

Project Title	Delivery of occupational health services
Programme Of Work	Continuous Improvement - Programme 2
Industry Group	Occupational Health Professionals
Objective	Widening the scope of occupational health services for the local community
Description	<p>Birmingham Heartlands and Solihull NHS Trust (Teaching) has actively encouraged the occupational health services to deliver services to external clients for some years now. The client group includes schools, colleges, a local authority and a Government agency. The Trust has a long working relationship with the local community trust. The arrival of NHS Plus and the Department of Health initiative to deliver occupational health services to GP practices has presented new challenges and partnerships. The new contract with the primary care trust based on a needs assessment includes the following: - a 24 hour helpline for employees who wish to access immediate advice, e.g. violent incidents; - a 'credit card' issued to all trust staff with the helpline number; - access to external, independent counsellors managed by the occupational health service; - fast track physiotherapy service for both work-related and non work-related conditions; - aromatherapy sessions at subsidised cost. The additional services have also been extended to the acute trust staff and funding is available from contract income support fast-track physiotherapy sessions. Audit of the service over the last 12 months has shown a marked impact on sickness absence rates for staff with musculo-skeletal problems particularly if intervention occurs at an early stage. Clinical psychology services available to trust staff have been increased and free aromatherapy sessions are offered to staff suffering from stress-related symptoms on prescription from OH practitioners. The Trust also have a Health Club which has close links with the Occupational Health Department with referrals working both ways if staff have health problems which may benefit from an exercise programme. The physiotherapy costs c. £25,000 per annum for a set number of sessions and appointments are, therefore, very tightly managed. The Health Club has agreed to allow staff to have a number of free sessions if referred by the Occupational Health Department. Aromatherapy sessions are priced at c. £15 per session on average and up to 6 are usually prescribed if seen as appropriate to aid relaxation.</p>
Project Cost	£10,000 - £50,000
Project Start Date	02-01-2003
Project End Date	Ongoing
Achievements	Income generated is ploughed back into the department to improve services and newly refurbished premises have added to the value of service delivery. The physiotherapy service work closely with the Manual Handling Advisory Service which is another arm of the Occupational Health Service to maximise rehabilitation of staff with musculoskeletal problems. In the long term it is hoped that sickness absence levels will continue to fall.
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Project Title	Charting Back Pain, Body Mapping
Programme Of Work	Continuous Improvement - Programme 2
Industry Group	Consumer Services
Objective	To carry out research on the problems of back pain at work.
Description	The body map is a chart with large outline drawings of both front and back views of a body. The chart is hung on the wall or flip chart stand. A set of coloured marker pens or coloured stickers is provided. Members of the group ideally from similar occupations, are encouraged to take it in turns to use the pens or stickers to mark on the chart which bits of their body hurt when they are working. Body mapping has been proven to be a technique that draws on the direct experience of the workers themselves and it helps workers to develop an understanding of the shared risk-factors in the work they do. In total 184 women were involved in 12 separate discussion groups across the country. The groups were drawn from women members of the union working in food manufacturing, shops and mail order establishments. A simple questionnaire was issued to participants to collect some basic statistical information following the body mapping sessions. The high numbers of women reporting back pain was not surprising. Other statistical surveys have consistently shown that back pain is a common problem and that the majority of people will suffer episodes of back pain over their working life.
Project Cost	£1,000 - £10,000
Project Start Date	01-07-2000
Project End Date	01-10-2002
Achievements	The overriding conclusion from the survey was that it confirmed the value of body mapping as a technique for drawing out members' experience. One remarkable feature of all the body mapping sessions was the way in which the discussion opened up as women began to realise that they shared common problems and concerns. Once they realised that they were in a group where they were likely to be listened to, many of the women felt able to speak out about the wider effects of their back pain on their social/domestic life. It has not been possible to produce a simple 'one-size-fits-all' set of negotiators guidelines as a result of the survey. However, there are some very important conclusions to draw from the analysis of the experience of the women who took part in the survey, which lead to some useful lessons that the union can learn and some practical advice for officials and activists. Employers need to pay more attention to the health hazards for women workers and avoid mistaken assumptions and attitudes about 'women's work'. The survey confirms the now substantial body of research that shows that back pain is a common condition for workers. Controlling workplace risks will also help to reduce the chances that some women do develop more serious chronic pain that could force them into a severely limited lifestyle, living on long term welfare benefits. The success of the sessions in the survey demonstrates that body mapping is a technique that union reps can use in their workplace to break through the communication barriers that exist. Employers who really want to know how well they are performing on managing occupational health and genuinely want to prevent or reduce health risks should regard body mapping by h&s reps as a valuable part of the h&s management process.
