



Safety & Wellbeing Policy Arrangement

Section 35b – Physical Activity in the Workplace

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Further guidance on this matter can also be obtained from the safety team at healthandsafety@northlan.gov

Section 35 (B) - Promoting Physical Activity In Workplaces

1. Introduction

It is now widely recognised that physical inactivity is a serious risk to health and inactivity carries a risk of coronary heart disease (CHD) roughly equivalent to the risk of smoking, having high blood pressure or high cholesterol. Inactive people (and therefore inactive workpeople) have twice the risk of suffering CHD as their active colleagues. In addition to protecting an individual from CHD, being moderately active on a regular basis can: -

- Significantly improve mental health by helping to control or reduce stress and anxiety.
- Offer protection against obesity, osteoporosis, diabetes and some forms of cancer.
- Maintain functional ability for older people.
- Provide many social benefits for all ages.
- Improve attendance at work.

North Lanarkshire Council is striving to improve its absence management performance as there is increasing evidence of a strong link between employee health and productivity. Planned regular exercise and physical activity by employees as that being advocated in this policy, is consistently shown to utilise less sick leave than those who do not exercise. Physical activity includes participation in sport or formal exercise, but also includes activities such as walking, dancing and heavy housework or gardening. Employers should promote awareness within the workforce to highlight to employees that they don't need to be the 'sporty type' to be active.

2. Statement

North Lanarkshire Council is committed to the ethos and benefits of promoting physical activity in its workplaces and taking positive steps to demonstrate this by encouraging its employees toward the derived benefits by promoting planned physical activity in the following ways: -

- Promote physical activity within the working day
- Promote employee awareness and participation in the *Access NL* Scheme to increase opportunities to undertake physical activity

3. Promotion of Activity

The promotion of physical activity at workplaces is an important element in encouraging employees to gain and sustain good health. There are a number of ways in which managers can encourage employees who work in Council premises to engage in physical activity which can be as follows: -

- Use stairs rather than the passenger lift
- Walk to Council meetings in establishments that are close by.
- If possible set aside a suitable area which encourages employees to cycle to work where it may be safely and securely padlocked
- Encourage employees to wear a pedometer from time to time, in order that they may gauge how much walking exercise they do or don't do!

- Publicise the existence of any Service activities that promote planned physical activity. For example, the Strathclyde Hillwalking Club or Jog Scotland.
- Encourage employees and their family members participate in “taster” sessions for activities such as canoeing or sailing at Strathclyde Park.
- Encourage employees to make the most of the leisure centres in the area with discounted membership via Access NL.
- Make use of the Healthy Working Lives notice boards to promote events/activities available.

There will be many other opportunities and ideas for management to include or to encourage employee participation in planning ideas. Such activities and information campaigns not only encourage employees toward healthy planned physical activity but also foster good working relationships.

Appendix 1 gives a range of ideas that can be used locally to develop local activities that will help foster team

4. Provision of Information

As part of the Council’s commitment to facilitate the provision of information and awareness raising activities Services will take all possible opportunities to provide information to employees so they can make positive lifestyle decisions about their physical health and wellbeing.

Services and managers should take advantage of employee events to provide information stands and use such opportunities to promote physical exercise options.

Managers can also consider how physical activities can be incorporated into the normal working day. The content of appendix 1 will offer some guidance on this matter whilst appendix 2 offers some information on the facilities available via NL Leisure.

When managers are considering physical exercise options then the content of appendix 3 should be considered, this will help strengthen participation. Managers and supervisors can obtain help to integrate physical exercise into the daily work activities and this help is outlined in appendix 4. Consideration should be given to ensuring all employees, no matter their abilities, can participate in some way.

Incorporating Planned Physical Activity in the Workplace

What is Physical Activity?

Being physically active involves moving your body and using energy (expressed in kilocalories or Kcals) at an intensity that makes you warm and breathe a bit deeper than usual i.e. such as brisk walking. Anyone can do this and achieve a healthier lifestyle!

