



The Workplace Health Team

18 month review 2022/23



BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Central Bedfordshire Council



Milton Keynes City Council

Table of Contents

2022 - 2023



Why is workplace health important? 2

What are the aims and objectives of the Public Health Workplace Health Team? 3

What have we achieved? 4

- 1. The Health Workplace Standards
- 2. The Workplace Health and Wellbeing Service Offer
- 3. Communications and Marketing

What have we learned? 18

Where are we going? 19

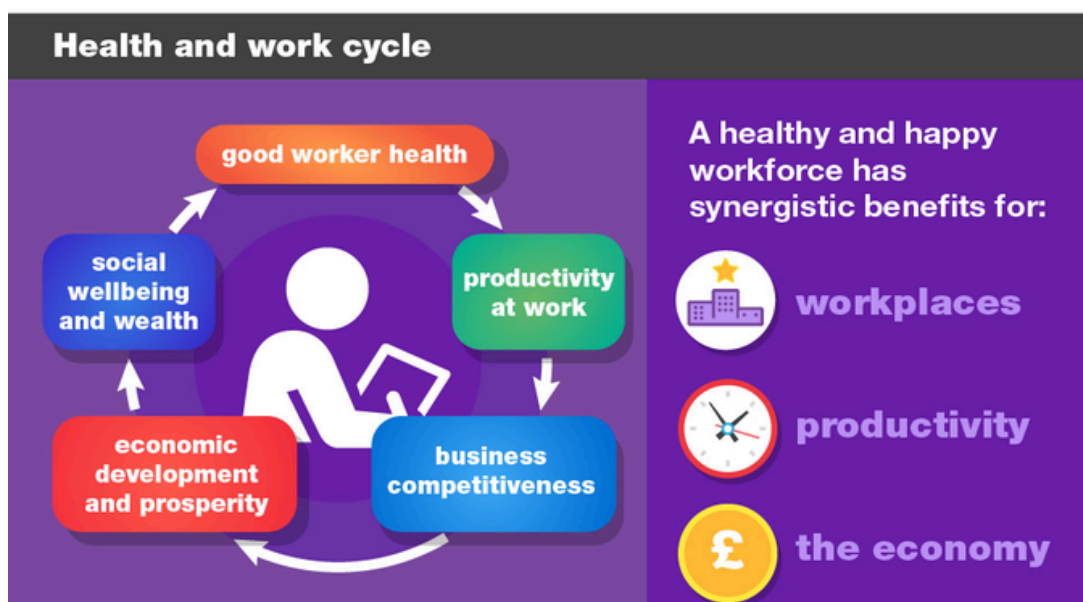


Why is workplace health important?

Employment is a building block of health



Being in good work is beneficial to the health of individuals and their families. Happy healthy employees also benefit workplaces and the wider economy.



Source: Health matters: health and work - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

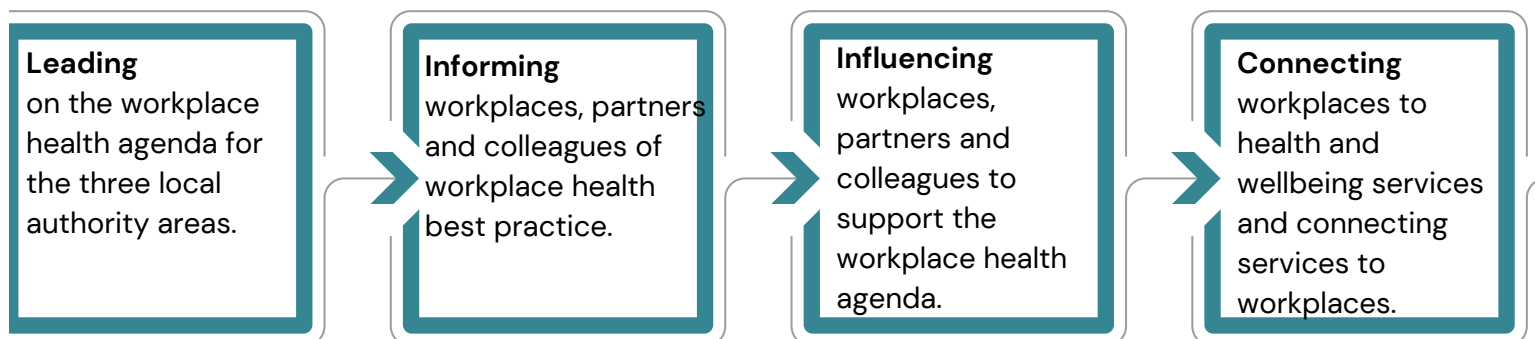
What are the aims and objectives of the Public Health Workplace Health Team?

