

Pilot Weight Loss Programme for NHS Staff

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Background:

65% of adults in Scotland are classed as overweight or obese. Two-thirds of the population of Fife are overweight or obese. Up to 25% of the UK's working age population suffer from a long-term condition which can be weight-related. Poor health may lead to sick leave, lost working days, increased absenteeism and reduced productivity. The aim of this pilot project was to identify if the workplace could be used to facilitate the NHS workforce to adopt a healthier lifestyle.

Method:

Six pilot sites were identified within NHS Fife. Facilitators were identified for this pilot who were either health improvement practitioners or had been successful participants in the community weight loss initiative: The Kingdom Weight Challenge. All participants were recruited at a local level and provided with a pack (based on Fife's Dietetic Department's weight loss intervention: Winning by Losing), containing an energy deficit, calorie controlled diet with practical advice on portion control. This initiative was free and was accessible during working hours.

Results:

Three sites successfully completed the 12 week programme with 132.35kg lost in total (51 participants) with an average weight loss of 2.6kg. The biggest individual weight loss was 12.4kg, an average weekly weight loss of 1kg. 61% of participants lost more than 1.4kg.

Discussion:

One site did extremely well with recruitment and weight loss and there appears to be an appetite for a workplace weight loss initiative within Fife Health and Social Care Partnership. Average weight loss was 2.6kg, the BDA work ready white paper showed that average weight loss is around 1.4kg. For some, facilitation time was difficult, if not part of their everyday role.

Conclusion:

These are encouraging results and demonstrate that the workplace can be an ideal forum for influencing the physical and mental wellbeing of a large population through the promotion of healthy lifestyles. Future work will focus on implementing the initiative at other sites in Fife and looking at its effectiveness.

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