

# WORKPLACE TOOCKIT FOR EMPLOYERS

A guide to help you get off the starting blocks with promoting physical activity in your workplace

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The Liverpool Active Workplaces programme is part of the Liverpool Active City Strategy 2014-21, which is resourced via a partnership between Liverpool City Council, NHS Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group and strategic stakeholders. The strategy sets out the vision for Liverpool to be the most active core city in England by 2021.

Liverpool Active Workplaces aims to provide support to employers to encourage their staff to improve their physical activity levels - 44% of adults working in Liverpool are not meeting minimum physical activity guidelines.

The programme is also supported by the Fit For Me campaign, which aims to inspire everyone in the city of Liverpool to become more active.

The Toolkit has been developed to support employers in promoting the benefits of physical activity to employees. It brings together best practice and demonstrates the <u>benefits for employers</u> in developing an active workforce.

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# ON YOUR MARKS

WHY WORKPLACE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY?

#### **EMPLOYER BENEFITS**

We all know that physical activity is good for our health and wellbeing, but research also shows that having an **active workforce** makes **organisations more productive and efficient.** 



UP TO £34

RETURN FOR EVERY

£1 INVESTED



ON 27%

AVERAGE 27%

FEWERSICK DAYS

ARE TAKEN BY ACTIVE STAFF



REDUCED BY



BETTER OMORALE COMER STAFF TURNOVER



IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY TEAMWORK & COMMUNICATION



DEMONSTRATES
CORPORATE
SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY



THE COST OF PHYSICAL INACTIVITY TO THE LIVERPOOL ECONOMY

We recognise that every organisation in Liverpool is different, so this Workplace Toolkit will provide you with a *range* of options that you could consider to implement.

We also recognise that implementing change doesn't happen overnight, but there are lots of simple 'quick wins' that you can put in place to help raise awareness of workplace physical activity to help build some momentum. Employers can also encourage employees to be active inside or outside of the workplace, in whatever way is practical for staff to join in.



There are several organisations that can help you understand the unique physical activity needs of your organisation – see page 28 for further details.

#### **CASE STUDY:**

MSP supported local NHS Trusts to measure outcomes from a step challenge and funded activity tasters - 73% of employees reported improved activity levels, 50% improved mental wellbeing and one Trust reported a 67% reduction in absenteeism with staff who took part.

#### **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

Research shows that staff can significantly improve their own health and wellbeing by taking part in regular physical activity.



#### MORE ENERGY, BETTER STRESS MANAGEMENT



## REDUCED RISK OF CHRONIC ILLNESSES

SUCH AS HEART DISEASE STROKES, DIABETES & CANCER



## IMPROVED SELF-CONFIDENCE & SELF-ESTEEM



## SOCIALISE & MEET NEW PEOPLE



**IMPROVED MOOD**& MENTAL HEALTH



**IMPROVED SLEEP** 



Generally, people are more interested in the potential *individual* benefits of being active, so try using the benefits outlined on this page (and not those on page 5) when communicating with employees.



#### IMPACT OF THE LIVERPOOL ACTIVE WORKPLACES PROGRAMME

To understand the potential benefits of supporting employees to be more physically active, Liverpool City Council, in partnership with Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group and strategic stakeholders, commissioned MSP¹ to deliver the Liverpool Active Workplace Programme from September 2016 to April 2017. 82 employers signed up to the programme across the public, private and third sectors, with 35% employing over 250 staff. The evaluation of the programme demonstrated that significant benefits were gained by employers and staff being engaged in physical activity initiatives;

Overall, of 82 employers

91% III
REPORTED IMPROVED
STAFF MORALE

REPORTED IMPROVED STAFF COMMUNICATION

91%

TT45%
REPORTED A REDUCTION
IN STAFF ABSENTEEISM

REPORTED IMPROVED STAFF
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVELS

SOCIAL RETURN OF INVESTMENT **£14.64 ON EVERY £1 INVESTED**<sup>2</sup>



**Physical Activity Champion Training (107 Champions trained)** 



This Workplace Toolkit has been developed using much of the learning and good practice from the Liverpool Active Workplaces Programme, to make it as easy as possible for you, as an employer, to help get your staff more active at work.