The Workplace Health Team are part of the Public Health shared service across Milton Keynes, Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire.

We aim

To improve the health, wellbeing and employability of the working age population by working with local workplaces, colleagues and partner agencies to create sustainable, healthy, supportive working environments and relationships that maximise opportunities to promote health and wellbeing and inclusive employment.

We do this by



What have we achieved?

This report outlines the achievements and impacts of the Healthy Workplace Team between June 2022 and December 2023

1. The Healthy Workplace Standards



The Healthy Workplace Standards (HWS) provide a framework for all local workplaces to improve the health and wellbeing of their workforce.

Covering eight topic areas, the Standards offer certificates and awards to workplaces which meet the standards at bronze, silver or gold levels.



The Healthy Workplace Standards scheme was launched in June 2022.

Eighteen months on



50 registered workplaces

- 70% workplaces registered are small to medium
- 23% from the healthcare sector (Medical Centres, Ambulance services)
- 22% from the routine and manual sector (manufacturing, warehousing, transport, wholesale)
- 20% from the education sector (schools, further education colleges)
- 11% from the public administration sector (local authorities, fire services)
- 7% from the voluntary sector

Over 65 standards have been submitted for assessment



36 certifications have been achieved.

- 20% Leadership Standard
- 19% Absence Management Standard
- 17% Mental Health and Wellbeing Standard
- 11% Health and Safety Standard
- 11% Smoking and Tobacco Standard
- 8% Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Standard
- 8% Inclusive Employment Standard
- 6% Drug and Alcohol Standard

15 workplaces have achieved one or more certificates

- Clearview Intelligence
- Milton Keynes City Council
- Ceetak
- Mk Snap
- Living It Up
- Clophill St Mary's School
- Carers in Bedfordshire
- Aiimi
- Central Bedfordshire Council
- Cranswick Convenience Foods
- HealthWatch Milton Keynes
- HealthWatch Central Bedfordshire
- South Central Ambulance Service
- Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue
- Aira Digital

12,000 employees have been reached across a range of workplace sizes and sectors

22 experts have been trained as Lead Assessors to support the healthy workplace assessment process.



Testimonials



“

We have found the introduction of the Healthy Workplace Standards in Milton Keynes a breath of fresh air. It is a place where our organisation can showcase the work we are doing to improve our staff's health and wellbeing, as well as provide us with the support and opportunity to continuously improve our internal health, wellbeing and safety practices - Clearview Intelligence

”

“

I am absolutely blown away by how easy the whole process is (I thought I had misunderstood something from reading on the website but you confirmed it is exactly like that). I am impressed that I am fully in control of the time it takes to achieve any of the standards and that it is free. It feels like one of those things where you are thinking "So what's the catch?" or "It's too good to be true" - Aira

”



Aimi
Mental health and wellbeing bronze



Carers in Bedfordshire
Absence management health and safety and healthy eating and physical activity bronze



Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire
Mental health and wellbeing bronze



Central
Smoking, and absence management bronze



Central Bedfordshire Council
Absence management, smoking, healthy eating and physical activity, and mental health and wellbeing bronze.

