Physical Activity at Work policy: SAMPLE POLICY

A physical activity at work policy for: Workplace A

Effective from: 00/00/00

Next review date: 00/00/00

Notes

This section of the policy could include information on some of the following topics:

- Why and how physical activity affects work performance
- Quality-of-life benefits
- How the organisation can create an environment that supports and encourages physically active behaviour
- How physical activity links to other health behaviours such as mental wellbeing and healthy eating

The need for a health at work policy

Physical activity

Physical activity is essential for good health and contributes to positive well-being. Many of the leading causes of disease and disability in our society – such as coronary heart disease, strokes, obesity, type 2 diabetes, hypertension (high blood pressure), colorectal cancer, stress, anxiety, osteoarthritis, osteoporosis and low back pain – are associated with physical inactivity.

For general health benefit, adults should achieve a total of at least 150 minutes a week of at least moderate intensity physical activity. Everyboutsofactivityof10minutesormorecountsandweshouldtrytobeactiveoneverydayoftheweekbuildinguptoour150minutes.

Any activity during leisure, working or travel counts. However, only 3 out of 10 people in England participate in the minimum levels of activity necessary to promote health.

The workplace is an important setting in which people can increase their levels of activity to benefit their health and protect against illness, whilst also improving productivity and reducing sickness absence. It helps employees to manage stress, back pain, weight and medical conditions.

Employees engaged in physical activity initiatives have reported greater enjoyment of their work, improved concentration and mental alertness and improved cooperation and rapport with colleagues.

Example aims are given on the right.

Aim of the policy

To promote and encourage employee participation in regular moderate intensity physical activity.

- To increase the opportunities for physical activity around the working day
- To create a workplace environment that encourages employees to incorporate physical activity into their daily routine.

The objectives should be SMART (Specific, Measurable,

Objectives

To raise awareness of the benefits of physical activity.

Policy actions:
Achievable, Realistic and Time-specific). See the examples opposite. Each objective should be followed by what the organisation will do – ‘policy actions’ – to meet the objectives.

**To support employees in becoming more active in a variety of ways.**

**Policy actions:**
- Encourage employees to make active choices through the use of promotional and motivational resources, e.g. encouraging walking or cycling all or part of the way to work, or to use the stairs instead of the lift.
- Map out walking trails or routes within the grounds or local area and publicise them with times and distances.
- Provide information on local sports and leisure facilities, classes and clubs.
- Establish a lunchtime activity group e.g. walking.
- Provide taster sessions of activities onsite which encourage employees to try new activities.
- Provide corporate memberships at local authority facilities.

**To remove barriers and enable staff to be active in and around work.**

**Policy actions:**
- Engage senior management in the development and delivery of the physical activity objectives.
- Provide flexible working hours to allow for physical activity before, during and after work.
- Provide incentives to staff who walk or cycle to meetings, e.g. paying activity mileage.
- Provide safe storage racks for bicycles.
- Provide showering and/or changing facilities.

**Explain how this policy will be communicated throughout the organisation.**

**Communication**
All employees will be made aware of the health at work policy, including the physical activity policy and the facilities available. The physical activity policy will be included in the employee handbook and employee information or induction packs.

A specific focus group will be established to take forward the actions from this policy. Regular updates will be provided to all employees via their line management.

**Regular review and monitoring are vital to assess the effectiveness of a physical activity policy. How will you track progress? Staff attitude surveys can be used to gauge morale among existing staff, and exit interviews can help identify reasons for staff turnover.**

**Review and monitoring**
Employees participating in any of the health at work activities will be regularly asked for feedback.

Physical activity will be included in a ‘health at work audit’, which will be undertaken and reviewed annually.

A Physical activity action plan will be maintained by the workplace health champion.

The policy, status updates and evaluation reports will be circulated to management and be available on request and reviewed and evaluated annually to ensure the policy meets its aims and objectives and remains relevant.

**Further Reading**
http://www.nhs.uk/Change4Life/Pages/be-more-active.aspx

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Adapted from the British Heart Foundation
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