



Royal College
of Physicians

fom
Faculty of Occupational Medicine

Implementing NICE
public health guidance
for the workplace:
**Overcoming barriers
and sharing success**

Board briefing

Part of the HWDU Staff Health Improvement Project

Board briefing

‘We’re in the healthcare business. If we can’t take care of staff health there isn’t much hope for anybody.’

Board lead, acute foundation trust

Acknowledgements

This report was co-authored by Jude Williams, project lead and Sarah Jones, project manager.

The project lead and project manager, members of the project development group and staff of the Health and Work Development Unit (HWDU) would like to thank all interviewees and staff involved in our visits to trusts for their time, thoughts, and willingness to share interesting observations and examples of their work. We hope that the findings published here support the development of staff health and wellbeing (H&WB) initiatives within those trusts involved in the project and others throughout the country.

We would like to thank Dr Siân Williams and Dr Richard Preece for their support with the draft manuscript and their valuable advice throughout the project.

The following trusts were involved in the phase one interviews: Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals NHS Trust, Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust, Birmingham Women's NHS Foundation Trust, Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust, Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Dorset County Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Frimley Park Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust, Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Mersey Care NHS Trust, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust, Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust, Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust, Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust, South Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, Stockport NHS Foundation Trust, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust, The Walton Centre NHS Foundation Trust and Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

The Royal College of Physicians

The Royal College of Physicians plays a leading role in the delivery of high-quality patient care by setting standards of medical practice and promoting clinical excellence. It provides physicians in the United Kingdom and overseas with education, training and support throughout their careers. As an independent body representing over 20,000 fellows and members worldwide, it advises and works with government, the public, patients and other professions to improve health and healthcare.

Faculty of Occupational Medicine

The Faculty of Occupational Medicine (FOM) aims for healthy working lives through:

- > maximising people's opportunities to benefit from healthy and rewarding work while not putting themselves or others at unreasonable risk
- > elimination of preventable injury and illness caused or aggravated by work
- > access for everyone to advice from a competent occupational physician as part of comprehensive OH and safety services
- > providing support to the Faculty's membership to raise the standard of OH practice.

Health and Work Development Unit

The Health and Work Development Unit (HWDU) is a partnership between the Royal College of Physicians (RCP) and the Faculty of Occupational Medicine (FOM). It is hosted by the RCP's Clinical Standards Department. The unit aspires to be known as a national centre of excellence for health, work and wellbeing quality improvement work. HWDU's remit is to contribute to improving the health of the workforce by supporting the implementation of evidence-based guidance. The unit carries out national clinical and organisational audit, facilitates change management work with participants and develops evidence-based guidelines.

Foreword

The NHS workforce continues to be our most vital resource. Maintaining and improving their health is crucial for meeting the increasing demand for safe, high quality patient care. This board briefing (and accompanying implementation guidance) demonstrates to organisations how to improve staff health and engage their workforce by implementing NICE public health guidance for the workplace.

To ensure the NHS has a committed, compassionate workforce that is as healthy and productive as possible, NHS organisations must address staff health and wellbeing. They have a responsibility, both to their employees, and to meet the important national requirements of the NHS Constitution, the NHS Operating Framework and the NHS Outcomes framework. The findings and best practice examples in this report provide a major practical step towards helping trusts place staff health improvement high on the agenda.

This report presents the findings of the *Staff health improvement project*, which assessed how NHS trusts have successfully implemented the NICE public health guidance for the workplace. The project team took a systematic approach, selecting 22 mental health and acute trusts around the country to learn from their practical experience. Interviewing board members and staff wellbeing leads, the team built up a picture of how NHS trusts can successfully implement the NICE guidance, irrespective of their progress to date.

The evidence-based NICE recommendations and the experiences of NHS trusts and examples of best practice shared in this report can be used together to provide guidance for prevention and management of a wide range of health problems affecting our workforce.

I urge all boards to use the barriers, enablers and themes identified in this report to drive forward their activities around staff health and engagement.



