

Effective Health Promotion Programmes

The principles which should underpin a successful health promotion intervention or programme, in terms of health benefits to employees, are:

1. A co-ordinated, planned and comprehensive approach – offering a range of interventions which consider the whole person and the interplay between work and life outside work. Participation in any activities should be voluntary and enable people to choose what they take up.
2. High levels of both management and employee involvement in planning, implementing and evaluating a health at work programme are crucial for its success. Programmes which are seen to be imposed by management do not work well.
3. Activities should be directly related to the expressed and measured needs of the workforce, and responsive to their changing needs. Interventions targeted at the needs of specific groups at risk of particular health hazards can be particularly effective. (*see Needs Assessment*).
4. Existing channels of consultation, negotiation and discussion – such as structures involving trade unions or staff representatives (negotiating committees, works councils, health and safety committees) – should be used for initial discussion and to plan how to respond to the priorities the workforce have in relation to health promotion initiatives. Smaller working groups can discuss the details of any plans.
5. The support of those responsible for and concerned with the day-to-day enforcement or implementation of a policy or programme is vital to its success. So there must be adequate liaison, discussion and training for managers and supervisors and for trade union and staff representatives.
6. There may need to be organisational changes and improvements to the workplace environment. Obvious health and safety problems should be tackled before trying to introduce more general health at work programmes in relation to lifestyle issues. Otherwise employees may just feel that managers are interfering in their private lives, rather than really being concerned about their whole health at work.
7. The effects of health campaigns reduce over time, so they need to be reviewed and evaluated to see what should be sustained or relaunched and what should be dropped.
8. Employees must be assured that there is strict confidentiality of any medical and health records which are kept as part of a health at work programme. Any monitoring should use anonymised data and ensure that individuals cannot be identified.

How We Can Help

We can help you to plan your health promotion programmes and activities.

We can provide you with examples of what has been done in other workplaces.

We can put you in touch with other agencies and organisations which can provide services.