



North East
Better Health
at Work Award

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Attention: Health, business and industrial correspondents and newsdesk editors

North East Better Health at Work Award highlighted as best practice model to improve workplace health across the country

The North East's flagship partnership workplace health programme, the Better Health at Work Award has been heralded as an example of best practice in improving workplace health in new national guidance published by Public Health England (PHE). The University College of London's Institute of Health Equity's (IHE) report on 'Increasing Employment Opportunities and Improving Workplace Health', commissioned by PHE is part of a series of evidence reports and briefings offering guidance on practical, local actions to tackle health inequalities.

The Better Health at Work Award is a unique partnership between all 12 of the region's Local Authorities, the NHS, and the Northern TUC. The Award recognises the efforts of local employers in addressing health issues within the workplace. It is free, flexible and open to all employers in the North East, regardless of size, location or type of business. There are four levels, Bronze, Silver, Gold and Continuing Excellence which employers progress through.

More than 400 regional employers have participated in the scheme to date, with 200 employers, covering 12.5% of the region's working population actively participating in 2014 alone. There are now in excess of 1000 Health Advocates in workplaces across the region. Health Advocates are staff from all business levels who take a lead on health and wellbeing in their workplace, run related events and offer informal support and advice to their colleagues.

In 2013 over 100,000 people participated in a diverse range of workplace-led health interventions, including cancer awareness sessions, smoking cessation, blood pressure screening, bone marrow donation and physical activity from marathons and football tournaments to deskercise and virtual mountain climbing - by swapping the lift for the stairs!

Beth Farhat, Regional Secretary for the Northern TUC who coordinate the Award throughout the region, said: "The Better Health at Work Award's inclusion in the new IHE reports is well-deserved recognition of the commitment the North East as a whole has shown to the health of our region, our employers, our workers and our communities. All twelve of the region's local authorities support



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and endorse the Award so we can offer an effective, coordinated and proven programme to everyone who participates.

“It is a privilege to be a partner in this programme and to see the real results it is delivering. It would be so rewarding if, thanks to the IHE report, our model is adopted by other areas and the success replicated throughout the country.”

Councillor Paul Watson, Chair of the Association of North East Councils (ANEC) said: “Investing in public health improvement and preventative measures makes a real difference to people’s health and in terms of reducing cost pressures on public spending and in reducing health inequalities. Having the Better Health at Work Award programme highlighted by the Institute of Health Equity as an effective means of addressing health inequalities is testament to the joined-up approach we employ in the region and the positive results that brings with it.”

Notes to Editors:

- For the full **Increasing Employment Opportunities and Improving Workplace Health Report** can be found click on the following link: <https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/projects/increasing-employment-opportunities-and-improving-workplace-health>
- The full series of IHE Reports can be found here: <https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/projects/local-action-on-health-inequalities-series-overview>

The reports were commissioned by Public Health England and the topics covered relate to some of the policy objectives in the Marmot Review* and are intended to provide a useful local focus for action. They are designed for local authorities, particularly Directors of Public Health and their teams and for Health and Wellbeing Boards. The papers include evidence, practical points and case studies on approaches and actions that can be taken by local authorities throughout England on a range of issues to reduce health inequalities.

*In November 2008, Professor Sir Michael Marmot was asked by the then Secretary of State for Health to chair an independent review to propose the most effective evidence-based strategies for reducing health inequalities in England from 2010.

The [final report, 'Fair Society Healthy Lives'](#), was published in February 2010, and concluded that reducing health inequalities would require action on six policy objectives:

- **1. Give every child the best start in life**
- **2. Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives**
- **3. Create fair employment and good work for all**
- **4. Ensure healthy standard of living for all**
- **5. Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities**
- **6. Strengthen the role and impact of ill-health prevention.**

The full Marmot Review can be found here: <http://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/projects/fair-society-healthy-lives-the-marmot-review>

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