

# Public Health Responsibility Deal

*Health at work*



Public health is everyone's responsibility and there is a role for all of us, working in partnership, to tackle these challenges.

A wealth of evidence shows that a fitter, healthier workforce is more engaged, efficient and productive and makes sound business sense. Making health and well-being integral to your business sends a positive message, not only to employees but to customers, clients and your wider community.

The simple facts are too many of us are eating too much, drinking too much and not doing enough physical activity. As a result more and more people are being diagnosed with chronic conditions such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes and cancer – impacting on individuals, business productivity and ultimately the country's prosperity.

## Taking action

The Responsibility Deal – a new and radical approach to tackling these public health challenges – involves organisations taking voluntary action in one or more of the following areas – **alcohol, food, health at work** and **physical activity** – to help people lead healthier lives.



Yes it's about personal responsibility, but organisations like yours have a vital role to play – whether in the workplace for your own staff, through your commercial activities which affect your customers and consumers or through what you do in your local community.



There are a wide range of pledges which lay out practical actions that you can take. Every organisation, no matter what its size, sector or business can do something – joining is simple and free. To become a partner you just need to sign up to at least one pledge, but the more you can commit to the greater the impact and benefit.

Working in partnership with Government you can help us create an environment that empowers and helps people to live more healthily.

## Health at work network

The health at work network sets out to encourage employers help improve the health of their employees – keeping people healthy, fitter, in work, productive and engaged.

Staff are our most vital resource. It is essential that workplace health is not seen as a separate “add on” but as integral to enabling businesses to meet the challenges they face. Traditionally, occupational health has largely been restricted to helping those who become ill whilst in employment, rather than preventing them from becoming ill in the first place. But we need to reach further and strengthen the preventive function of occupational health.

The network has a range of partners, including many smaller organisations such as Let's Get Healthy and Kershaw Roofing, public sector organisations and NHS Trusts, as well as leading companies such as Mars, Nestlé, AstraZeneca, Morrisons, BP, British Airways, GSK, Unilever UK to name a few.

## Pledges for employers

If you want to do something to help improve the health of your staff, there are several pledges that all employers can sign up to:

- ensure that employees with chronic conditions and mental health conditions can remain in work and are managed in the best way possible;
- use only accredited occupational health services;
- provide an annual employee health and wellbeing report;
- encourage and enable healthier eating at work;
- promote stop smoking support services;
- offer and promote staff health checks e.g. the NHS Lifecheck;
- support the health and well-being of young people starting work (coming soon).





## Physical activity pledges for employers

Additionally there are a number of pledges promoting physical activity that are relevant for all employers, including encouraging active forms of travel (walking and cycling), as well as greater physical activity within the workplace.



## Why sign up?

- In 2009/10, we lost 23.4 million days due to work-related ill health.
- The overall cost to UK business of working age ill-health is in excess of £100 billion a year.
- Your commitment sends out a positive message about your work culture, enhancing your reputation, helping to attract good candidates, as well as retaining valued employees.
- Twenty seven million of us go to work every day. We spend more time working than doing anything else. The workplace offers us a major opportunity to drive health improvement.
- You can share learning with other like-minded businesses, speak with peers and get some practical support.



For more information visit our website:

**<http://responsibilitydeal.dh.gov.uk/>**

Or contact:

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