

Better Health at work



An Employer's guide
to making good work 'better'



Better Health
at Work Award



The Business Case

Promoting a healthy workplace has considerable benefits for employers and can lead to decreased absenteeism, increased productivity and improved performance.

It can also enhance an organisation's reputation and standing with staff, stakeholders and the wider community.



The average level of employee absence in 2021 was **4.6 days**

BHAWA is the largest workplace health and wellbeing programme in England



£
17m

In 2021/22 **17.9 million** working days were lost due to **mental health issues** (inc stress, anxiety, depression) in the UK

Source: HSE

Two of the top causes of sickness absence in 2020 were **muskuloskeletal issues** and **mental health conditions**

For every £1 invested in workplace stress prevention there was a **ROI of £2**

£2

Poor mental Health costs UK employers up to **£56 billion** each year

Source: Deloitte

£
56b

ROI for workplace health programmes ranges from **£2 to £34** for every £1 invested



149.3 million working days were lost due to work related sickness or injury in the UK in **2021**

In 2022 over **440 employers** covering over **244,000 employees** engaged with the Award

Welcome to your **Healthier Workplace**

For too long, the North has had a reputation for being an ‘unhealthy’ place to live and work; unfortunately borne out by our fairly shocking life expectancy rates and high long-term sickness and disability figures.

To help combat this, a unique partnership project to the North East was created and the Better Health at Work Award (BHAWA) was established in 2009 to take health and wellbeing into the workplace.

This partnership has now been taken forward by Local Authorities in the North East and more recently Cumbria, with programme coordination provided by the Northern TUC.

Workplace Health is an integral part of the regional public health strategy and is even more relevant as we recover from Covid19 and face challenging economic times, when organisations need to use every available tool to ensure productivity and competitiveness.

With almost 500 regional employers participating in the scheme and a reach of nearly 250,000 workers, as well as the very favourable findings of at least two independent evaluations, the need for, and effectiveness of the Award for all concerned is clear.

Individuals benefit from a healthier environment and culture, increased access to health information and interventions where they wouldn't normally; workplace activity as part of the Award has potentially saved lives on numerous occasions – identifying dangerously high cholesterol levels and early stage cancers.

At the same time, employers benefit from improved staff engagement and retention, lower levels of absenteeism and increased productivity. There are few more apparent win-win situations.

The Award Scheme

The Better Health at Work Award supports and recognises the efforts of employers addressing health and wellbeing in the workplace.

The award scheme is FREE, flexible and open to ALL employers in the North East and Cumbria, regardless of size, location or type of business.

Many organisations already promote healthy lifestyles and consider the health of their employees. This Award recognises the achievements of these organisations and helps them move forward in a structured and supported way.

For those organisations who have not considered promoting health at work, taking part in this award will help you reap the rewards of facilitating a healthy workplace and workforce.

There are 5 main levels to the Award: Bronze, Silver, Gold, Continuing Excellence and Maintaining Excellence, with appropriate criteria at each stage to build into an Award Portfolio. Organisations are given up to a year per level, but there is flexibility for those who need it.

Evidence indicates that it takes a period of time to effectively establish the infrastructure that will engage employees in adopting behaviour/lifestyle changes. This is why ALL employers are required to begin at Bronze and progress systematically upwards through the levels.

Every employer/organisation who signs-up to participate in the Award scheme is supported by a dedicated Health Improvement Specialist.

Taking part in the Award does not affect the participant's obligation to comply with the law, including health and safety and employment law. It is the employer's responsibility to ensure they are legally compliant in these matters and, therefore, the awarding body cannot be held accountable for any shortfalls in legislative compliance as a result of participation in the scheme.



The Process

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Create an action plan for the year- including setting your assessment date

Ensure you are familiar and comfortable with the online portal and the requisite criteria for your level. Inductions are available for both.

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Your workplace needs to be pre-assessed and assessed.

You need to liaise with your designated local award coordinator as soon as possible to negotiate assessment dates within the specified period.

