

# Healthy Working Lives Bulletin October 2017



With the winter season fast approaching this bulletin focuses on keeping your staff fit and healthy at work and reducing sickness absence. According to the **Office for National Statistics**, sickness absence rates have generally been falling since 1993. However there was a slight increase in 2014 and 2015.

Rates still tend to be higher for certain groups:

- those working in Scotland and Wales (in comparison to those working in England)
- individuals who smoke
- older workers
- those working in large organisations
- those working in public sector organisations
- those with long-term health conditions (however this group have also seen one of the largest reductions in absence rates) **(1)**.

Minor illnesses such as common coughs and colds were the most common cause of absence in 2016, this is followed by muscle or joint problems and mental health conditions.

Recent reports however suggest that one in three sick notes (known as fit notes) written by GPs relate to mental health problems.

### ***Alison Mackay said:***

***“Understanding national sickness absence trends can be useful to help employers target health initiatives and training to particular groups of staff. However, employers need to get to grips with what is happening in their own workplace and what is available locally to support their staff.***

***Often small companies will grow rapidly and fail to see sickness absence patterns emerging. Large organisations and public sector organisations seem to have higher rates of sickness absence therefore should try to monitor trends via absence rates, exit interviews and staff surveys.***

***In particular employers need to do more to support staff with common mental health problems such as anxiety or depression. It is vital that managers know how to be fair, consistent and sensitive towards employees who experience poor mental wellbeing. This does not come naturally to all managers and therefore training and mentoring for new managers is essential.***

*An open door policy and a friendly ear can often make the difference between an employee confiding in their manager and staying at work to an employee going off long term sick.*

*Recent research from Mind UK finds that only 60% of males feel they have a good understanding of how to promote mental wellbeing of staff compared to 74% of female line managers (2). Yet the majority of training delivered by the NHS is attended by female line managers. Clearly more needs to be done locally to address this imbalance."*

- **Stress Control Sessions:** Free support sessions for individuals suffering from stress or mild depression or anxiety. Runs over 6 evening sessions at various locations across the Forth Valley Area. To book and for more information visit: <https://bookwhen.com/imhs>

- **Living Life** - Telephone Cognitive Behaviour Therapy. Visit: <http://www.nhs24.com/usefulresources/livinglife/>
- **Mentally Healthy Workplace Training:** Train your managers in Mental Health Awareness by attending this FREE course. For dates and booking visit: <http://www.healthyworkinglives.com/hwlevents/default.aspx>
- **Mental Health First Aid Training** (2 days) - for more dates visit the Health Promotion training brochure: <https://nhsforthvalley.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Health-Promotion-Service-Training-Brochure.pdf>

#### References

(1) - <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/labourproductivity/articles/sicknessabsenceinthelabourmarket/2016>

(2) - <https://www.mind.org.uk/news-campaigns/news/mind-survey-finds-men-more-likely-to-experience-work-related-mental-health-problems/#.Wa5v5K-WyM->

**Healthy Working Lives** **NHS Health Scotland**

## Turn around your attendance management

Take our **FREE** new online module **Supporting Staff Attendance** and get things under control. Packed with information and tools, it will help you put into action the most effective ways for managing absence. Don't forget, you can also call our specialist advisers on 0800 019 2211.

**Do our FREE online module today**  
[healthyworkinglives.com/staff-attendance](http://healthyworkinglives.com/staff-attendance)

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# National Campaigns Coming Up...

## Go Sober for October

Get your workplace to join in Go Sober for October visit:

<https://www.gosober.org.uk/>



## Staying Warmer in Winter

With the colder weather around the corner, why not promote some ways for staff to save energy and stay warmer in winter? Many households struggle to keep their homes warm and energy efficient. This is known as fuel poverty.

Home energy Scotland provides impartial advice in making your home cheaper to heat.

Call 0808 808 2282 or visit: <http://www.homeenergyscotland.org/>

Encourage your staff to visit: <http://www.homeenergyscotland.org/>

Encourage your staff to visit: <http://www.greenerscotland.org/home-energy-scotland/>



## Mouth Cancer Awareness Month

Rates of mouth cancer are higher in Scotland than the rest of the UK. Raise awareness of this important subject in November during Mouth Cancer Awareness Month.

