



# DISC know how to 'run' a healthy workplace

**Employer:** DISC

**Area:** Durham

**Theme:** Physical Activity



**DISC is a registered charity working across the Northern Region, we specialise in supporting people with complex needs and those who are considered hardest to help. Our staff work in very challenging situations and focus upon supporting people to make positive changes to their lives.**

We began our 'Better Health @ Work' journey in 2012 when we signed our Head Office up for the Bronze level which we successfully achieved in the same year, having gathered some momentum we were keen to continue the journey and therefore signed up to the Silver Award in 2013.

The campaigns we have run over the two years have included cancer awareness, awareness of mental health, physical health, alcohol awareness, with healthy eating, weight management and physical exercise featuring throughout as ongoing campaigns. As part of our healthy eating and weight management campaigns we have run a 'biggest loser' weekly weigh in programme, given staff opportunities to share healthy recipes, held healthy baking and soup making competitions in addition to smoothie and summer fruit fests and water intake challenges. We have found that involvement appears to be greater when there is a competitive element!



Our largest and most successful campaign to date has been our Physical Activity campaign.

## Physical Activity

Staff indicated that they would be interested in participating in some form of physical activity if it was during the working day or straight after work in the workplace. We therefore organised a programme of activities that would appeal to a range of people with differing abilities as detailed below:

- On-site exercise classes
- Running classes after work to train for Marathon / half marathon, Great North Run.
- Bleep test
- After work Bike Club
- Lunch time walking group
- Free gym passes

To promote and encourage participation we promoted the recommended levels of exercise and the benefits of exercise alongside some positive persuasion.

Below is a snapshot of the outcomes achieved in 2013:

- 5 people completed the Edinburgh Marathon, for 3 of these it was their first marathon
- 2 people who had never run before completed the Edinburgh Half Marathon
- 5 people completed the Great North Run
- 10 people signed up to twice weekly exercise classes
- Up to 15 people took part in the lunch time walking club
- 3 people accessed free gym passes

Implementing Better Health at Work has given us the opportunity to focus upon the welfare of our staff, who often work on a lone basis in potentially stressful and difficult situations.

Positive feedback from staff has encouraged us to continue our journey and challenge ourselves further; resulting in us now embarking on the Gold Level Award.

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