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Project Title	Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD) Challenge
Programme Of Work	Support - Programme 5
Industry Group	Non-specific
Objective	To reduce injury absenteeism rates across its UK workforce
Description	<p>Andy Collinson, group Health and Safety Manager for the company was researching a solution that would work across many levels. It needed to rehabilitate those injured as effectively as possible and thereby reduce absenteeism. It had to be seen as good for the workforce and therefore receive union acceptance. It also had to make good business sense; absenteeism, injuries and disruption all contributed to an unacceptably expensive problem. In conjunction with Osteopaths for Industry (a company who already had extensive experience of both the training and rehabilitation needs of industry), a pilot scheme was devised. The initiative soon proved a success and was then rolled out across the BPI Group by using a national network of £3,000 osteopaths, chiropractors and physiotherapists. While the organisation undertook risk control and provided preventative kinetic handling training, the key was a service that treats injuries within a few hours, oversees each absence and provides a company-wide view on MSD problem areas. This fresh approach enables the company to manage the injury and absence more effectively and ensures the employee recovers and returns to normal duties more quickly. After an initial assessment by the registered physical therapist a detailed report is sent to the company giving details of the injury, the estimated number of treatments required and whether or not the employee is fit for normal duties.</p>
Project Cost	None Specified
Project Start Date	01-01-2000
Project End Date	Ongoing
Achievements	<p>The initiative soon covers its own cost in reduced staff absence, while providing fast-track treatment to even remotely based workers. In 1998 before it employed MMS National, each incident of MSD absence at British Polythene Industries resulted in an average of 26 working days lost. The following year, the first year of working with the system, the number of lost days was down to four for each MSD absence. 'Over the first year we substantially reduced British Polythene Industries lost days from handling inquiries. In financial terms, the benefits outweigh the costs by 12:1. We were able to make a case for improvement, prioritise areas and demonstrate the impact we have had from hard measurable facts' said Andy. In 2001, there were more than four hundred treatment sessions arranged through MMS National. Each referral had an average of three treatments, and more than 75 % remained at work whilst undergoing therapy. It doesn't matter if the injury occurred at work or at home, because any type of back injury will demand early attention or risk lengthy rehabilitation; 74 % of BPI injuries were non-work related. As a result of the swift response and early treatment, which is the essence of the service, only 16 % of the referrals had to take time off work. A further 14 % were temporarily put on restricted duties and 70 % were fit for work. Musculoskeletal injury responds well to early treatment, and this contrasts with the traditional route of dealing with musculoskeletal injury through GP prescription and sick note, which often results in costly long-term absence. 'This rehabilitation scheme created the solutions we needed in terms of health, safety and occupational health. It was popular with the workforce and their representatives, and it made excellent business sense; for every £1 we spent on the scheme we made a saving of £12.' Said Mr Collinson.</p>
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Project Title	Business Benefits of Ergonomics Training
Programme Of Work	Continuous Improvement - Programme 2
Industry Group	Engineering and Utilities
Objective	Implement a comprehensive ergonomics training programme with measurable business benefits.
Description	System Concepts designed, developed and delivered a series of different ergonomics training courses to various groups of supervisors, safety personnel, team leaders and engineers at a major automotive manufacturer
Project Cost	£10,000 - £50,000
Project Start Date	00-00-1999
Project End Date	00-00-2001
Achievements	<p>Three major ergonomics projects were initiated after the training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - one investigated storage operation and handling tasks; - another involved material parts retrieval and distribution to the production line; and - the last one investigated the use of power tool balancing systems. <p>The ergonomics solutions implemented after the analysis had been completed reduced the risk of sustaining low back injuries by eliminating awkward and poor back postures and reducing the load weights handled by the employees.</p> <p>The resultant solutions for the three different job processes resulted in a 27% decrease in absenteeism through low back pain in the following year.</p>
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Project Title	Back in Work, Backpain, physiotherapy
Programme Of Work	Continuous Improvement - Programme 2
Industry Group	Non-specific
Objective	To compare two fast track evidence-based interventions for the treatment of simple low back pain.
Description	The patients were directed to the project by GPs and occupational health physicians. One group (1) received the Back Book and advice followed by the normal route of care as directed by their GP, and the other group (2) received the Back Book, advice and a back programme involving one treatment plus group exercise sessions.
Project Cost	£10,000 - £50,000
Project Start Date	01-04-2000
Project End Date	01-10-2001
Achievements	Group 1 management will allow the employee to return earlier to work. On average, Group 2 patients took 10 days less off work than patients in Group 1, which represented a 33% reduction in the amount of time taken off work.
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Project Title	Back in Work, back pain, primary health care.
Programme Of Work	Continuous Improvement - Programme 2
Industry Group	Occupational Health Professionals
Objective	To raise awareness and promote good practice in the primary care setting, regarding the causes, prevention and treatment of back pain at work, and to enable general practitioners, pharmacists and practice managers to carry out a simple risk assessment of factors in the workplace associated with back pain.
Description	<p>An evidence-based education programme was produced in the form of a workbook, addressing back pain for GPs and pharmacists in their roles as employers. A simple guide to risk assessment, and a information leaflet for employees and patients about best practice in self-care in preventing and treatment of back pain were also produced.</p> <p>Invitations to take part were sent to approximately 1500 GPs' surgeries and pharmacists' practices, and as a result 132 workbooks were distributed.</p> <p>A book, 'Back Pain Matters in Primary care', which forms part of the educational programme has been published by Radcliffe Medical Press (ISBN 1-85775-418-2).</p>
Project Cost	£1,000 - £10,000
Project Start Date	01-04-2000
Project End Date	01-04-2001
Achievements	Improved working conditions for primary care workers. GPs and pharmacists, as employers, received an evidence based educational programme.
