welcome and useful as it helps us to improve our services.

Details of how to submit a compliment, complaint or suggestion are available on North Yorkshire County Council's website www.northyorks.gov.uk



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The Award elements



Bronze Level

Principle: Your organisation takes steps to develop and then maintain an all-inclusive culture of health and wellbeing which benefits both the workforce and the organisation.

- 1.1 The organisation's senior managers can demonstrate their commitment to workplace health and wellbeing.
- 1.2 Champion/s have been identified from your workforce, they are supported to promote and encourage health and wellbeing.
- 1.3 A Workplace Health Needs Assessment is carried out and is used to develop and implement an action plan.
- 1.4 Line managers can demonstrate how they support employees' health and wellbeing.
- 1.5 All employees have the opportunity to participate in consultations relating to workplace health.
- 1.6 At least two information campaigns are organised per year to raise awareness of health and wellbeing in your organisation. Priority is given to the topics identified by your workforce.
- 1.7 At least two activities/interventions are organised per year to improve employee health and wellbeing. Priority is given to the topics identified by your workforce.
- 1.8 Staff absence information is collected and includes the length and reasons for absence.
- 1.9 There is a system in place to ensure you are meeting the latest requirements of health, safety and wellbeing related legislation.
- 1.10 There is a system for resolving employee health and wellbeing issues. For example equality, health and safety matters, bullying, harassment and fairness.
- 1.11 The working environment is conducive to employee health and wellbeing, for example there is easy access to drinking water, toilets, washing and eating facilities which are clean, safe and well-maintained.



Silver Level

Principle: Your organisation maintains and builds on your achievements at Bronze level, and actively engages in a holistic approach to improve your workforce's health and wellbeing.

- 2.1 Your workforce has opportunities for flexible working where reasonably practicable.
- 2.2 Employees are encouraged to have a voice in the organisation and are made aware of what is possible, practical and affordable to ensure realistic expectations.
- 2.3 Sickness absence data and feedback from staff is analysed and used to enhance the action plan developed at Bronze level.
- 2.4 **One** action for each of the following topic areas is implemented which is evaluated to ensure it makes a positive change:
 - Get Active
 - Healthier Eating Choices
 - Improving Mental Health
 - Alcohol/Smoking/Substance Misuse Support
 - Back Care (musculoskeletal)

See Appendix 1 for examples of how to meet this element.

- 2.5 Your Business Health and Wellbeing priority, identified from your Workplace Health Needs Assessment, and/or through workforce consultations and statistics relevant to the business.

Identify any key issues particularly relevant to your staff, for example if they are predominantly an older workforce, female, male, migrant workers, or shift workers.

One action covering your identified priority is implemented.



Gold Level

Principle: Your organisation has a sustainable and embedded approach to health and wellbeing which reviews and identifies ongoing opportunities to improve current practices. It is a positive 'role model' for other organisations looking to improve the health and wellbeing of their workforce.

- 3.1 The effectiveness of interventions are assessed and innovative approaches used to overcome barriers to workforce participation.
- 3.2 The organisation continues to encourage employees to participate in the health and wellbeing activities that are promoted throughout the year and which cover the range of topic areas outlined at Silver.
- 3.3 There is a system in place to proactively support employees to return to work following recurring short or long-term absence.
- 3.4 All employees are encouraged to have regular health checks.
- 3.5 The organisation can demonstrate that on at least one occasion it has shared good practice with, or mentored other businesses and/or has promoted health topics in the wider community.
- 3.6 There is an action plan in place for the long-term sustainability and maintenance of health and wellbeing in the workplace.
- 3.7 All areas including grounds are smoke free, this should be in place for at least a year with ongoing monitoring and reviews.



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Wellbeing Champions

The Wellbeing Champions are an essential part of your organisation's journey to achieve success in the award process. They not only promote health and wellbeing in the workplace but are the link throughout the process, meeting with the Workplace Wellbeing Advisor, gathering the evidence and participating in the accreditation process.

Management support is vital to ensure the Champion has access to the evidence required and guidance to implement the business priorities that have been identified.

Large organisations, or those with multiple sites will need a number of Champions. Smaller organisations may only need one person to take on the role, although it may be beneficial to have at least two so they can support each other.

Who are the Wellbeing Champions?

Champions are members of staff who have volunteered, or have been chosen, to promote the organisation's health and wellbeing initiatives to their colleagues.

Champions will generally be people who are enthusiastic and have a desire to improve the working environment through supporting and encouraging healthy lifestyles and wellbeing. They should be approachable, willing to help and whilst they are likely to be passionate about health and wellbeing they are not expected to be 'experts'.

Champions will know their colleagues and work areas so are well placed to know what will work best in that environment and what resources may be the most effective.



The Wellbeing Champion's role

The main purpose of the role is to support organisations to improve the health and wellbeing of their employees through the achievement of the Workplace Wellbeing Award.

The Champion is expected to:

- work with management, Human Resources and colleagues to develop health and wellbeing initiatives
- collect the evidence for the award and liaise with the Workplace Wellbeing Assessor during the accreditation process
- promote national health and wellbeing initiatives for example the One You campaign by putting up posters and distributing information
- initiate and develop health campaigns utilising the skills, interests and passions of colleagues
- raise awareness of health and wellbeing activities throughout the organisation, promoting healthy lifestyles and positive mental health
- signpost to local services for advice and support to improve lifestyle choices
- promote healthy activities within the organisation for example lunchtime walking or running groups, steps challenges
- promote wellbeing activities for example book club, arts and crafts
- be the point of contact for colleagues who want to know more about health and wellbeing, and collect their feedback



Training and support

The Workplace Wellbeing Advisor will provide support to the Champion/s, both on an individual level and through support events with champions from other local organisations.