#### **HOW ACTIVE SHOULD WE BE?**

We know that physical activity is win-win for both employers and employees, but how much activity should we all be doing?

For employees who are not very active, it's a good idea to start aiming to do at least 10 minutes of moderate activity where they can. Once they're started, they should try working towards doing 10 minutes or more on 3 or 4 days a week. For those who are already doing some activity, when they feel comfortable, they should try to work their way up to doing half an hour or more on 5 days each week (or 2 and half hours across a week if they prefer). The Chief Medical Officer recommends that adults do at least 150 minutes of moderate activity per week.

Moderate activity means that your heart and breathing rates are increased - a good way to check if your activity is the right intensity, is to try and sing a song whilst you're doing the activity - if you can talk but find it difficult to sing then you've raised your breathing rate to the right level.

44% of adults working full-time in Liverpool do not meet these recommended levels. Research from the British Heart Foundation shows that 80% of people think that they are active enough, and local insight suggests that people in Liverpool think that it has become normal to be inactive.

As we can spend up to 60% of our waking hours at work, employers can have a huge role in helping to raise awareness of how much physical activity employees could be doing to benefit their health, and putting flexible arrangements in place to help people to become more active inside and outside of the workplace.

**11** Taking part in Liverpool Active Workplaces has been really fantastic; we've had people from different departments being active and mixing for the first time. This programme has helped to provide a bit more structure and purpose, which has helped keep up interest and momentum. It has made a massive difference to the organisation, and has been appreciated by senior managers and employees alike.

**Employer - Liverpool-based organisation** 

#### **SEDENTARY BEHAVIOUR**

A growing problem in modern day employment is staff being sedentary i.e. sat down at a desk or in a car for the majority of the day.

Research shows that sitting for at least eight hours a day could increase the risk of premature death by up to 60%, which is why you might have heard of the phrase "sitting is the new smoking".

Employers can play a big role in encouraging staff to break up their working day - see page 24, for lots of great ideas for staff to reduce sedentary behaviour in the workplace.



**66** Taking part in the Liverpool **Active Workplaces programme** has helped us to engage all of our staff members in inclusive activities to reduce sedentary behaviour at work, such as through the step challenge - it was great to see friendly banter and competition as part of the challenge.

Lisa Greenhalgh, MSIF

# BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

## HOW CAN WE HELP EMPLOYEES TO BE MORE ACTIVE?



Effective organisational culture can support and encourage employees to be more active during the working day and beyond.

We all 'tick' in different ways, and people do physical activity for lots of different reasons. However, here are some of the most common motivators and barriers that employees tell us help or hinder them to do physical activity.

#### **MOTIVATIONS TO TAKE PART**

- Keep fit / lose weight / gain weight
- Relieve stress
- **E**njoyment
- ▼ To socialise
- To improve confidence

#### **BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATING**

- Cost of sessions / equipment
- Work / family commitments
- No one to participate with
- X Lack of confidence
- Don't know where to participate

#### **EFFECTIVE MESSAGING**

Research undertaken as part of Liverpool's 'Fit For Me' campaign shows that there are types of messages and tones that appeal when encouraging inactive people from Liverpool to take part in more physical activity:

#### **MESSAGES THAT DO WORK**

Physical activity will positively benefit you in the short-term e.g. improve your sleep, mood, confidence and reduce stress

Being active is something that can help us all feel good

Physical activity can be for everybody - no matter what your shape, size, age or ability

Being active can be whatever you want it to be - find simple ways to build activity around you, such as taking the stairs instead of the lift or be active with your kids at weekends

Small amounts of activity can help you feel better. You're probably doing some activity already - build upon it by doing a little bit more, such as 10 minutes extra a day

#### **MESSAGES THAT DON'T WORK**

Messages that come across as negative, lecturing or accusatory e.g. "x% of Liverpool residents don't do enough activity", or "not doing activity increases your risk of illness"



## USEFUL TIP

See page 29 for further information about Liverpool's Fit For Me campaign - it features local people from across the city sharing their real stories about how physical activity has changed their lives.

