

Executive Summary

To support NHS Fife in the planning of future support requirements, the Health Promotion team commissioned research aimed at exploring how local organisations currently deal with health, safety and wellbeing issues amongst their employees.

The research was conducted across two distinct stages, as follows:

- Qualitative research with a sample of 7 employers to assess understanding of HWL themes, current practice and drivers for change
- Quantitative research with a sample of 303 organisations in Fife to provide a baseline of current priorities, current practice and future support needs.

Summary of findings

The feedback from the qualitative discussions and from the wider quantitative survey suggest that organisations which had received support from the HWL team in NHS Fife were very satisfied with the support provided and felt that their businesses had benefitted from the team's interventions.

An economic impact analysis conducted as part of this research, estimated that each participating company that experienced a reduction in sickness and absence following involvement with the HWL team typically saved their organisation and the local economy £17,865 per annum.

Awareness of the need for HWL policies and practices and the likelihood to seek external support to implement health, safety and wellbeing practices varied with organisation size with small organisations (up to 10 employees) being least aware of the need for HWL and large companies (over 250 employees) being most aware and most likely to have internal support to implement policy and practice.

Medium sized companies, particularly those with 11 to 50 employees tended to recognise the potential need for compliance with legislation but did not understand the relevance of employee wellbeing for their business. Few of these companies had access to internal support.

Very few organisations were able to measure the impact of health, safety and wellbeing employees on their business but many were very keen to be able to do this to support their involvement with HWL with their senior management.

Recommendations

Targeting future organisations

We would recommend that the NHS Fife HWL team focuses future support on organisations with between 11 to 50 employees initially. These organisations are most likely to have an internal manager responsible for developing HR practices with no access to external support.

Very small organisations also require support but need to be convinced of the relevance of HWL to their size of organisation. It is likely to take longer to influence

them into the “buying zone” and therefore this needs to be a longer term objective for the local HWL team.

We would also recommend that the local HWL team retain contact with larger organisations in order to market their training activities to them.

Understanding of the health, safety and wellbeing message

All respondents identified with the Health & Safety message, but only those with previous experience of using the local HWL services were in tune with the employee wellbeing aspects of the phrase. We would recommend that future promotion of the service focuses on the business benefits of introducing HWL policies, programmes and activities, highlighting the business case for tackling HWL issues.

Motivations for implementing HWL policies, programmes and activities

Motivations for considering and implementing HWL policies, programmes and activities tended to vary by what stage the organisation was at in their organisational growth, with smaller organisations tuning more into the Health and Safety messages and the need for legislation compliance.

Larger developing organisations tended to be more in tune with how occupational health policies could directly link with their need to introduce more robust human relations policies to ensure they complied with current employment legislation.

We would recommend that the local promotion of HWL services tailor specific promotional messages to small businesses leading with HSE related support, highlighting occupational health messages for larger, developing organisations.

Priorities for future service provision (current services)

The current services which are of most interest to organisations were events, information packs, training and progress reviews.

We would recommend that the NHS Fife HWL team continues to provide the following services:

1. Awareness raising events and information days. We would recommend that a programme of sectoral information days are planned, with information being available on the support services that are most likely to be specific to the sector selected.

We would recommend that the programme of information days is maintained and extended to include organisations new to HWL as the days have proved effective at engaging with local employers. Respondents indicated that they felt the information days were a good opportunity to meet the advisers and get to know them first, before setting up a more formal meeting at their business to discuss areas of potential support. Previous attendees praised the local advisers for being approachable, knowledgeable and down to earth.

To help facilitate access to the wider business community, we would recommend that the HWL team aim to extend the programme by organising joint events with key local business support forums, such as the local Chamber of Commerce, local Council, and Scottish Enterprise.

2. A service information pack. There is an appetite for more information on the service portfolio provided by the local HWL team. However, any future information pack should do more than create awareness of the range of services available, and should be more of a service map, highlighting how HWL support services could be used to support local employers, perhaps focusing on organisational growth issues. It was felt that this was likely to encourage access to wider support services to help put in place employee wellbeing programmes designed to enhance staff morale, teambuilding and ultimately the employer brand.
3. Progress reviews focusing on advice and guidance for organisations on how to address implementation challenges. Key strengths of the current service were considered to be:
 - Advisers spending time with the employers scoping out the issues in the business and linking how HWL related activities could be used to support the organisation
 - The development of agreed action/implementation plans following the scoping sessions
 - Follow up meetings setting informal timelines to work towards. This helped the organisation maintain momentum and provided a clear direction of travel
 - Low key, practical, done to earth approach
 - Unbiased, free advice delivered with no hidden sales agenda.
4. Training courses for smaller organisations with a particular focus on:
 - Health and safety awareness training
 - First aid training
 - Lifting and handling
5. Occupational health related support for larger, developing organisations, including:
 - Stress management / mental health (for managers)
 - Physical activity
 - Smoking
 - Weight management / healthy eating.

Priorities for future service provision (addressing gaps in services)

The research participants highlighted interest in the following services which they did not think were provided currently by NHS Fife HWL team:

1. Consultancy support to measure the impact of the health, safety and wellbeing policies and practices in order to demonstrate the value of HWL to senior management in organisations.
2. Development of a service pathway. When considering the development of the service pathways, We would recommend that staff health checks are used as a catalyst to path the way for the implementation of employee wellbeing programmes.
3. An information pack to help organisations link HWL activity with progress through the national award programme and demonstrate the business benefit from progressing through the award. It would be useful to link the service map with the differing levels of award from the national award programme.
4. Consultancy support for national award programme participants to help them develop an implementation plan to progress to higher levels in the award.

Future programme marketing and engagement strategy

Given the different needs expressed by organisations of different sizes, we recommend that the future marketing move away from the one size fits all approach to promotional activity and start to develop a more targeted business engagement strategy.

We would recommend that the local HWL team, consider two key strands to the business engagement strategy; namely:

- Developing a new client acquisition strategy – engaging with organisations with no previous contact with the HWL team and less developed organisational structures, such as micro businesses and SME's)
- Developing a more structured approach to the account management process to help local employers that have some experience of tackling HWL issues, helping them to introduce more wide-ranging employee wellbeing programmes that could underpin their organisational growth.