“

Being introduced to the Health Workplace Awards was incredible, it not only gave us a space to showcase what we do for our team but to also learn about what more we could be doing for them. The support I have received in starting this journey has been amazing, to have access to such knowledge and expertise and enjoy the process along the way has been so refreshing - Aiimi







”

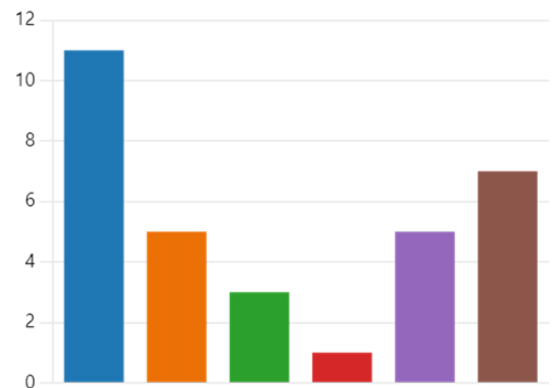


The impact of the Healthy Workplace Standards

A survey of 40 registered workplaces* in October 2023 showed that at an early stage in the process, there were improvements in workplace health policies, behaviours and in staff health and wellbeing.

What impact has the Healthy Workplace Standards process had on your workplace?

-  Improvement and/or development of policies
-  Improvement and/or changes in behaviors or practice
-  Improvement and/or changes to workplace ethos or culture
-  Improvements in absence rates and/or attrition
-  Improvements in the health and wellbeing of your workforce
-  Other



*20 respondents including workplaces working towards the standards and workplaces which had achieved one or more of the Standards at Bronze level.

In January 2024, the Workplace Health Team conducted semi structured interviews with our 18 awarded workplaces to identify the impacts of working with the Healthy Workplace Standards. Although the majority of these workplaces had only achieved Bronze level (working towards best practice), we found clear indicators of the positive impact the HWS have had on the health and wellbeing of employees in those workplaces.



We have identified 3 areas in which our workplaces have made significant improvements impacting on the health and wellbeing of their workforce

i) Culture



A health and wellbeing culture is a working environment in which employee health and wellbeing are valued, supported, and promoted through programs and policies.

3 of our local workplaces have developed new suicide prevention policies. Workplaces play an important role in suicide prevention. Adopting a strategy which reduces stigma, improves awareness and ensures mental health and wellbeing support, can reduce the risk of suicide and its devastating impact on the workforce.

3 local workplaces have improved or developed new domestic abuse policies, improving the safety and support for victims and survivors and raising organisational awareness.

4 local workplaces have enhanced their absence management policies and procedures, enabling better support for individuals and informing organisational health and wellbeing priorities.

6 local workplaces introduced a staff health and wellbeing survey, either for the first time or by adding health and wellbeing questions into their existing staff satisfaction surveys. A health needs assessment helps employers to understand where to organise investment in staff health and well-being (PHE, 2017).

3 of our awarded workplaces have developed or strengthened their drug and alcohol policies to ensure individuals are supported by the workplace, in partnership with local services.

Workplace Feedback

“

We are developing a Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the first time and senior management have approved a revision of manager training, and information at induction. This incorporates additional health and wellbeing information, to improve awareness across the organisation. (Central Bedfordshire Council)

”



“

We conducted a staff health and wellbeing survey which enabled Trustees and staff to identify priorities for the workplace, which led to major improvements across the organisation, including the appointment of additional staff. Managers were also more aware of staff needs and were able to open up conversations and offer support. (Living It Up)

”

“

We have learnt so much about Domestic Abuse and the do's and don'ts, what we should do in the event if something was to happen. We've learned more about Mental Health, there's so many elements. Also Suicide Awareness. (Cranswick)

”



Case studies

Ceetak improved their absence management policy to include other forms of absence and to improve communication lines to support employees to return/remain in work



The Money and Pensions Service used the Healthy Workplace Standards as a framework to structure their new staff health and wellbeing policy



One local workplace reported that an employee's alcohol abuse issue was having an impact on their attendance at work, and was supported by the workplace to overcome their problem. They are now over 8 months alcohol free and have returned to work as a productive member of the team



ii) Improvements in workplace communication and connectedness

The HWS encourage workplaces to create an environment where employees feel able to talk openly. This prevents issues getting worse and improves absence rates and employee morale.