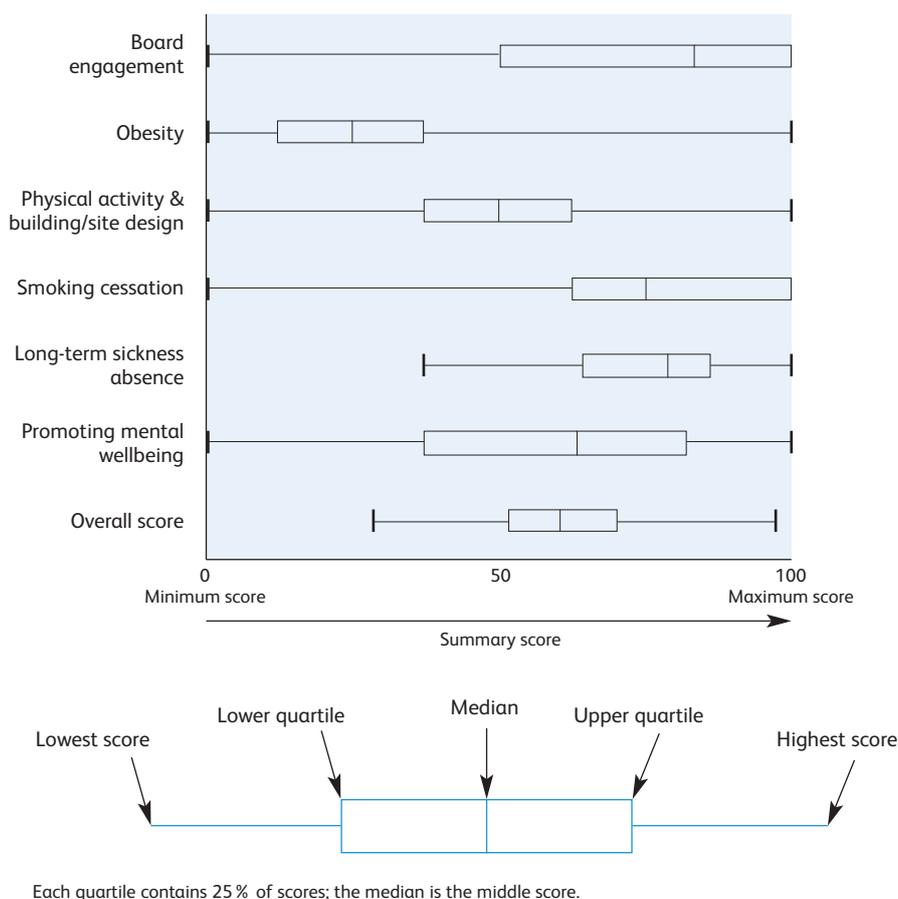
Sir David Nicholson KCB CBE
NHS Chief Executive

Background

- > Staff are the main healthcare delivery vehicle for the NHS.
- > Staff are your most valuable asset, accounting for at least 40 % of your NHS Budget.¹
- > Staff health influences patient experience, patient safety and clinical outcomes.²
- > A healthy workforce is crucial for delivering sustained improvements in patient care.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has published evidence-based guidance for all employers on how to improve their staff health. Topics covered are: management of long-term sickness absence, mental wellbeing, obesity, smoking cessation and physical activity in the workplace.^{3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8} NICE economic modelling shows that the recommendations are cost-effective.

In 2010 the Health and Work Development Unit (HWDU) measured in a national organisational audit how well trusts across England were implementing the NICE workplace guidance. Results showed wide variation with areas of poor compliance.⁹ The figure below shows the median summary score (and range from lowest to highest score) achieved in each topic area by the 282 (63%) trusts in England that participated in the audit.*



* A summary score was calculated for each trust that participated in the national audit, based on their responses to the audit questions. Further information on the calculation can be found in the audit report available at www.rcplondon.ac.uk.

Identifying barriers to, and enablers for, implementing the guidance

In 2012 HWDU identified 22 acute and mental health trusts from the national audit with results suggesting good progress in implementing the NICE workplace guidance. HWDU held 41 structured telephone interviews with the board lead and implementer for staff health and wellbeing (H&WB) in these trusts, to elicit organisational barriers to, and enablers for, implementing the guidance (phase one). We selected a range of trusts in terms of size, number of sites, financial performance, sickness absence rates, location (rural, urban), teaching and non-teaching.

Subsequently, HWDU facilitated tailored action planning workshops with 40 mental health and acute trusts in England (phase two). The workshops were used to brief participants on the themes that emerged from the interviews, support board engagement and progress implementation of the NICE workplace guidance.

This board briefing summarises findings from phase one and the action that senior stakeholders can take to support the development of their staff health and wellbeing work.

The report *Implementing NICE public health guidance for the workplace: Overcoming barriers and sharing success* summarises the wealth of knowledge and expertise gained during both phases of the project and includes the detail of the interviews, the barriers and enablers identified and activities that have been implemented.¹⁰ This longer report is recommended for H&WB steering groups and it can be used by any organisation that would like to develop their staff H&WB work. The report can be accessed at <http://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/staffhealth>.

Overarching organisational enablers

The following overarching organisational enablers were identified as supporting the implementation of the NICE workplace guidance and the development of an effective programme of work to support staff H&WB.