Visit: <http://www.mouthcancer.org/>



## Other National Campaigns

For a list of other National Campaigns visit:

<https://www.hi-netgrampian.org/news-events/campaigns/>

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## National Campaigns Coming Up...

### Join in with National Sugar Awareness Week (30th October - 5th November)

Download or order your FREE resources from Action on Sugar. A health factsheet 'Sugars: Learn more, eat less' **can be downloaded or ordered (50 printed copies free of charge)** on a first-come-first-served basis.



Also available to **download for free** including a smartphone app, a selection of posters and factsheets from Action on Sugar.

To order and download resources and to register your support for the week, please visit:  
<http://www.actiononsugar.org/Resources/ordering/index.html>.

### Annual Report

Find out more about the work  
NHS Forth Valley's  
Health Promotion Team  
has been involved in over the  
past year:

<https://nhsforthvalley.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Health-Promotion-Annual-Report-2017.pdf>

A yellow sticky note is pinned to the page with a red paperclip. The note contains handwritten text in blue ink.

If you would like to  
be added to the email  
distribution list for this  
bulletin please email:

[elainehaston@nhs.net](mailto:elainehaston@nhs.net)

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## Healthy Working Lives - RMD Bronze Award



A big **congratulations** to RMD Ltd on achieving their Healthy Working Lives Bronze Award.

RMD Ltd is an independent specialist in data centres, server & comms rooms and IT facility solutions. RMD Ltd pride themselves on being one of only a handful of UK companies with the capacity to supply, install and maintain power protection and cooling for critical IT infrastructure & services. They have fully accredited engineers that ensure the smooth running of vital IT services for some of the UK's biggest banks, retailers and emergency services. Working with small and large organisations across the country, RMD's client list includes NATS, Aggreko, NHS, GlaxoSmithKline and AutoTrader.

RMD Ltd achieved the Bronze Award after implementing a number of activities to improve the health and wellbeing of their staff. In particular work focused on improving knowledge around policies and procedures such as accident reporting. They also focused on improving physical activity by running a staff pedometer challenge and trialling sit-stand desks to encourage staff to spend less time in a sedentary position.

***Gavin Maxwell, Managing Director, RMD Limited says:***

***“Receiving the Healthy Working Lives Bronze Award is a great achievement for our company. Our dedicated and knowledgeable staff are the life blood of RMD and the company’s biggest asset. We want to continue to invest in our employees’ welfare and empower everyone to even greater achievements.***

***We are truly thrilled that we have now achieved our Bronze Award and we want to carry on the good work with our eye set on Silver.”***

For more information on RMD products and services please visit:

***[www.rmduk.com](http://www.rmduk.com)***

***email us at: [sales@rmduk.com](mailto:sales@rmduk.com)***

***or call our professional and knowledgeable RMD team on 01259 219362.***

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# Winter Flu - Join the Campaign

Minor illnesses such as coughs and colds were the most common cause for sickness absence in 2016 accounting for approximately 24.8% of the total days lost. Flu is much more than a bad cold. It is a virus that can make even healthy people feel very ill. The flu can be very serious and in extreme cases can result in very serious illness and even be fatal.

## Encourage eligible employees within your workforce to take up the influenza vaccination.

In Scotland, the flu vaccination is offered to groups of individuals who may be at risk.

These include:

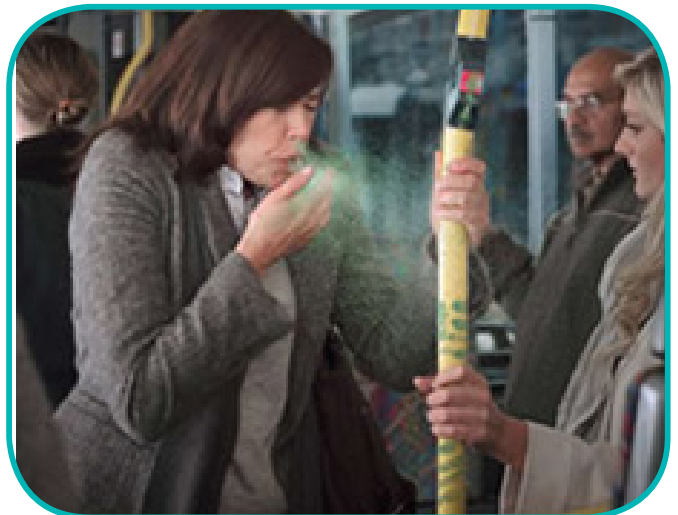
- anyone with a specific **health condition**
- people over the age of 65
- **pregnant women**
- those who work in **health care**.