You can help by using these Ambassadors to advocate physical activity within your workplace.

Research from Sport England around behaviour change complements the local research findings in Liverpool - use the following tips to support staff to be more active:



We're mainly driven by emotions - we connect better to faces and stories rather than statistics or logic - think about how to promote the emotional benefits of taking part in physical activity



T

We like to see immediate results - lots of people use physical activity as a way to lose weight or tone up - however that normally takes time. Think about how to build in immediate rewards to participating in physical activity initiatives, even something as simple as recognising a colleague for taking part



We like to fit in - marketeers use a concept called 'social proofing' to demonstrate that humans like to follow the crowd, and that there is safety in numbers (e.g. thousands of people have taken part) - think about how to use group dynamics to encourage people to take part in activity initiatives

Every part of the customer journey matters - think about every single step that a colleague may take in joining in with an activity, from how to signup to what happens after the activity - we need to make each step as easy, quick and appealing as possible



The Fit For Me resources enable you to apply all of these tips - go to www.FitForMe.info to find out more

#### **ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE**

In addition to using the right messages to promote activity to staff, an effective culture can enable employees to feel that they can be more active at work - e.g. feeling that they can step away from their desk for a short walk instead of being worried about coming back late or having to work through their break.

This culture could be developed gradually by adopting ideas such as:

- Identify a Champion 'on the ground'
- Get managerial/board backing
- Encourage managers to join in with activities
- Set up a staff working group
- Put a physical activity policy in place

- ✓ Invest in facilities/workplace environment
- Promote the benefits of being active
- Promote active travel
- Include info in management briefings to disseminate to employees

**ff** We purchased a table tennis table for our office, with senior management allowing each employee 10 minutes of paid time each day to play - this enabled staff who wouldn't normally take part to have a little taster of the game, which improved morale and then gave them the confidence to go on and play in our staff tournament.

Medicash

## GET SET

WHAT STRUCTURES CAN WE PUT IN PLACE TO HELP EMPLOYEES TO BE MORE ACTIVE?

#### **POLICIES**

An effective physical activity policy demonstrates to your employees that the organisation is committed to supporting workplace physical activity. This policy may involve practices such as:

- Flexible working arrangements to allow staff to undertake physical activity before/during/after the working day.
- A '10 Minute Blast' allowing staff at least 10
  minutes of paid time each working day to take
  part in a short physical activity initiative, such as
  going for a short walk or taking part in a team
  workout.

#### **INVOLVING EMPLOYEES**

Initiatives are more likely to be successful if they are co-designed with employees as this gives them the opportunity to shape the offer and feel a sense of ownership.

Before deciding upon an initiative, activity or campaign to promote physical activity, it is recommended that you consult with employees so that they can inform you about their needs. This could be done through an online survey, focus group or setting up a staff forum.



As part of the Workplace Wellbeing Charter accreditation process, Health@Work can provide expertise around putting policies and procedures in place to improve staff health and wellbeing within your organisation - see page 30 for further information about how they can support you.



#### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY CHAMPION TRAINING

A very effective way to effectively communicate messages to employees is through word of mouth. MSP deliver a Physical Activity Champion training course, suitable for any member of your workforce who is passionate about promoting physical activity - they don't necessarily need to work in a physical activity or wellbeing role.

As part of the Champion training, participants will gain an insight in to:

- Physical activity evidence and guidelines
- Behaviour change
- Workplace activity ideas
- Signposting to sources of support

Once trained, your Champions will be skilled and engaged to help your HR/Management function to promote physical activity initiatives within your workplace.



Employers are seeing the benefits of allocating their Champions some time during their working week to organise and promote initiatives.

#### **MEASURING SUCCESS**

As employers, you are likely to want to demonstrate the impact and outcomes from implementing physical activity initiatives to show a return on investment, especially to senior management. There are a number of ways in which you can demonstrate this, including measuring:

- A change in absenteeism levels
- A change in staff physical health and mental health
- A return on investment, or social return on investment
- Quotes and case studies on how employees have improved their health



There are a range of organisations that have a range of tools and mechanisms available to help you measure and demonstrate outcomes (see page 28 for further details). They can support you to gather this data before and after any initiatives take place in order for you to measure and demonstrate a positive change.