Physical activity is a general term, used to describe doing everyday activities the active way! There are many types of physical activity: walking, housework, gardening, playing with children / grandchildren, washing the car, climbing the stairs, dancing, bowling, and exercise (such as swimming or cycling).

How Much?

In order to achieve an active lifestyle adults should accumulate (build up) at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity most days of the week. It is important to remember that the kind of effort involved in sports such as hockey or football, or the effort involved in running for a bus is **not** required to gain the health benefits. Many people really like expending this kind of effort, but for people who are not as active as they would like to be, thinking of perspiring and working hard can often put them off. Remember that we should actually be invigorated by our activity rather than tire of it! The effort we need to put in to gain health benefits is the same as the feeling we have when we are walking briskly.

Moderate activity is the equivalent of brisk walking. Moderate intensity physical activity should feel comfortable, and should not lead to injury. If physical activity is painful then it's likely you're overdoing it and may need to reduce the intensity and possibly the frequency of the activity.

Frequency = how often you are physically active

Intensity = the level at which the activity is maintained and how hard you think it feels

Duration = length of time you spend being physically active

A combination of frequency, intensity and duration can be used as a guide to monitor levels of physical activity.

Planning Physical Activity at Work

If you are taking up physical activity after a prolonged gap, or other illness, you should consult your GP as to the suitable types of activity you could do. Consider starting an activity in stages.

Stage One

As a starting point less fit and able employees should **accumulate 30 minutes of moderate physical activity (equivalent to a brisk walk) on most days of the week.**

Be Active In Your Daily Life

You don't have to be a sporty type to be active! Going for a walk, doing the housework or carrying the shopping are all effective. Putting a bit more effort into physical tasks and being less reliant on labour saving devices is an excellent start.

Walking is one of the easiest ways of being more active. You don't have to buy special clothing or spend hours in the gym. Walking is free and it's something nearly everyone can do. Regular, brisk walking actually lowers the risk of heart disease. Did you know that inactivity actually doubles your risk of heart disease?

1. Take Pleasure In Active Leisure

Think about adding some activity to your leisure time. Your local parks and leisure centres will have plenty of activities to try: bowls, cricket, football, fitness classes, swimming and lots more. See which one suits you best. Alternatively, try dancing, gardening or energetic DIY to keep you active.

If you've been particularly active up to now, don't try to do too much all in one go. Take it step by step. Gradually build up your activity levels then keep up the good work - because staying fit means staying active. You may wish to consult your GP prior to taking up any new exercise activity.

Set realistic goals for yourself. Begin gradually and build up both the length and level of activity. Start off with one or two 30-minute sessions a week. If 30 minutes in one go is difficult, try two 15-minute sessions.

If you have a medical condition, or are recovering from illness, check with your doctor before you start.

Stage Two

More benefit can be achieved for both health and cardiovascular fitness if periods are continuous (i.e. 20 minutes continuously rather than 5 minutes here and there) and more vigorous (i.e. working hard enough to get slightly out of breath and perspiring). The stage two target is generally agreed as being **20 minutes of continuous vigorous activity, 3 times a week.**

Some ideas for you to consider in the context of getting fit, getting to work and while at work are as follows: -

- Active Commuting
- Stair Banner Campaign (use the stairs)
- Lunch Break Exercise

Active Commuting (travel) is about choosing regular physical activity in the form of walking or cycling for your everyday trips. It's a great way to fit regular physical activity into your daily active lifestyle. Every time you walk or ride to work instead of sitting in a car or bus, you're burning calories, getting fitter and living your new active lifestyle whilst getting part of your daily recommended amount of regular physical activity.

The journey to work is an ideal chance to help build up the 30 minutes a day of the regular physical activity you need. You can read more on this by visiting www.healthyliving.gov.uk

Stair Banner Campaign

Placing notices on each floor comparing how far they have climbed in stairs against the height of a munro. This encourages employees to take the stairs instead of the lift.

Lunch Break Exercise

Take a walk in the local area; walking route maps are available on the Council's intranet with routes from many Council establishments.