Individuals who are not in these eligible groups can get the flu vaccination in many high street pharmacies for a small fee.

## Other ways to protect against the flu.

It may sound like common sense, but many people fail to follow good hygiene practices which can prevent flu from spreading in your workplace.

- Make sure staff know to wash their hands regularly with warm water and soap. This is particularly important once someone has coughed, blown their nose or touched their mouth, face or eyes.
- Make sure staff have the resources to clean/disinfect equipment such as keyboards, telephones and door handles regularly - this is particularly important where equipment is shared between staff.
- Ensure your cleaning staff know to disinfect commonly touched items such as door handles as part of their regular cleaning routine.
- Have some office tissues available and encourage staff to use tissues to cover their nose and mouth when they cough or sneeze.



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- Wash hands before eating.
  - Encourage staff with coughs/colds or flu to take time off work, or where appropriate (and they are well enough) to work from home. Allowing employees who are ill back into the workplace could be the difference between one member of staff and a large chunk of the workforce being off.

### Promote this campaign to your workforce.

- The World Health Organisation has an infographic which can be printed and displayed in a toilet or sent out to staff [http://www.who.int/gpsc/clean\\_hands\\_protection/en/](http://www.who.int/gpsc/clean_hands_protection/en/)
- Why not promote good handwashing on **Global Handwashing Day**?
- To order a free supply of campaign flyers, posters and social media assets that you can display in your workplace please contact: [keri.wyatt@union.co.uk](mailto:keri.wyatt@union.co.uk)
- Hand-washing clip on You Tube - encourage staff with children to teach them good hand washing techniques - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGJNspLRdrc>
- Permit eligible staff time off to get their flu vaccination.

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Top Employer for  
Working Families Award -  
Now Open

Visit: <https://www.workingfamilies.org.uk/about-us/family-friendly-working-scotland/scottish-top-employers-for-working-families-awards/>

In an increasingly competitive marketplace, organisations looking to recruit and retain the best people, gain an advantage from being known as a great place to work.

Supporting individuals to work in an agile, family friendly way can ensure parents, carers and those with health conditions are well supported in the workplace. Why not gain the recognition you deserve.



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# Working Health Services Forth Valley

## Helping employers and employees with sickness absence.

Working Health Services is an NHS and Scottish Government initiative. The service offers tailored, individual support to people who are suffering ill health but are still attending work or have been absent for less than 3 weeks. To be eligible for this service individuals must be employed by businesses which employ less than 250 employees.

This is a self-referral service and individuals are assigned a case manager who can offer advice and support and where appropriate arrange early access to interventions including physiotherapy, occupational therapy and counselling.

Working Health Services is delivered locally in Forth Valley by Amanda Chapman. Amanda is a local Vocational Rehabilitation Nurse Specialist/Certified Disability Management Professional.



### Amanda Chapman explains:

*“Through Working Health Services I work closely with people from many backgrounds and workplaces who are struggling at work for one reason or another. Some examples are workplace stress, muscle and bone problems, difficulty with the efficiency of their working environment, for example incorrect seating/standing position and breakdown of communication between the employee and employer. Working with employees through this service allows me to offer tailored support to the individual which can help them to safely return to work at the earliest possible point.”*

The contact telephone number for Working Health Services is **0800 019 22 11**

## Working Health Services - A case study provided by Amanda Chapman

Mr X is a 32 year old mechanic within a busy car repair garage. He has been struggling to lift heavy engine components due to pain in his left shoulder as a result of a fall at home. He had 3 days off sick initially but has been struggling at work since. He has been asked by his manager why he is not keeping up and has been told that he would have to speed up. He reported feeling worried about his job and the impact that it would have on his family if he lost it. He also explained that he feels anxious and uptight and is suffering panic attacks each time he goes to work. Mr X also described that he was drinking more alcohol than usual to “cope with the pressure”.



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Whilst in the canteen he picked up a leaflet about Working Health Services which his employer had put on the table. Initially he did not want to phone the number on the card as he was worried that his employer would be told about this. Mr X spoke to his GP who changed his pain medication and reassured him that this service was run by the NHS and therefore information would only be shared with his employers with his consent.