"The whole programme is a great initiative not only for our own business but the wider Merseyside community"

> Cathy Murphy Merseyrail

## GOI

# PRACTICAL IDEAS FOR YOUR WORKPLACE

We've put together a selection of ideas that you could try in your workplace - all are designed to be low cost, quick and simple to implement.

As we have already seen, different people respond differently to various messages or ideas. Some of these ideas could work in your workplace, but the most effective initiatives are developed through listening and engaging with employees to provide a range of options so that they can choose something to suit them and their needs.

It is strongly recommended that you gain consent from your employer (e.g. through HR or Health & Safety) to undertake any of these activities before encouraging staff to join in. It is also recommended that you advise employees if they have a health condition or are concerned about their health, they should consult a health professional before taking part.



## PROMOTE THE BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Promote Liverpool's physical activity campaign 'Fit For Me' to employees. The campaign promotes the benefits of physical activity and aims to inspire people living and working in Liverpool to be more physically active. Access resources and tips on messaging via the website - see page 29 for info



## OFFICE ACTIVITIES

Liven up lunchtimes with office table tennis, volleyball, golf or badminton equipment – quick and easy to set up in a spare meeting room /communal space



## BREAKTIME WALKING CLUBS

Move away from your desk and take a brisk 15 minute walk outside as a team. Contact Liverpool City Council (see back cover) for details of free Walk Leader training available



#### WORKPLACE SPORT TEAMS

Take part just for fun or compete against other workplaces by setting up your own team - you could try rounders, netball or football



## MEETING ROOM ACTIVITIES

Swap your chair for a swiss ball for five minutes to work your core and posture when sat in a meeting. Or have one less chair than the number of people in the meeting so that there's always one person stood up



## WORKPLACE CHALLENGE

Could you collectively walk the distance between Liverpool and London in steps? Set your own target and work together as a team to achieve it or create a team challenge speak to MSP (page 30) for more info



## 5 MINUTE TEAM WORKOUT

Take part in quick and gentle activities at your own pace with your colleagues at the end of a team meeting or at your desk



#### WORKPLACE ACTIVITY CLASSES

You could bring in a tutor to deliver yoga, tai chi, circuit training or dance sessions in your workplace



## BEAT THE BOSS

Challenge employees to beat the management team in an activity challenge - everybody loves to try to beat their boss!



## OFFICE RUNNING GROUP

You could try a beginners running group, then train staff up as Run Leaders to sustain the group. Access the Fit For Me Activity Finder to find local running groups and Run Leader Training - see page 29 for more details



#### LEISURE MEMBERSHIPS

If you don't have your own facility, gyms offer reduced fees if a number of your colleagues are interested in joining. Check out the city's Lifestyles Fitness Centres Corporate Membership offer on page 33



### WALKING MEETINGS

Have a small meeting or appraisal organised? Step outside to walk and talk at the same time!



### EXERCISE FQUIPMENT

Pop an exercise bike or stepper machine in a communal area, allowing colleagues to hop on and off for quick activity bursts.



#### 10 MINUTE BLAST

Allow staff at least 10 minutes of paid time each working day to take part in physical activity.

Access the Fit For Me website for '10 minute motivations' that you can share with staff



## OFFICE WORKOUTS

Ask staff to create fun office workouts, such as stand up when you're on the phone, do five star jumps when you go to the printer or lunges when you're waiting for the kettle to boil.



## CYCLE/WALK TO WORK DAY

Tap in to resources such as National Bike Week or Walk to Work Day, or offer a breakfast to employees who cycle in. Promote Liverpool's citybike scheme to employees and Merseytravel's journey planner resources



Link up with your local sports club, park or facilities – who knows what opportunities are on your doorstep! Check out the Fit For Me Activity Finder for further info and see page 33 for links to the Liverpool Sports Forum and Parks activities!



#### SIT-STAND DESKS

The latest research has found that sitstand desks can reduce daily sitting time and lead to beneficial improvements in cardiometabolic health in office workers.

