

Wellbeing Workshops Heighington

Employer: Durham County Council

Area: County Durham

Theme: Healthy Eating, Cancer, Men's Health



In a digital age, it can be particularly challenging to engage none-office-based staff in health and wellbeing campaigns and initiatives. This year as part of the Better Health at Work Award we have developed strong working relationships with frontline services. Working closely with Refuse and Recycling, Neighbourhoods and Climate Change we piloted monthly health and wellbeing workshops at Heighington depot. The pilot provided the opportunity for equitable access to health messages and signposting information with frontline staff.

The Waste Operations Manager was involved in the planning of monthly health and wellbeing workshops, working closely with the Durham County Council Better Health at Work (BHAW) Lead Health Advocate to welcome several guest speakers from external health organisations to the Depot. These interactive workshops have been well received, generating discussion, and raising awareness on a range of topics to promote good health and wellbeing.

As a result of the pilot refuse and recycling and trade union representatives are working with BHAW to recruit representatives to take part in a focus group to identify barriers and solutions to engaging frontline workers in workplace health initiatives. Learning from this will be invaluable and widely reproducible.

The Waste Operations Manager became a trained BHAW Health Advocate to continue to promote



health and wellbeing messages with staff. Winning an Inspiring Peoples Award in the Workplace Health and Wellbeing category. The Award recognises the people and teams who show exceptional commitment and whose contribution to the service they work for is vast.

"When the refuse & recycling service was approached to identify solutions in engaging front line workers in workplace health and wellbeing interventions. I was keen in supporting this initiative having recently had a health scare myself, in August 2022, 2 weeks before my 50th Birthday I suffered a heart attack and was rushed to James Cook Hospital for treatment. This has really changed my outlook on life and the importance of looking after your own health and wellbeing. I now gently promote health messages, championing campaigns and encouraging staff to get involved. We rolled out a monthly program of health and wellbeing workshops in the Heighington lane depot/waste transfer station. The first session we looked at fats and healthy lunches, this certainly raised a few eyebrows when staff realised how much sugar went into everyday lunch items such as fizzy drinks and a small chocolate bar. As a frontline service the refuse and recycling operatives work out in all weathers so the second session Staying safe in the sun was delivered by the PCP cancer team. This was followed by a McMillan coffee morning where staff could come along for a cuppa and cake. During October we did Stoptober and raised awareness of the dangers of smoking and then looked at the short-term facts regarding vaping as an alternative to smoking. Men's health and wellbeing session we looked at Prostrate and bowel cancer, the staff had chance to talk about their own experiences or family members who had been diagnosed with certain cancers. This was a good session and certainly got the staff talking and asking questions especially in relation to prostate cancer. The final session is to be delivered before Christmas the content will cover Winter wellness - food, exercise, alcohol, financial wellbeing. I enrolled myself on the health advocate training to ensure that I was able to signpost any members of staff who had any issues relating to health and wellbeing. We have monthly trade union meeting, so this enables me to provide health and wellbeing updates and raise awareness of health campaigns and encourage staff to take part in events."