The assessment window opens on 01 June and closes on 30 November (cohort 1: 01 June to 18 September and cohort 2: 19 September to 30 November).

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This is usually conducted by your dedicated BHAWA contact and is then submitted to the coordinators to undergo quality assurance checks and verification.

Sign up to the appropriate level

Train health advocates

Create and action/ delivery plan for the year

Implement and evaluate the actions

Populate Criteria Document as you go

Collect evidence for the portfolio

Identify who/what could be a potential case study and write up (see case study section for guidance)

Collate online submission and portfolio

Assessment Period opens 01 June and closes 30 November

Pre-assessment

Submit your completed online document and evidence portfolio for review. 30 November cut off date for submissions

Final assessment

Assessment verification

Notification of achievement

Celebration event

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Bronze applications for the award need to be endorsed by a senior person within the organisation in consultation with the local award co-ordinator.

Familiarise yourself with the appropriate criteria.

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Your dedicated Workplace Health Lead will be able to provide guidance on, for example, carrying out a health needs assessment and developing health-related policies.

Resources, information and signposting will also be available to organisations participating in the Award, on the BHAWA portal and from their Workplace Health Lead.

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This is provided from the BHAWA coordinators by a stipulated date, depending on cohort.

Health Advocates



Health Advocates are your point of contact with your Workplace Health Specialist. They are vital to the award process, so should be passionate about health and wellbeing. They can be anyone in the organisation regardless of role or experience.

If you have a large or multi-site organisation it may be more practical to have a team of advocates, but we mandate training **at least** two advocates so that they can support each other. This training is provided FREE through the Award. The following information should help you when recruiting:

- ♥ **The Health Advocate should have the full support of all the management team and have access to evidence required for the assessment process**

- ♥ **Management must be committed to working with the Health Advocate to action any measures necessary to achieve the award**

- ♥ **The Health Advocate will need time to collect evidence and work with the assessors to implement the action plan. They should not be expected to do this with a full workload**

- ♥ **Ensure cross-organisational representation and multi-disciplinary input to include all staff groups eg. Human Resources; Occupational Health; Communications and representative of organisation demographics. Enthusiasm and commitment are equally as important.**

Health Advocates are fundamental to help organisations achieve the award. They work hard to involve and motivate employees to actively participate in the process.

Full support and endorsement from both management and personnel within the organisation is crucial to meeting the required criteria and embedding health and wellbeing for the benefit of all.

The Health Advocates and your organisation will benefit in many ways:

- ♥ **Learning new skills, accessing training from Health and other professionals which will make them much more valuable to your organisation. Advocates often cascade training back into their organisations**



♥ Making contact with other advocates in a range of different sectors and sizes of businesses which may be mutually beneficial for your organisations

♥ Better staff engagement and cohesion. Access to information, advice and support from trained health professionals to address specific issues in your organisation

♥ Exchanging good practice with other organisations and attracting positive publicity for your organisation

Below is a more detailed remit of the role of the Health Advocate to help you to make the right choice of person and to give you a better idea of how you can support them in that role. Support will also be provided throughout the year from the Better Health at Work team, both on a one to one basis and through local support events and training.

The Health Advocate Remit

To support their organisation towards the achievement of the Better Health at Work Award and help develop a positive wellbeing culture in the workplace and beyond

Responsibilities:

♥ Key Contact person between organisation and Award Assessors

♥ Compilation of the portfolio of evidence required to achieve the award

♥ Work in consultation with the Award Assessors at initial and any follow up meetings to address any actions required

♥ Progress health action plan (if required) to achieve award

♥ Organise and promote health initiatives/ activities within their workplace

Time Commitments for Remit

(The actual time spent will depend upon the size and complexity of the organisation and the number of Health Advocates in the team)

♥ Attending Award induction and any support or training events organised by the award co-ordinators

♥ Organisation of/running health campaigns and events

♥ Compilation of evidence portfolio

♥ Final assessment facilitation - in person or digital

♥ Health action plan work (if required)