Attend one of the 'express' fitness classes available in the North Lanarkshire Leisure centres.

CONNECT

The "Health" pages of the employee health and safety pages will give access to a range of other options.

Information about Access NL

Access NL is the Council's all-inclusive health and fitness initiative. The membership is paid for on a monthly basis offering unlimited use of gyms, swimming pools, fitness classes and health suites at participating centres throughout North Lanarkshire.

If you train twice a week, you may well be spending more per month than the cost of an Access NL membership and as a member; you can use all the amenities as often as you want! All members have the same package and can make the most of unlimited use of gyms, swimming pools, health suites and an extensive range of fitness classes - there really is something for everyone!

The benefits of being an Access NL member are excellent and focuses on health, fitness and relaxation. Improving your health and fitness is beneficial to all of us regardless of the level of fitness we start off with. Access NL fitness trainers can provide you with the perfect programme designed specifically for you and your needs, they will also provide the help, support and motivation you might need to keep you going.

If you wind down from all the stresses of life you can do so at one of the many swimming pools with sauna and steam room for your leisure. Other options for winding down are popular fitness classes such as Yoga, Body Balance, and Pilates. Remember we only have the one body and it has to see us through our whole lives - treat it like its precious!

For more information on Access NL and activities at the centres listed below you can call: 01236 442644 or visit the website: www.nlleisure.co.uk

- [Airdrie Leisure Centre](#)
- [Aquatec Motherwell](#)
- [Birkenshaw Sports Hall](#)
- [Broadwood](#)
- [Iain Nicolson Recreation Centre](#)
- [John Smith Pool](#)
- [Keir Hardie](#)
- [Kilsyth Swimming Pool](#)
- [Kirkwood Sports Barn](#)
- [Lochview Family Golf Centre](#)
- [Palacerigg Golf Course](#)
- [Shotts Leisure Centre](#)
- [Sir Matt Busby Sports Complex](#)
- [Time Capsule](#)
- [Tryst Sports Centre](#)
- [Wishaw Sports Centre](#)
- [Ravenscraig Regional Sports Facility](#)

Reciprocal Agreement

There may be reciprocal arrangements for Access NL members to use facilities in other local authorities, you can find out more information on this via NL Administrator detailed above.

Physical Activity Checklist

As a proactive Manager you might be considering featuring or being included in a Healthy Eating or Healthy Lifestyle Event in your workplace or Service.

Here is a checklist of ideas that will help as a reminder and get you started: -

- Consider the best means of publicising or marketing the event, which could be emailed to 'all users', or displayed on Healthy Working Lives notice boards, or both.
- Contact your Service Healthy Working Lives Health Promotion Group member for advice on suitably themed posters on a range of health related topics linked to promoting physical activity.
- Considering enlisting the assistance of your Service Healthy Working Lives Health Promotion Group representative.
- Glance over the ideas in paragraph 5 - Guidance within this document.
- Consider if the Event is suitable for including a local / national celebrity / chief executive / committee convenor.
- Involve your colleagues where possible, for example 'promotional physical activity events suggestions box'
- Keep a record of the Event by planning and taking photographs at it and include a suitable article in your house magazine, and remember to thank all who contributed.
- Importantly - make sure that you read the Health and Safety Policy Arrangements Section 23 Management of Events - paragraph 5 Guidance for Managing Small Events and where necessary complete the Pro-forma For Managing Small Events

Sources For Advice on Planned Physical Activity

1. Healthy Living

There are endless sources of information and advice when planning physical activities, which can be accessed electronically on computer or otherwise at your local library. One particularly good source is the Healthy Living website address www.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Healthy-Living

At healthy living you'll find out about healthy eating and physical activity, and how small changes can lead to big benefits. A poor diet and inactivity can lead to health problems, but by taking on board the healthy eating and physical activity tips you'll soon see yourself on the way to a healthier lifestyle.