- 2 local workplaces reported that working towards the Healthy Workplace Standards improved interconnections, relationships and communication between their departments.
- 4 workplaces told us they had reduced the stigma around neurodiversity, menopause and suicide by encouraging open conversations in their workplaces.
- 3 workplaces reported that improvements in open communication enabled employees to receive support with menopause symptoms and one employee was supported through a mental health crisis.

iii) Improvements in health and wellbeing information and support for employees

While employers have a responsibility to provide a safe and hazard-free workplace, they also have opportunities to promote individual health and a healthy work environment. The HWS help workplaces to explore these opportunities.

- 6 workplaces improved the availability of trained support and information for employees on stopping smoking.
- 4 workplaces improved healthy eating information within their workplaces, by including it in wellbeing calendars, on information boards and by influencing workplace catering facilities.
- 2 workplaces improved their system of 1-1s enabling employees the opportunity to share challenges and access support.
- 10 workplaces introduced or improved the provision of health and wellbeing training courses, including menopause, suicide prevention, mental health, domestic abuse, and neurodiversity.

Case studies



Central Bedfordshire council introduced a new Health and Wellbeing staff newsletter in 2023

One local workplace hosted an inhouse weight loss group delivered by MoreLife, supporting employees to achieve a healthy weight.

One of our large manufacturers translated their mental health policy into different languages to ensure all staff were able to access the support available to them (Cranwick).



Clearview Intelligence is the first local workplace to have achieved Healthy Workplace Status at Silver level, having achieved certification in all eight standards at Bronze and Silver levels. As a result, the organisation has seen an increase in productivity, and a lower attrition rate than in previous years.

One workplace reported that discussions within the team about the importance of physical activity, encouraged one member of staff to start cycling to work. He has done so every day since.

2. The Workplace Health and Wellbeing Service Offer

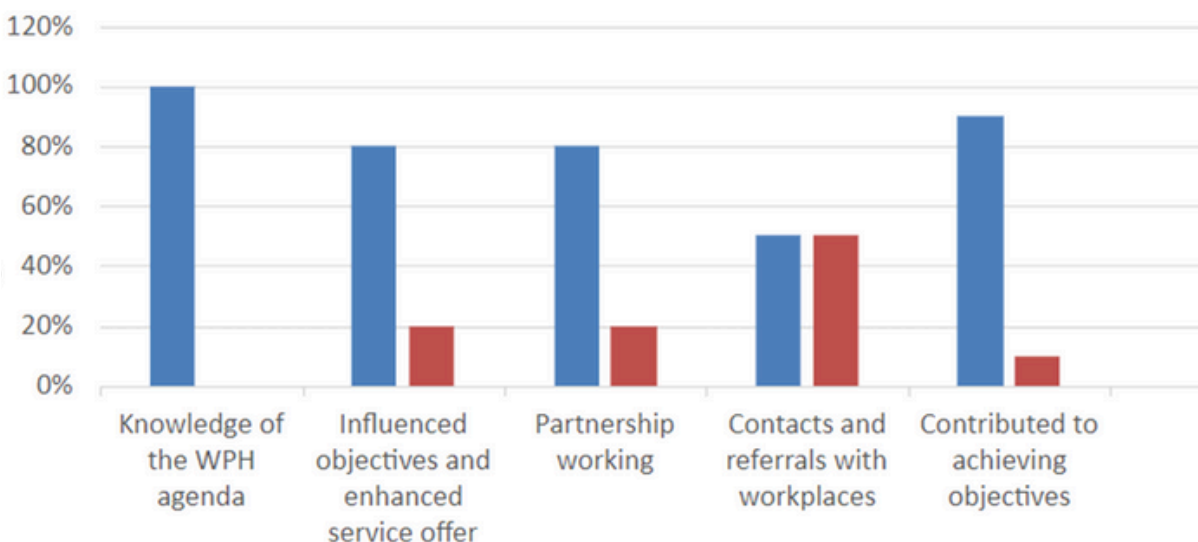


The Workplace Health and Wellbeing Service offer provides up to date information on the range of free health and wellbeing services available to local workplaces. The offer includes over 30 support services including:

