
HEALTH, WORK AND WELLBEING – CARING FOR OUR FUTURE

Dr Bill Gunnyeon
Chief Medical Adviser
Department for Work and Pensions

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*“He’s renowned for his speed, his success rate and his list – he takes over three hundred cases a year. Some fail, a handful endure with their lights fogged, but most thrive, and many return to work in some form; **work – the ultimate badge of health.**”*

Ian McEwan – “Saturday”



WORK AND THE ECONOMY

- Decreasing labour market supply – unemployment below 900,000
- Increased numbers of people economically inactive – 2.6 million on Incapacity Benefit
- Increasing proportion of the population beyond State Pension Age:
 - Old age dependency ratio

1960	20%
Today	28%
2030	40%
- Changes in nature of work
- Aspiration of 80% employment rate



WORK AND HEALTH

- We spend 35-60% of our waking hours at work
- Work has the potential to harm health – 28 million working days lost attributed to work related illness
- Work also provides an opportunity to promote and improve health
- Health problems have the potential to lead to job loss – of the 1 million who report sick each week:
 - 3,000 will remain absent at 6 months
 - 2,400 will still be absent 5 years later
- Once on incapacity benefit for 2 years, more likely to retire or die than return to work



WORK, HEALTH AND ORGANISATIONS

- Supporting the resolution of health issues can have significant benefits for organisations:
 - Reduced absence costs
 - Improved productivity
 - Improved morale
 - Reduced turnover
 - Improved bottom line
- Organisations can create a positive culture and a safe and healthy environment
- Adjustments can be made to accommodate those with health conditions and disabilities



WORK AND THE INDIVIDUAL

- Being in work:
 - Gives status and provides an income
 - Offers social contact
 - Reduces health inequalities
 - Provides opportunities for improving health
- Being out of work:
 - Leads to deterioration in health – twice the rate of depression and three times rate of anxiety
 - Causes loss of self esteem and self confidence
 - Leads to social exclusion
 - Increases poverty
- 40% of new IB claimants have mental health problems and further 10% develop them



SO:

- Work and health are inextricably linked
- Our economy depends upon employers having people available to work
- Being in work has benefits not just for individuals but for the health and wellbeing of their family
- People who are healthy tend to be more economically active and people who are economically active tend to be healthier



THE CHALLENGE

- **Keeping people healthy**
 - Improving general health
 - Preventing work related illness and injury
- **Keeping people in work**
 - Early intervention
 - Speedy and effective investigation and treatment
 - Workplace adjustments
 - Supportive employers
- **Getting people back to work**
 - Access to rehabilitative interventions
 - Addressing other barriers
 - Return to work programmes



MEETING THE CHALLENGE

- Appropriate priority to health of working age people
- Joined up thinking and working
- Engagement of all stakeholders
- Leadership

And so the Health, Work and Wellbeing Strategy was born!



WHAT WILL SUCCESS MEAN?

- Improvement in the health and wellbeing of working age people
- More people at work
- People at work for more of the time
- People with health conditions and disabilities able to optimise work opportunities
- People able to work to a later age
- Improvement in public health
- Reduced health inequalities and social exclusion
- Reduced poverty
- Strengthened economy

