



Businesses urged to take action on obesity rise

Businesses need to take an active role in promoting physical activity to combat obesity – claims an organisation leading the nation's biggest workplace physical activity campaign.

With obesity on the rise, coupled with a recent study by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) revealing that only 28 per cent of employees receive advice from their employers on health and wellbeing issues; coordinators of the Workplace Challenge are calling business leaders across the country to take action.

Employers are being encouraged to sign up to the campaign, run by the County Sports Partnership Network (CSP network) in collaboration with the British Heart Foundation Health at Work programme.

Workplace Challenge provides workers with the opportunity to use a free online activity logger to keep track of all their physical activity and active travel.

The idea behind the platform – which has already proved a success in pilot areas across the country – is to encourage workers to be more active and make exercise a part of their daily routine.

The Workplace Challenge invites workers to log their activity in reward for points for their place of work. They will also get the chance to go head to head with other local businesses and even take part in inter-workplace competitions and leagues.

John Byrne Head of the Workplace Challenge team said it is more important than ever that employers take an active role in encouraging staff to lead more active lifestyles.

Mr Byrne said:

“Employers can really support their employees in achieving their New Year’s resolutions in 2014. The Workplace Challenge platform is free to use, allowing team leaders to track and support their colleagues with motivational challenges. Healthier workforces, lead to healthier businesses - the benefits are substantial.

I would love to see every business in this country using the Workplace Challenge platform, with employers actively encouraging their staff to lead more active lifestyles.

Not only would this have a direct impact on obesity levels in the country but also on the level of employer engagement and wellbeing within the workplace.”

Lee Mason, Chief Executive of the County Sports Partnership Network (CSP Network), said:

“The CSP Network are very proud to have launched the Workplace Challenge platform. We believe that the success of the platform will be driven by our local County Sports Partnership teams, who will be ensuring that in parallel to the ability for people to track their activity online, that there are a diverse range of activities available to go and try, compete in and enjoy offline.

We hope to not only grow participation in Sport but radically reduce the effects that inactivity have within local communities. It is essential that businesses take a lead in encouraging their staff to be active and we see the workplace environment as key in leveraging the ‘power of the peer’ to get people active.”

Organisers hope that workplaces will get involved by organising sport orientated team days out or by launching a walk to work or lunch walking scheme; employers will directly benefit from a healthy and revitalised team of staff who are active both in and outside of work.

There will also be a number of opportunities available for businesses to sponsor and support community workplace challenges.

For more information log on to www.workplacechallenge.org.uk.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

*Office of national statistics

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Workplace Challenge

- Workplace Challenge is a free online platform enabling people to log all of their physical activity.
- Throughout 2014, employees and employers will be encouraged to start logging and generate points, enabling them to take part in a series of challenges, events and competitions.
- Points are calculated according to Metabolic Equivalent (METs) where 1MET is a person's average seated energy expenditure which is

equivalent to 1kcal.kg-1.h-1. MET values will be different for different forms of exercise and will increase with the intensity and duration of exercise.

- Active loggers will be able to see a variety of stats including distance travelled, calorie burned and CO2 saved.
- A minimum of three registered employees are required for a workplace to appear in a leader board and people can also track their own individual progress locally and nationally.
- The platform has been developed, following a successful pilot by Leicester-Shire & Rutland Sport, with £500k investment from Sport England and will be run by the County Sports Partnership Network with support from the British Heart Foundation Health at Work team.
- Local County Sports Partnerships will manage the online platform for their community, ensuring that there are challenges, activities and competitions available offline to encourage people to stay active.
- It is anticipated that many people will use the platform to fundraise. E.g. The platform is already being used to support the 'Run to Remember' helping the Police in raising money for PC Nicola Hughes Memorial Fund, Victim Support, Care of Police Survivors and the North West Police Benevolent Fund.

County Sports Partnership Network

- The CSP Network represents 49 local County Sports Partnership teams across the country.
- Collectively, they contribute to the health of the nation by helping local partners, organisations and delivers to promote the benefits of active lifestyles across local communities.
- The CSP Network delivered The Community Games – one of the most successful community campaigns seen in the UK, attracting over 2 million members of the public to come together in local communities to take part in active cultural events inspired by 2012.

British Heart Foundation Health at Work (HaW)

- Coronary heart disease is the UK's single biggest killer. For over 50 years we've pioneered research that's transformed the lives of people living with heart and circulatory conditions. Our work has been central to the discoveries of vital treatments that are changing the fight against heart disease. But so many people still need our help. From babies born with life-threatening heart problems to the many Mums, Dads and Grandparents who survive a heart attack and endure the daily battles of heart failure. Join our fight for every heartbeat in the UK. Every pound raised, minute of your time and donation to our shops will help make a difference to people's lives. For more information visit bhf.org.uk.

Phase 1 - Participating County Sports Partnerships (further phases in 2014)

- Active Essex
- Active Norfolk
- Bucks
- Derbyshire Sport
- Get Berkshire Active
- Greater Sport (Manchester)
- Hertfordshire (HSP)
- Leicester-Shire & Rutland Sport
- Lincolnshire
- Living Sport (Cambridgeshire & Peterborough)
- Northamptonshire Sport
- Northumberland Sport
- Oxfordshire
- Suffolk Sport
- PRO-ACTIVE (collaborative support from 4 London CSPs)
- Somerset
- South Yorkshire Sport
- Sport across Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent
- Sport Hampshire & IOW
- Wesport
- West Yorkshire Sport

Michelle Leavesley, Citydesk Sport, on behalf of Workplace Challenge and County Sports Partnership Network.

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