- Healthy weight programmes and training
- Smoke free workplaces, programmes and training
- Mental health and wellbeing support and training
 - Domestic abuse training
 - Active travel advice and support
- Inclusive employment support, advice and training
 - Addiction and recovery services

In 2023, 44 partner health and wellbeing services were asked 5 questions on the impact of working with the Healthy Workplace Team. 100% reported an increase in their knowledge and understanding of the workplace health agenda. 80% told us it had influenced their own service objectives and improved partnership working.

Feedback from partner organisations October 2023



*The percentage feedback in both columns relates to 100% Blue = YES Red = NO



WELLBEING
OF WOMEN



Menopause Xplored

Learn how to support your employees going through menopause
Immersive film with expert advice and guidance

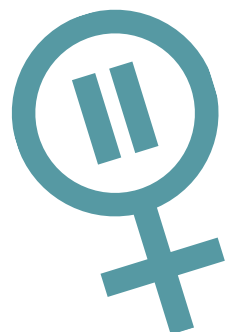
- In 2023, the Workplace Health team, in partnership with Wellbeing of Women, were successful in securing Government funding to offer 10 free virtual reality menopause awareness workshops a year for small and medium sized businesses across Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes.
- The 62 people who attended the workshops (December 2023) gave a rolling average score of 4.5 out of 5 when asked "To what extent they had improved their knowledge and awareness of menopause" and "To what extent do you now feel comfortable to discuss the menopause with colleagues at work?"



“

"I found the event really informative. My knowledge of menopause increased hugely, particularly on the impact of menopause symptoms on women in the workplace, the potential impact of menopause symptoms on a woman's mental health, and the range of symptoms a woman may experience." This has helped Fizz Heseltine (CEO) to improve the policies and support offered to staff and volunteers at Living it Up

”





QUIT SMOKING AND BREATHE

For support, search **Stoptober**

The Workplace Health Team have worked closely with the Stop Smoking Service over the last 9 months to provide information, and support to help employees to quit. We have also offered level 2 stop smoking training to embed workplace advisors within organisations.

- 11 people have been trained as in house workplace stop smoking advisors
- 19 workplace wellbeing events have been attended
- 24 direct referrals have been received into the stop smoking service
- 12 employees have achieved a four week quit



“

“Jane, our local stop smoking adviser provided Level 2 stop smoking training to myself which enhanced my understanding of the hazards of smoking and taught me strategies to assist those seeking to quit. I believe it’s beneficial for companies to have an in-house expert who can provide advice and guide employees who have the desire to quit smoking” Tia at Clearview Intelligence

”



3. Communications and Marketing

Events

In 2022 and 2023, the Workplace Health team attended over 60 business network and other events to improve awareness of the workplace health offer. The team ran a twice yearly breakfast workplace health, and healthy workplace award ceremony with workshops on a range of workplace health topics.



“

Great event this morning and thanks for inviting me. It's people like you who are making change happen. **Batton of Hope**

”

“

The feedback from the team after (the event) and the value (the team) took for us as an organisation but also for when we are out speaking to businesses was great. **Talking Therapies service**

”

“

I attended the Milton Keynes Breakfast event earlier in 2023. It was there that I was able to make the acquaintance of Maximus. I then invited them to a Three Countywide Disability Employment Adviser Meeting with a number of subsequent referrals into the Maximus service. **The Department of Work and Pensions Disability Confident Lead**

”

“

Thank you so much for your time this afternoon. Your presentation was very informative and the comments from attendees at the end of the meeting were very positive! **Home Instead**

”

“

We have attended 2 workplace health breakfast events and (from the information we collected) we have been able to build folders that we now have available to staff so they can get help if they are experiencing any issues. **Ceetak**

”

Workplace Health Monthly Bulletin



The monthly Workplace Health Bulletin was introduced in January 2023 to deliver up to date information to local workplaces.