♥ Attendance at award celebration event

Associated Costs:

♥ Time: for Health Advocates/Health and Wellbeing team/staff to deliver and participate

♥ An internal Health and Wellbeing budget: (helpful but not mandatory) to deliver Health and Wellbeing activities (there are a lot of free resources available and your WHIS will be able to advise on current initiatives or local offers)










Award Criteria



Better Health at Work Award Foundation Award

This is a discrete “pre-Bronze” level for any organisations who are new to workplace health and wellbeing or have limited capacity and feel they would benefit from a lighter-touch introduction to gain further experience and some ‘tools for the job’. **It is not mandatory to undertake this before signing up to Bronze.**

The Award Requirements

- 
A minimum of one trained Health Advocate required to support the scheme
- 
Run a light-touch staff survey (template provided) to determine the health needs of the workforce
- 
Run a minimum of two staff focussed, health and wellbeing campaigns
- 
Develop one new communication method and a workplace/facilities improvement related to staff wellbeing
- 
Produce a small amount of evidence to demonstrate all the above activity (5-10 pieces required)
- 
Achievable in six months or less
- 
Work completed at the Foundation Level can contribute towards the subsequent Bronze Award

This Level has been specifically designed as a manageable introduction to building staff health and wellbeing structures into the workplace.

It has been tailored to ensure achievable goals within a realistic timeframe.

The Benefits of Participation

Access to support, resources, events and webinars

Reduced sickness absence and improved productivity

Improved staff engagement, recruitment and retention

Free Health Advocate and Making Every Contact Count Training

A happier and healthier workforce

Networking and sharing best practice opportunities with other participants

Accredited award which is nationally recognised



Better Health at Work Award

Bronze Award

The Bronze Level lays a firm foundation to build a healthier workplace.

- ✔ Deliver a health needs assessment with a 30% return rate
- ✔ Raise health awareness with the workforce, through a minimum of three health campaigns/ themes throughout the year, based on the outcome of your health needs assessment
- ✔ Raise awareness of risky alcohol and drug use within the organisation
- ✔ Positive mental health and well-being to be promoted through employee support, training and awareness-raising
- ✔ Sickness absence rates and causes to be collected and monitored

- ✔ How does the company enforce smoke free legislation and promote harm reduction around the use of tobacco and tobacco products
- ✔ Healthy food choices to be available if there is a canteen, restaurant or vending machine. Otherwise a mechanism is in place to ensure employees are aware of dietary issues and healthy food choices and these are actively promoted
- ✔ General awareness of how health can be affected by work activities and assessment of risk
- ✔ Demonstrate partnership working and the process for ongoing consultation and communication with staff on relevant workplace health issues. Where there is a recognised trade union this should be through an appropriate agreement with them
- ✔ The workplace environment should be conducive to health and employee welfare should be addressed – drinking water, washing facilities, clean toilets, eating facilities etc





Better Health at Work Award

Silver Award

The Silver Level of the Award builds upon the basics of the Bronze Level and rewards organisations that take a more holistic view of the workplace.

- ♥ The organisation will participate in a minimum of four local, regional or national campaigns throughout the year, and ensure these activities are fully evaluated
- ♥ The organisation will promote general health improvement through facilitating a healthy living culture and healthy behaviours both in the workplace and beyond
- ♥ Continue to address the mental health and wellbeing of the workforce through awareness, training and support and embed into organisational infrastructure
- ♥ Physical activity will be encouraged by the organisation
- ♥ The organisation will be expected to have a policy regarding Alcohol, Drugs and Substances
- ♥ Demonstrate that continued promotion and support of healthy eating/ weight management has taken place. Develop and implement an organisational commitment to healthy eating that considers government guidelines and reflects staff needs
- ♥ A commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion will be demonstrated across the organisation's policy, procedure and practice
- ♥ The organisation will start to embed health and wellbeing within company structures and support their health advocates
- ♥ The organisation will provide Information to contractors and visitors in relation to health issues
- ♥ Produce a case study





Better Health at Work Award

Gold Award

This Level builds upon the Silver level and requires companies to look outside their own organisation and promote health within the wider community.