Mr X decided to contact the number **(0800 019 22 11)** where he spoke to a call handler who advised him that a case manager would be in touch with him within the next few days to organise a telephone assessment. Mr X was contacted 2 days later by a local case manager who arranged a good time for him to be able to talk confidentially.

Following a confidential discussion about his pain, his work, his home circumstances and his increased alcohol intake, an action plan was agreed. Firstly, a referral to physiotherapy was made to address his ongoing pain. It was suggested that he speak to a qualified counsellor through Working Health Services for help with his anxiety and low mood, however he declined and was signposted towards local services such as **stress control course** and local alcohol support services.

Mr X was seen by the Physiotherapist at the beginning of the following week and received support and treatment for his injury. His case manager kept in touch with him and offered to meet his manager with him to discuss any work adjustments which could be supported until he had recovered, to which Mr X was agreeable. It was suggested that he be given more time to carry out his normal tasks, work on lighter duties and have extra support from other staff. He was able to speak to his manager, with support from the case manager, confidentially regarding his concerns about losing his job.

His manager reassured him that he was a valued member of staff and wasn't going to lose his job.

After a course of physiotherapy and some temporary lighter duties at work, Mr X was much happier and in less pain, he was less anxious and his productivity increased. Mr X still uses the skills that he learned from the stress control class and the exercises that he had been advised by the physiotherapist to help strengthen his shoulder. He is now drinking less as he feels that he is coping at work and in turn at home.

His employer is happy that they, along with Working Health Services were able to support him to get back to full productivity.

For more information or to order some materials for your workplace please contact Amanda Chapman @ ***A.chapman1@nhs.net***

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# Cancer and the Workplace

Our good friend and colleague **Ann McArthur** tells us about her journey with Cancer.



*“As I stood on top of Ben Nevis, I thought - ‘I’ve just climbed the highest mountain in Scotland’ - and I felt good, I felt fit, I felt so proud of myself. After all I try to ‘practice what I preach’. Little did I know, less than 4 weeks later I would receive a ‘recall’ letter instructing me to come back for another mammogram. Little did I know I would receive a cancer diagnosis.*

*Right now, more women are being diagnosed with breast cancer and we now know that the earlier breast cancer is diagnosed and treated, the greater the chances of survival. I had been happy to accept the invite for breast screening at my local mobile screening unit and thought, “that’s me for another 3 years”. I am vigilant about my breast screening as well as the self-examination procedures as both my younger sisters had breast cancer 7 years ago.*

*“What do we do next?” I asked. I was a bit shocked, no doubt about it, but I knew early detection was good and the sooner things got started the better the outcome could be.*

*After my recall mammogram I had an ultrasound and a biopsy. One week later it was confirmed, I did have breast cancer and I needed surgery. Surgery was to follow 5 weeks later and I’ll tell you, that was a long 5 weeks. During that time I attended my nephew’s wedding, a big hat on my head and all dressed to the nines, to onlookers I hadn’t a care in the world. A week after that I flew to Dresden and Berlin for a family holiday. How could I enjoy myself I thought, but my family and my faith gave me the strength to keep going.*

*People say I’m a very positive person, I heard this so often throughout my cancer care and hearing it gave me determination to see the surgery and treatment regime through to the end. We have come a long way, treatments now are highly targeted and personalised to each and every individual, 4 weeks after surgery I received 19 sessions of radiotherapy and prescribed hormonal therapy for the next 10 years.*

*We are so lucky to have our NHS, I have seen and experienced the dedication that went into patient care at every step of my journey from diagnosis to recovery (and thereafter) and I cannot thank staff enough for the care and support they gave me.*

*I have recovered and am now back at work and happy to share my experience with you.”*



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The Scottish Government are promoting breast screening as part of their Detect Breast Cancer Early programme and we urge all women aged 50 - 70 (and beyond) to take part, do not put it off.

Learning that an employee or colleague has a Cancer diagnosis can be daunting for many employers. However, positive and supportive work can make a big difference to someone either living with or recovering from Cancer. Many employees will want to continue to work while receiving care for a cancer diagnosis.

Macmillan offer training and support for workplaces. Human Resources or Occupational Health employers can order a free Work and Cancer **toolkit** which provides lots of information and tips for employers to follow if they have someone in their workforce being treated for cancer.