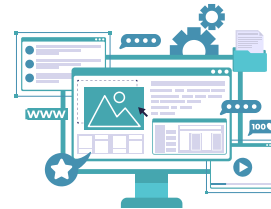
The bulletin is shared across 90 different networks and partner organisations, directly to 65 workplaces and to over 50 interested individuals.

The bulletins are published on our workplace health webpages and cover a range of topics, including suicide prevention, financial wellbeing, women's health, and mental health and wellbeing.

The workplace health bulletin webpage achieved 400 hits in quarter 3 2023, an average of 100 web views for every monthly bulletin published.



Workplace Health webpages



The team have developed a set of Healthy Workplaces webpages, with a range of workplace health resources and services, free training opportunities, and information about the Healthy Workplace offer.

Hits on our webpages have trebled over the last 2 quarters (quarters 2 and 3 2023/4).

LinkedIn



The team have increased its LinkedIn presence over the last 18 months with an overall reach of 863 connections. LinkedIn posts promote the biannual workplace health events, share advice and information on workplace health, and celebrate workplace successes. The most popular post in 2023 achieved 750 impressions for the release of the new Workplace Health and Wellbeing Service Offer brochure.

What have we learned?

Feedback from workplaces has helped us to understand that local workplaces are keen to support their workforce, but often do not know where to start. They welcome the structure and flexibility of the Healthy Workplace Standards scheme.

Since its launch in June 2022, the team have made significant changes to the Healthy Workplace Standards website to improve the user interface, including the addition of a workplace dashboard, enabling them to track their progress against the eight standards.

Our work with events and networks has given us insight into what works best in terms of engagement. Face to face contact with workplaces has been the most effective form of communication, however it is imperative that all forms of communication are utilised as workplaces tell us they have connected with our services through a variety of routes.

The Healthy Workplace Standards scheme to date has not targeted specific sizes, sectors or locations of workplace. As a result, we have learned that a wide range of workplaces have engaged with and have benefitted from the scheme.

Feedback from workplaces and provider services has confirmed that our brochure of health and wellbeing services for workplaces has enabled them to connect, facilitating access to support for employees inside and outside the workplace.



Where are we going in the next 18 months?



Over the next 18 months the Workplace Health Team will be embarking on a targeted project to support those employees most in need. Working with our Public Health Evidence and Intelligence Team, we have identified a list of targeted workplaces with the aim of engaging a higher percentage of workplaces from the routine and manual sectors.



We will continue to refresh the Healthy Workplace Standards, to keep them up to date and to reflect feedback from workplaces and Lead Assessor experts. We will also continue to make improvements to the Healthy Workplace Standards process, for example by enabling workplaces to self-assess their own standards for renewal of certificates after 2 years.



We will explore modifications to the Healthy Workplace Standards process, to enable the maximum number of workplaces to benefit from the scheme within existing resources, whilst maintaining the quality of the service. Since December 2023, the team have received 10 new workplace registrations. (March 6th 2024). This is three times the monthly average registering throughout 2022 and 2023. The Healthy Workplace Team will continue to monitor numbers of newly registered workplaces to ensure capacity is not exceeded.



The Healthy Workplace Team will continue to enhance our workplace health and wellbeing service offer by working collaboratively with provider services and charitable organisations to establish additional free support across a range of health and wellbeing areas to support our local workforce.

Where can I find out more?

Contact the Public Health Workplace Team
Milton Keynes City Council, 1 Saxon Gate East,
Milton Keynes MK9 3EJ

Email: public.health@milton-keynes.gov.uk



Public Health:
Working together to improve the health
and wellbeing of our communities