This web site is a joint collaboration between NHS Health Scotland and the Scottish Executive to promote Scotland's healthy living programme. It is designed to help you attain a healthier diet and a more active lifestyle by providing resources, advice and support on healthy eating and physical activity. Find out what healthy eating and physical activity are all about and discover the healthy eating and physical activity-related activities going on in your area.

There are also physical activity and healthy eating quizzes to help you assess how active you really are and how healthy your diet is. These will help you create a healthier lifestyle. You'll also find out top tips on both healthy eating and physical activity. You'll find out recipes and meal ideas, as well as suggestions for overcoming some of the typical physical activity barriers.

If you have a question about healthy living, email our experts or browse the frequently asked questions on healthy eating or physical activity. If you require further information about healthy living, order online a healthy eating pack, weight management pack or physical activity pack. You can also call the healthy living line on **0300 244 4000** to speak to someone.

For more information on the Scottish Executive's national food and health programme, and the policy behind this, you can visit the national programme's policy website. For more information on the Scottish Executive's national physical activity strategy, visit their website national physical activity strategy.

2. Paths to Health Project

The Paths to Health Project is another source giving information and advice and their website is also worth visiting at www.pathsforall.org.uk

The website provides information on why walking can help improve your health and gives contact details for health walk groups in a variety of areas.

If you should wish more information on health walk groups in the North Lanarkshire area you can contact the following:

Tel: 01259-218888

3. Jog Scotland

Jog**scotland** has been urging the people of Scotland to don their trainers and adopt a healthier and more active lifestyle since 2002. Since then, over 25,000 people have taken up jogging through our local community and workplace groups by using simple, gentle walk/jog/run programmes to encourage everyone to get out and be active.

Exercising regularly boosts energy levels, enhances self esteem and aids long-term weight loss. What's more, being more active has a host of specific health benefits including reducing the risk of heart disease, certain cancers, strokes, diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure and osteoporosis.

If you want to locate a group in your local area access the web address below or alternatively contact

Bonny Wallace
Sports Development Officer
Ravenscraig Regional Sports Facility
O'Donnell Way, Motherwell ML1 1AD

Tel: (01698) 274623

Fax: (01698) 263616

e-mail: wallacebo@nleisure.co.uk

<http://www.jogscotland.org.uk/local-groups>

Physical Activity - The Facts

Physical inactivity has been described as the 'silent killer of our time'. Lack of physical activity is one of the causes of illness and death in Scotland and increasing activity levels is now a priority for many national and local organisations. People who are active are more likely to live longer, enjoy more healthy years of life and remain independent.

NHS Scotland recommends that we should be doing 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days of the week. A good guide to the term "moderate activity" is that we should be slightly out of breath but still able to talk and feel warmer.

The Benefits of Walking

We know that walking is an ideal activity to promote to inactive people because it is easier to start to sustain other activities. However, people can equally reap the benefits of physical activity by cycling or walking / power walking using local path networks.

Walking is an ideal form of exercise to promote to inactive people:

- It is free and requires no special equipment.
- It is accessible to all regardless of age, income, location and ability.
- It is within the physical capabilities of most people and is a realistic goal for inactive people.
- Walking combines all the physical benefits of activity with an opportunity for social contact and support.
- Walking can easily be incorporated into our daily lives, including on lunch breaks.
- It can be enjoyed safely and there is a low risk of injury.

Impact Assessments

Document Title: Health and Safety Policy - Arrangement Section 35b, Physical Activity in the Workplace

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Environmental Impact Assessment: This document has been assessed for significant environmental impact; no detrimental impact has been identified

Equality Impact Assessment: This document has been assessed for significant equality implications; no significant issues have been identified.

General Comments: This document is the arrangement section, relating to the provision of health related opportunities at appropriate workplaces across the council. This is associated with the Council's health and safety policy as required by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The general aim of the council is to ensure a healthy and safe working environment for all persons working for or make use of Council Services. Nothing in the document serves to have any negative impact on the above issues and indeed, in general, associated documents will encourage positive consideration of the factors to ensure all members of the workforce and community are afforded access to the same safe and healthy workplace.