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### Healthy Working Lives

If you are part of the Healthy Working Lives Award programme please remember you are required to carry out staff consultation at least every three years. This is normally done via a staff survey facilitated by your Healthy Working Lives Adviser. If you are due your next employee survey get in touch with your local adviser to discuss, please don't wait until your next annual review is due.



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# Winter Driving Be Prepared

Driving in the winter is very different than during other times of the year. Adverse weather and longer periods of darkness (especially after the clocks go back at the end of October) makes driving more hazardous. Sometimes conditions can be extreme, as we have found out over recent winters with prolonged periods of heavy snow and floods. This means that we need to adapt the way we drive.



Different weather conditions create different hazards throughout the winter and in different areas of the country at different times. A single journey may take us into very different weather, road and traffic conditions, so we need to be prepared for each one.

The following tips from [Road Safety Scotland](#) may help you cope better with the various seasonal weather hazards.

## Winter Driving Tips DVD

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Road Safety Department has produced several highly informative DVDs and videos on a range of road safety topics. To view the one on winter safety tips [click here](#) and then scroll down to the short RoSPA DVD 'Winter Driving Tips', run time about five minutes. Also available to download is the [RoSPA Road Safety Factsheet Winter Driving Tips Factsheet](#).

## Look After the Heart (Battery) of your Car

According to the RAC a large number of RAC patrol winter callouts are battery related. If your car won't start in the cold your battery might need replacing or it might need to be given a booster charge. However this takes time and if you are in a hurry and need to get moving fast then you can attempt to jump start your car if you have access to jump cables and another vehicle. To view the RAC DVD on how to jump start your car [click here](#), run time about 2 minutes.

Remember: **high gear, gradual acceleration and soft braking!!**

# Health, Safety and Wellbeing Training Programme

<b>October</b>	
<p><b>Manual Handling Risk Assessment (MHRA)</b> The workshop aims to raise awareness of the moral and legal requirement for carrying out a MHRA. It includes interactive sessions on the methodology to adopt when carrying out a MHRA, a DVD, a practical exercise and an interactive quiz.</p>	<p><b>When: Thursday 19th October from 09.30 - 12.30</b> <i>Where: Gean House, Alloa</i> <i>Cost: £15:00 + VAT</i> <b>Booking tel: 01259 726 430</b> <b>E-mail: aharrick@ceteris.co.uk</b></p>
<p><b>Fire Risk Assessment (FRA)</b> The Workshop aims to raise awareness of the moral and legal requirement for carrying out a FRA. It includes interactive sessions on the methodology to adopt when carrying out a FRA, a DVD, a practical exercise and an interactive quiz.</p>	<p><b>When: Friday 20th October from 09:30 - 12:30</b> <i>Where: Enterprise House, Stirling</i> <i>Cost: £20:00 + VAT</i> <b>Booking tel: reception 01786 463 416</b> <b>E-mail: reception@stepstirling.co.uk</b></p>
<b>November</b>	
<p><b>Health and Safety Policy</b> The workshop aims to raise awareness of the moral and legal requirement for writing and introducing a health and safety policy statement. It includes interactive sessions on basic health and safety at work, a practical exercise and an interactive quiz.</p>	<p><b>When: Tuesday 14th November from 09:30 - 12:30</b> <i>Where: Gean House, Alloa</i> <i>Cost: £15:00 + VAT</i> <b>Booking tel: 01259 726 430</b> <b>E-mail: aharrick@ceteris.co.uk</b></p>
<p><b>Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Risk Assessment (COSHH RA)</b> The workshop aims to raise awareness of the moral and legal requirement for carrying out a COSHH RA. It includes interactive sessions on the methodology to adopt when carrying out a COSHH RA, a DVD, a practical exercise and an interactive quiz.</p>	<p><b>When: Friday 17th November from 09:30 - 12:30</b> <i>Where: Enterprise House, Stirling</i> <i>Cost: £20:00 + VAT</i> <b>Booking tel: reception 01786 463 416</b> <b>E-mail: reception@stepstirling.co.uk</b></p>

For more information on the above workshops contact:  
Tom Neilson **07795 801 465** or by e-mail: [tneilson@nhs.net](mailto:tneilson@nhs.net).

To access the full health promotion training brochure visit:  
<https://nhsforthvalley.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Health-Promotion-Service-Training-Brochure.pdf>