- ♥ A minimum three-year health and wellbeing strategy and one-year action plan (appropriate to your organisation) to be in place for health improvement activities and task related health issues, which should be reviewed annually
- ♥ A follow-up Health Needs Assessment will be offered to the workforce with a 30% return rate
- ♥ Health topics should be promoted in the wider community and to families of the workforce. In addition the organisation should share good practice and encourage other businesses to participate in the BHAW award

♥ The organisation will participate in a minimum of five local, regional or national health campaigns/events throughout the year (one of which should be ongoing throughout the year and one should demonstrate an element of innovation)

♥ The organisation will facilitate and encourage employees to have regular health checks (carried out by qualified providers) including awareness of and attendance at routine screening

♥ The organisation will have a dignity at work policy in place. This will cover any workplace conflict issues and relevant resolution mechanisms/procedures, eg. bullying and harassment

♥ The organisation will have a proactive system in place to support staff on long term sick to return to work and will raise awareness of and support staff with long term conditions

♥ The organisation will demonstrate a social value approach

♥ Produce a case study

Note: Information from any case studies may be used in the media to help promote the award and motivate other organisations



Better Health at Work Award

Continuing Excellence

This recognises the importance of organisations sustaining the progress they have made during their participation in the Award and encourages them to use their experience to support others.

- ♥ Provide evidence of progress against your 3 Year Strategy developed at Gold Level
- ♥ Continue to raise health awareness with the workforce through a minimum of five local,

regional or national health campaigns or events throughout the year

♥ Provide a mentoring role to at least one other organisation taking part in the award and/or continue to actively promote the award to other organisations

♥ Continue organisational commitment to the adoption and delivery of a social value approach

♥ Produce a case study


♥ The organisation should address any new elements added or amended to the previous Award levels as a result of the annual criteria review process





Better Health at Work Award


Maintaining Excellence


Undertaken by employers who have been engaged with the Award long enough to have achieved a pass at all levels, via the completion of a criteria document, portfolio and desk assessment.

-  **Demonstrate progress against Strategy/Action Plan**

-  **Describe your organisation's main workplace health campaigns (minimum of 5)**

-  **Continued organisational commitment to a social value approach**

-  **Provide information regarding any mentoring and/or external promotion of the BHAWA you have undertaken - who? when? details?**

-  **Additional elements**



Only on achievement of Maintaining Excellence do organisations become eligible for Ambassador Status. They must be nominated by their designated Workplace Improvement Specialist.



Better Health at Work Award

Ambassador Status

Ambassador Status was created to recognise those employers who demonstrate both long-term commitment and outstanding practice around workplace health and wellbeing, not only achieving but consistently going above and beyond at every stage of assessment.

Eligibility Process

Organisations are eligible for Ambassador Status when they reach Maintaining Excellence level and with the recommendation of their designated Workplace Health Improvement Specialist.

This is then passed through to the BHAWA Verification Panel for endorsement.

The status involves being a public Ambassador for the Award, mentoring other employers and sharing best practice.

Award Progression





One Stop for Better Health

Our online **Digital Assessment Submission Platform and Resource Portal** is a one stop shop for all of our workplaces and Health Advocates to access as they progress through their Award journey. For those leading on the BHAWA in the workplace this is the main, interactive point of contact and where the criteria document can be populated and corresponding evidence portfolio can be built.



Once signed up and registered live, all organisations are provided with a welcome pack and website login details.

The website is comprised of a secure submission portal and a comprehensive resource library. Each workplace can have 2 super users who are responsible for completing the award documentation/uploading

evidence, all other trained health advocates will have access to the portal information and resources only.

For all Health Advocates we have a Resource Portal full of accessible and downloadable health and wellbeing information, resources and signposting - from videos and template/best practice documents to national and regional campaign posters/leaflets and website links.



Better Health at Work Award



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