We will offer an initial ½ day support event to your champion/s which will cover a basic understanding of health and wellbeing, the influences on attitudes to health, organising health initiatives, the Award process and accreditation, and where to go for health and wellbeing resources.

Time commitment

This will depend on the number of Champions you have and the size and complexity of your organisation.

This work is in addition to an employee's current role so agreement will need to be reached with their line manager to allow them sufficient time to undertake the duties required, for example to:

- Attend workplace health meetings
- Attend specific training or support events
- Organise and run health campaigns and events
- Gather evidence
- Participate in the accreditation process

Champions may also choose to volunteer more of their time outside work to the activities.

Resources

There is no charge to go through the award process, and support is provided by the Workplace Wellbeing Advisor free of charge.

There may be some costs associated with the Wellbeing Champions, for example:

- time commitment
- travelling expenses to events/training
- health promotion activities, although many resources are available free through the NHS/OHID resources centre
- training, although some courses may be free

The benefits of having Champion(s) in the workplace

The Champion is expected to:

- encourage staff engagement
- learn new skills, which they can cascade to others making them more valuable to your organisation
- be in contact with Champions from other organisations to share good practice and promote your organisation

Guide to getting started

Fundamental to the Award is leadership commitment to prioritise the health and wellbeing of your workforce, and to develop a culture to support it. To start the process visit www.northyorks.gov.uk/workplacehealth and complete the application form which needs to be signed by either the owner of your business or a senior manager who has responsibility for making workforce wellbeing a core priority.

Once we receive your application we will arrange a meeting where we will discuss amongst other things how to identify your Workplace Wellbeing champion/s and the support we can provide to them.

We will ask you to complete the baseline information form for your organisation; this is a summary of your workforce data measured at a specific point in time. This includes data such as sickness rates and staff turnover. We appreciate some information may not be relevant or useful to your organisation so we will work with you to find out what you would like to get out of the award, to help develop your own individual benchmark and provide a more personal element to how you measure your success.

We will also discuss relevant questions for your Health Needs Assessment (HNA). This HNA can be carried out electronically or in a paper format, whichever suits your workforce. Once the results are collated we will work with you to analyse the results and help you to develop an action plan based on the findings and any other relevant information. We can help you with the development of your action plan for example by providing templates and offering suggestions.





APPENDIX 1

Examples of some of the types of activities and interventions that can be put in place:

Get Active

- The organisation promotes the benefits of physical activity on health and wellbeing through educational materials and resources.
- Information is provided on local sports and leisure facilities, classes and clubs.
- The organisation takes steps to encourage and facilitate walking and cycling to work and between meetings (active travel sessions).
- Facilities are available for cyclists i.e. safe storage racks for bicycles are provided and where possible, there are showering and/or changing facilities.



Healthier Eating Choices

- Healthier eating choices are available through on-site catering facilities or vending machines. Where possible healthier food/drink items are priced more cheaply than less healthy options.
- A calendar of events is in place which promotes healthy eating options and provides information on healthy eating, weight control and the links between diet and common health risks e.g. type 2 diabetes and heart disease.
- Support is provided to employees to help them follow a weight management programme.



Alcohol/Smoking/Substance Misuse Support

- Employees are made aware of any policies or legal requirements in relation to the working environment and drugs/alcohol/tobacco.
- A smoking cessation policy is developed in collaboration with staff and their representatives.
- Support is available to staff or they are made aware of local support services to help them address any alcohol/smoking/substance misuse concerns.
- Through a programme of information events, employees are aware of the effects of alcohol, tobacco and substance misuse on both physical and mental health.



Improving Mental Health

- The role of line managers is strengthened and promotes the mental health of employees. Your workforce should feel confident to report ill health knowing they will be treated fairly and empathically and supported to be in work wherever reasonable.
- The organisation signs up to the 'Mindful Employer Charter'
- Systems are in place to identify, address and help prevent, work related stress through the use of risk assessments.
- Opportunities are provided for staff to take part in activities aimed at boosting morale and mental wellbeing e.g. volunteering opportunities. Where practicable some time off during working hours is allowed to facilitate this.
- Support is available to staff to enhance their mental wellbeing for example access to counselling services through an in-house or employee assistance programme, mindfulness and/or personal resilience training.



Back Care (musculoskeletal)

- A reporting mechanism is in place for musculoskeletal problems which analyses causes and identifies the issues which need action.
- Potential back care issues are identified; action is taken to prevent the issue/s from occurring.
- Moving and handling training is delivered to all employees.
- A variety of desk types (standing/sitting) or workspaces are available.
- A fast track physiotherapy referral system or Occupational Health service is in place to enable employees to receive advice and support for musculoskeletal issues.





To find out more about improving the health and wellbeing of your workplace:

E: nyworkplacehealth@northyorks.gov.uk

T: 01609 780780

W: www.northyorks.gov.uk/workplacehealth

Contact us

W: www.northyorks.gov.uk E: customer.services@northyorks.gov.uk

T: 01609 780 780 (Monday to Friday 8.00am - 5.30pm closed weekends and bank holidays)

North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 8AD

You can request this information in another language or format at

www.northyorks.gov.uk/accessibility