Reference: Graves et al. (2015) BMC Public Health 15:1145 DOI: 10.1186/s12889-015-2469-8



#### OFFICE THEMED DAYS

Have office themed days every week or month, such as Table Tennis Tuesdays, Walking Wednesdays or Football Fridays.



#### **RECOGNITION**

Run an 'Active Employee of the Month' scheme to reward and celebrate employees who take part.



MSP can help you to implement any of these ideas – from loaning equipment to providing health & safety risk assessments – see page 30 for contact details.



Physical activity is just one element of an effective organisational health and wellbeing strategy. Check out the range of health training sessions offered by Health@Work in Liverpool - see page 30 for further information.

# WHO ELSE CAN HELP?

We hope that you have picked out some ideas in this Toolkit that you can implement within your workplace, and there are also lots of local organisations and sources of information that you can use to encourage your staff to be more active.





#### **FIT FOR ME**

Launched in July 2016, Fit For Me is a Public Health campaign backed by Liverpool City Council and NHS Liverpool CCG, aiming to inspire Liverpool's population to become more active.

The campaign is part of the wider strategy that aims to make Liverpool the most active core city in England by 2021, targeting adults aged 16-65 who are inactive.

The Fit For Me website (www.FitForMe.info) is packed full of information and advice around how and where to be active in Liverpool. As an organisation, you can also be the first to hear about new Fit For Me campaigns/offers and receive a toolkit of resources by registering as a stakeholder - you can do this by emailing hello@fitforme.info

#### THIS GIRL CAN

Sport England also run a number of public campaigns to encourage people to be more active, such as This Girl Can. This Girl Can is a celebration of active women up and down the country who are doing their thing no matter how well they do it, how they look or even how red their face gets. You could use This Girl Can messages and resources to help promote physical activity to women in your organisation.

There's a This Girl Can campaign designed specifically for Liverpool – find out more by visiting **www.thisgirlcanliverpool.co.uk** 





#### **MSP**

MSP is the only strategic organisation dedicated to unlocking the power of sport and physical activity across the whole of the Liverpool City Region.

By providing leadership and expertise, plus access to a well-developed network of partners and funders, MSP create the conditions that enable people to be active every day.

MSP provide their Active Workplaces programme designed to help organisations to improve the activity levels of employees. Find out how MSP can support your workplace to implement physical activity by calling **0151 427 3889** or visit **www.merseysidesport.com** 

#### **HEALTH@WORK**

Health@Work can help your organisation to create safe and supportive workplace cultures with healthy, happy staff who perform at their best. They deliver a range of training courses, staff health checks, events, campaigns and a wellbeing app covering stress, mental health, alcohol awareness and healthy lifestyle.

Sign your business up to the Workplace Wellbeing Charter, endorsed by Public Health England and Dame Professor Carol Black. These guidelines provide organisations of all sizes with best practice advice, guidance and support to improve workplace health and wellbeing across eight areas.

For more information please visit www.healthatworkcentre.org.uk





### MERSEYTRAVEL EMPLOYERS' NETWORK

The Employers' Network provides your organisation with access to bespoke advice & resources to inform & incentivise employees and visitors to travel more sustainably.

Membership includes an invite to two forums a year, where you can network and share best practice with other local employers, a free travel survey & results analysis, a dedicated cycle & walking challenge website, site improvement grant scheme (available during limited periods), public transport ticket campaigns and regular newsletters.

To join over 400 other members of the Employers' Network simply email **EmployersNetwork**@ **merseytravel.gov.uk** with your full contact details & number of staff employed.

#### **CITYBIKE**

citybike is Liverpool's cycle hire scheme, with more than 140 stations across the city. citybike Corporate Membership allows businesses to save money on city business travel and reduce their carbon footprint by using citybike. Membership allows you, through your business, to offer your workforce use of citybike for business travel across Liverpool. You can also, if you wish, allow employees to use citybike for commuting to and from work or for leisure purposes outside work.

