



Fieldwork on the Promotion of Physical Activity in the Workplace

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An Evaluation of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) Draft Recommendations

NICE drafted four recommendations covering:

1. Devising an organisation-wide policy or plan to encourage employees to be physically active.
2. Introducing and monitoring an organisation-wide, multi-component programme to encourage employees to be physically active.
3. Putting up signs at strategic points and distributing written information to encourage employees to use the stairs rather than taking a lift where possible.
4. Encouraging employees to increase the distance walked during the working day.

The recommendations were for employers and professionals in small, medium and large organisations who have a direct or indirect role in, and responsibility for, improving health in the workplace. This included those working in the NHS, local authorities and the wider public, voluntary, community and private sectors, especially those working in human resources or occupational health. They would also be of interest to employees, trades union representatives and members of the public.

Fieldwork was required in order to identify the relevance, utility and implementability of the recommendations within workplaces.

Research & Evaluation

What did Greenstreet Berman Ltd do?

We were asked by NICE to carry out fieldwork in order to evaluate their recommendations on promoting physical activity in the workplace.

The fieldwork comprised of:

- Workshops with representatives from stakeholder organisations that included employers, workers, health professionals and providers of health promotion;
- Telephone interviews with representatives from stakeholder organisations; and;
- Telephone interviews with employers, covering small, medium and large organisations.

These methods identified the relevance, utility and implementation of the recommendations within workplaces.

What did we find?

Practicality and relevance – the need for advice and support

Stakeholders said that the recommendations would be practical and effective.

A need for further advice and support for employers was identified:

- How to engage employees in physical activity;
- How to engage all sections of the workforce, including disabled, shift workers etc;
- Advice on how to assess and plan activities.

This could include providing more practical examples and case studies.

Organisations also felt they would have required a business case to commit time and resource to the implementation of these recommendations.

Integration into wider wellbeing and health policies

Respondents indicated that a holistic approach to workplace health would be adopted.

These recommendations would form part of wider health and wellbeing policies (as well as environmental policies) rather than standalone policies.

They also offered suggestions on how to further develop each recommendation to make them practical and meaningful.



“The feedback indicated that the statements were considered to be practical and relevant to organisations.”

Further development of the specific recommendations

NICE used the results of the fieldwork along with their own consultation to finalise and launch the recommendations.

The final recommendations were structured as:

1. Policy & Planning
2. Implementing a physical activity programme
3. Components of the programme
4. Supporting employers

The final guidance can be seen at:

www.nice.org.uk/PH013/

This included an Excel tool for producing business cases, a PowerPoint slide set and quick reference guide.

Clients

Sports Council for Wales
Food Standards Agency
Health & Safety Executive
Communities & Local Government
Association of British Insurers
Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
National Institute for Clinical Excellence

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