- > **Values:** make the link in your organisational values between patient outcomes and staff H&WB (including respecting and engaging staff).
- > **Board involvement:** demonstrate strong board involvement and support for the H&WB agenda by:
 - nominating a board lead with responsibility for staff H&WB who can develop and facilitate the links between different departments (eg communications, estates) that play a role in supporting the delivery of H&WB work
 - requesting updates on H&WB activity and regular reports on workforce metric data that integrate staff H&WB measures
 - ensuring feedback is provided to the board lead, implementer or H&WB steering group.
- > **Governance:** ensure your board lead for staff H&WB is proactive, supported by an implementer and leads a H&WB steering group that has an effective reporting line to the board.
- > **Staff engagement:** frequently assess staff H&WB needs using a wide range of methods (eg NHS Staff Survey, counselling reports) and involve staff and their representatives in planning and delivery of H&WB programmes.
- > **Data:** use data from a variety of sources as intelligence to plan interventions and target organisational hotspots.
- > **H&WB strategy:** use a H&WB strategy and corresponding action plan to set direction, maintain momentum and hold individuals to account for delivery. The recommendations in the NICE workplace guidance can be used as a framework to describe the evidence base for effective action.

- > **Resources:** make a small, dedicated budget available for staff H&WB activities. Consider the benefit of a coordinator role depending on the size of your organisation. Additional resources can be made available through:
 - making patient facilities and services available for staff (eg gyms, mental wellbeing and smoking cessation services)
 - developing strong relationships with external organisations (eg local councils) and securing local sponsorship
 - using profit-making activities, year-end unspent funds and charitable funds
 - making a business case to the board for specific programmes (such as case management)
 - developing a network of staff H&WB champions throughout the trust.
- > **Involving managers:** involve, train and convince managers that supporting staff H&WB is an integral part of their job. Incorporate aspects of H&WB into staff recruitment and managers' objectives, supervision guidance and appraisals.

Enablers for implementing the 5 NICE guidance topics

The following generic enablers were identified to support the implementation of the five NICE workplace guidance topic areas (obesity, physical activity, smoking cessation, mental wellbeing and long-term sickness absence). Further details of specific enablers and the interview findings can be found in *Implementing NICE public health guidance for the workplace: Overcoming barriers and sharing success*.¹⁰ We recommend that all trusts use these findings and case studies to inform their own action planning.

- > Articulate to staff the link between their H&WB and the quality of patient care they deliver.
- > Put in place a broad range of initiatives so that there is 'something for everyone'.
- > Use clear communication methods to promote services, events and activities to staff.
- > Engage staff in decisions about services and activity choices and ensure these are available at a convenient time for staff.
- > Invite staff to lead or become involved in the delivery of H&WB initiatives.
- > Monitor uptake, for example by gender, occupational group and pay band and respond quickly to changes in demand for H&WB initiatives.
- > Build links with external organisations to support delivery of initiatives.

Conclusions

From our interviews with a range of trusts we conclude that all trusts are capable of implementing the NICE workplace guidance. Many interviewed trusts had addressed and overcome the predictable barriers of finance, geographical distribution, head count and organisational change. Some trusts have extended their H&WB work beyond the NICE workplace guidance and these examples are included in the main report.

The workforce is the NHS's most crucial and costly asset. Making staff health and engagement a central trust value will increase productivity, avoid financial waste and contribute to better patient care.

All board members should read this report and encourage their H&WB steering group to read the report *Implementing NICE public health guidance for the workplace: Overcoming barriers and sharing success* and use it to implement, or review and revitalise, the staff health agenda.¹⁰

Actions for senior stakeholders:

1. **Link staff H&WB with patient outcomes in your organisational values.**
2. **Strengthen your staff H&WB governance arrangements.**
3. **Ensure board awareness of H&WB work.**
4. **Ensure all directorate heads support this agenda (eg finance and communications).**
5. **Ask your HR or OD Director to read and use the main report.**

References

- 1 The Kings Fund (2010) General Election 2010: frequently asked questions. [online]. Available from <http://www.kingsfund.org.uk>
- 2 Department of Health. *NHS Health and Well-being. Final Report*. Crown copyright, 2009. (<http://www.nhshealthandwellbeing.org/FinalReport.html>)
- 3 National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. *Management of long-term sickness and incapacity for work (PH19)*. London: NICE, 2009.
- 4 National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. *Promoting mental wellbeing through productive and healthy working conditions (PH22)*. London: NICE, 2009.
- 5 National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. *Obesity: guidance on the prevention, identification, assessment and management of overweight and obesity in adults and children (CG43)*. London: NICE, 2006.
- 6 National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. *Workplace interventions to promote smoking cessation (PH5)*. London: NICE, 2007.
- 7 National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. *Promoting physical activity in the workplace (PH13)*. London: NICE, 2008.
- 8 National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. *Promoting and creating built or natural environments that encourage and support physical activity (PH8)*. London: NICE, 2008.
- 9 Health and Work Development Unit. *Implementing NICE public health guidance for the workplace. A national organisational audit of NHS trusts in England*. London: RCP, 2010.
- 10 Health and Work Development Unit, *Implementing NICE public health guidance for the workplace: Overcoming barriers and sharing success*. London: RCP, 2012.