

**SUBJECT: BETTER HEALTH AT WORK AWARD**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, THE CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY,  
THE FINANCE OFFICER AND THE PERSONNEL ADVISOR TO THE AUTHORITY**

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**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline for Members details of the Better Health at Work Award scheme and the Authority's success to date.
- 1.2 The award is a North East regional scheme to encourage employers to improve the health of their employees. The award also recognises the achievements of the organisation in managing health at work.
- 1.3 There are three levels to the award, Bronze, Silver and Gold with appropriate criteria to be met at each annual stage. The award is supported by regional public health specialists at all levels.
- 1.4 In February 2011 the Authority was successful in achieving the Better Health at Work Bronze Award, and staff were determined to continue to make improvements in health provision for all employees by committing to the next level, the Silver Award.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The aims of the Better Health at Work Award are:
  - Support improvements in health and well-being for North East workers and employers
  - Create an inclusive, standardised framework within the region.
  - Complement existing, local workplace health schemes
  - Give regional recognition to those workplaces which actively promote the health of their employees.
  - Share good practice and promote the contribution workplace health can make to a healthy community.
- 2.2 Promoting a healthy workplace has considerable benefits to employers with evidence which suggests reduced absenteeism, enhanced productivity and improved performance.

### 3 REVIEW OF BETTER HEALTH AT WORK AWARD: SILVER AWARD

- 3.1 The Silver Award builds upon the basics of the Bronze level and rewards the organisation if it takes a more holistic view of health in the work place. It was clear from the onset that the Authority already recognised the link between control of risk, the general health of their employees, and the success of the organisation itself.
- 3.2 As an organisation that has a mixed population of operational (safety critical) and non-operational roles occupational health identified that there was more emphasis in health promotion placed on operational staff rather than non-operational staff. This was primarily due to operational staff having a statutory medical on a three yearly basis that included a large element of health promotion.
- 3.3 To address this imbalance and with the aim of improving the provision of health promotion to all of the work population the Occupational Health promotion remit was expanded by:
- Being pro-active in developing management practices and policies that support health
  - Providing opportunities and activities to promote health and wellbeing
  - Expanding the role of volunteer health champions
- 3.4 The nursing team were very motivated to develop the health promotion aspect in their occupational health delivery to the workplace; but it was the involvement of the Health Champions at each location that were crucial to the success of the delivery of each health promotion topic.
- 3.5 All the Health Champions are volunteers based across the service and agreed to assist in delivering health promotion initiatives. Each health champion ensured that health promotion material was displayed and made available to employees in their area.
- 3.6 In January 2012 there was a meeting with the Health Champions and the following initiatives were developed:
- February: Healthy Eating
  - May Cancer: Awareness
  - June Blood: Donor Day
  - September: "Know Your Numbers"
  - November: "*Movember*" (Prostate Cancer Awareness)

- 3.7 Historically the occupational health unit have carried out health promotion road shows, where health promotion stands would be set up and clients could visit any stand that was of interest to them.
- 3.8 To ensure that the holistic approach was promoted the Know your Numbers Health Promotion event was adapted to meet the requirements of each individual. The three days were advertised on the intranet and people were encouraged to book an appointment time which would dedicate a one to one session with a nurse.
- 3.9 The Know your numbers concept was developed from a Blood Pressure review, to full health check incorporating:
- Blood Pressure
  - Pulse Rate
  - Height
  - Weight
  - Body Fat Percentage/Waist Measurement
  - Cholesterol Check
- 3.10 The occupational health staff actively sought satisfaction rates from the work force for all the health events and they were evaluated by a combination of qualitative and quantitative data. Occupational Health recorded attendance of open events, and each activity had feedback through questionnaires, comments, logs and meetings with the Health Champions.
- 3.11 As a culmination of all the aforementioned initiatives, the Chief Fire Officer is pleased to report that the Authority was successful in gaining the Better Health at Work Silver Award. Feedback from the assessing body is being considered and staff are now working towards the Gold Award in the future.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The Chief Fire Officer contends that entering the Silver Award has initiated a shared sense of ownership for developing health promotion by involving the Health Champions at each location; and the health education aspect of the campaigns along with health promotion activities supports and enhances positive lifestyle changes for all participants.
- 4.2 The award also recognises the strong commitment the Authority has to the health and wellbeing of the workforce.

## 5 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 There are no risk implications in respect of this report.

## 6 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no financial implications in respect of this report.

## 7 **EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report.

## 8 **HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

## 9 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 The Authority is recommended to:

- a) Note the contents of this report;
- b) Endorse the actions of the Chief Fire Officer;
- c) Consider a congratulatory message to staff involved;
- d) Receive further reports as appropriate.

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## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

There are no background papers referring to the subject matter of the above report.