For further information please visit www.citybikeliverpool.co.uk/corporate.html





### BRITISH HEART FOUNDATION - HEALTH AT WORK PROGRAMME

Health at Work is the British Heart Foundation's (BHF) programme to help your colleagues stay healthy and feeling great at work. BHF's research is powering the fight against heart disease. You can support your staff to reduce their risk of developing heart and circulatory disease by providing heart healthy initiatives in your workplace.

Join Health and Work and you'll receive:

- Free resources and advice to support your staff improve their health and wellbeing.
- Access to the latest ideas and top tips through our website.
- Email newsletters, members' postal packs and access to our online LinkedIn community of members to share best practice.

Join for free by visiting **bhf.org.uk/healthatwork** to find out more and get support for your business.

#### **SPORT ENGLAND**

Sport England fund community and grassroots sporting programmes across England. They also fund National Governing Bodies (NGBs), who have responsibility for managing their specific sport. For example, the local NGB for football is Liverpool FA and for netball it's England Netball. Some NGBs are able to offer guidance, training, links to clubs or sessions to help you set up your own workplace sports activities or teams. If you have a particular sport in mind that you would like to establish in your workplace, MSP can help link you to an NGB contact who can help you.

Sport England also offer small grants programmes to encourage community physical activity programmes – find out if your workplace is eligible for funding by visiting www.sportengland.org/funding/



#### **USEFUL LINKS**

Fit For Me

Fit For Me Activity Finder

Liverpool City Council Lifestyles Fitness Centres

Liverpool City Council Leisure and Parks

Liverpool Sports Forum

www.FitForMe.info

www.FitForMe.info/activities/activity-search

www.liverpool.gov.uk/lifestyles

www.liverpool.gov.uk/leisure-parks-and-events

www.liverpoolsportsforum.org.uk/clubs

## CASE STUDIES

Introducing physical activity initiatives in the workplace is great for business, and it can also transform the lives of your workforce.



EMPLOYER
CASE STUDY
THE WOMEN'S
ORGANISATION

"Our office culture used to be very sedentary, spending little time on our feet and having a 'naughty table' with treats and sweets on, but signing up to Liverpool Active Workplaces and joining the Step Challenge really changed the game for us.

Going on walking meetings, lunchtime walks and colleagues parking their cars a few roads away has now become the daily routine – as an organisation we are now very much more movement focused and make an effort to incorporate it into our day.

Two of our colleagues were trained up as Physical Activity Champions, and they help to spread moral motivation and information about how physical activity can be an easy choice.

Taking part in the programme has made a definite improvement to communication, and fitness is a hot topic in the office now. People are engaging in conversations about changes that they are making in their lives to be more active, and the 'naughty table' is now a distant memory!"



EMPLOYEE CASE STUDY KEE-RA, LIVERPOOL MUTUAL HOMES

"My role at work is largely desk-based, so I used to be very sedentary and would often take the lift instead of the stairs when I went for appointments. I signed up for the Step Challenge with some of my colleagues, and initially set myself a target of 5,000 steps a day - I built up the amount of activity that I did day by day, taking the stairs instead of the lift and walking short distances that I may have previously got a bus or taxi for.

Walking has been great for me because it is free, it is simple and it is easy on my joints. It's a lot easier choice than forcing myself to go to the gym or for a run, and it's been great for my asthma too. I am now averaging 9,000 steps a day plus I now go on weekly cycle rides and I'm planning to start up swimming.

It's amazing what difference going out for a walk on your dinnertime can make, and it's created healthy competition within our office because the first thing everyone talks about when they arrive in the morning is how many steps they have done and whereabouts they are on the leaderboard!"

Liverpool City Council and NHS Liverpool Clinical Commissioning Group would like to thank the Liverpool Active City Strategy 2014-21 Stakeholders for their contributions to the Liverpool Active Workplace Programme.

Particular thanks go to the PAS Workplace Sub-group and MSP in developing the Workplace Toolkit as an accessible resource for all Liverpool workplaces.

Workplace Toolkit artwork provided by Hitch Marketing Ltd.

For further information about the Workplace Toolkit or the Liverpool Active City Strategy 2014-21, please contact Liverpool City Council's Sport and Recreation Service on 0151 233 5433 / lifestyles@liverpool.gov.uk

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