Source of Funding	
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Project Title	Back in Work, Back Pain
Programme Of Work	Continuous Improvement - Programme 2
Industry Group	Non-specific
Objective	To reduce the reoccurrence of back-pain related absence from work for patients who had experience more than 4-6 weeks absence by providing a functional restoration programme including stabilising exercises, and on advice on an individual's working pattern.
Description	<p>Participants came mainly from physiotherapy waiting lists (GP referrals) and Sandwell Occupational Health Service.</p> <p>They were screened for serious spinal pathology and any psychological barriers to rehabilitation. Participants were given a back pain restoration programme undertaken by a dedicated physiotherapist and a clinical psychologist. Links were also made into the workplace for ergonomic and other issues in order to promote safer working practices.</p>
Project Cost	£50,000 - £100,000
Project Start Date	01-04-2000
Project End Date	01-04-2001
Achievements	<p>78% of patients felt that they had benefited from the service and would use the service again. 28 of 33 patients who completed the project returned to work after 4 weeks on average.</p> <p>During the next 6 months 50% had suffered reoccurring episodes of low back pain but no further sickness absence. 28 separate company assessments were undertaken and in 25 of these recommendations regarding improvements to moving and handling and ergonomics were made.</p>
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Project Title	Back in Work, Back Pain, Physiotherapy
Programme Of Work	Continuous Improvement - Programme 2
Industry Group	Engineering and Utilities
Objective	To examine the success and benefits of providing a fast track physiotherapy service to employees with back and neck pain in local small and medium sized enterprises (SME's).
Description	<p>Rolls Royce has an established rapid access physiotherapy service for its employees, and the project extended the service to all local SME's for a six-month period to treat patients with back and neck pain.</p> <p>Where appropriate, the hazards in the workplace were assessed and simple solutions identified.</p>
Project Cost	£10,000 - £50,000
Project Start Date	01-04-2000
Project End Date	01-04-2001
Achievements	<p>71% of employees treated reported a sustained reduction in the level of pain they experienced after treatment, and 62% reported a sustained reduction in their level of disability.</p> <p>As a result of the positive effect on employees, 4 out of the 6 participating employers said they would be willing to purchase rapid access physiotherapy for their employees in the future.</p>
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Project Title	Back Pain, Back in Work, Health Promotion
Programme Of Work	Continuous Improvement - Programme 2
Industry Group	Non-specific
Objective	To assess the risk of back pain and the current level of back pain in a chosen target population, to train 70% of them in the prevention of back pain and promote early management of back pain, and to establish whether this could achieve increased awareness and a decrease in the number of reported back injuries.
Description	<p>250 employees in nine businesses in a single business park were asked to fill in a questionnaire.</p> <p>Those considered to be experiencing problems were seen by a physiotherapist and appropriate adjustments made to their workstation.</p> <p>Training sessions covering prevention and management of back pain were given which covered anatomy of spine, posture, adjustment of chair, manual handling and importance of breaks and exercise.</p>
Project Cost	£10,000 - £50,000
Project Start Date	01-04-2000
Project End Date	01-04-2001
Achievements	There was raised awareness of back pain and how to prevent it and a better-trained workforce on avoiding back pain.
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Project Title	Health Promotion, Back in Work, Back Pain
Programme Of Work	Continuous Improvement - Programme 2
Industry Group	Non-specific
Objective	To develop good practice guidelines, to build upon a project on health promotion in the workplace, to engage with small and medium sized businesses who have little occupational health input to their workforce, and to raise employers' awareness of back pain, including prevention and treatment.
Description	The project involved 11 small and medium sized businesses, and provided ergonomic and health and safety assessments, early access (fast track referral) to physiotherapy assessment and treatment, and developed and produced educational material for GP's, employers and employees.
Project Cost	£10,000 - £50,000
Project Start Date	01-04-2000
Project End Date	01-04-2001
Achievements	<p>There was raised awareness of prevention and treatment of back pain. 16 of the 19 employees receiving treatment reported that their back pain had improved by 80-100% due to physiotherapy.</p> <p>Fast track physiotherapy together with the provision of information produced an improvement in employees back pain, and a reduction in the number of days lost due to back pain.</p>
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Project Title	Back in Work, training, education, back pain
Programme Of Work	Continuous Improvement - Programme 2
Industry Group	Non-specific
Objective	To create local partnerships to raise awareness of back care issues and reduce the incidence of backpain in groups of 10 small and medium sized businesses. To establish the current back pain/injury problem, and to deliver tailor made programmes.
Description	<p>The project created partnerships with 10 small and medium sized local businesses, and delivered tailor made programmes to reduce the risks of back pain and injury within the workforce.</p> <p>The tools developed included information booklets, and good practice guides.</p>
Project Cost	£10,000 - £50,000
Project Start Date	01-01-2000
Project End Date	01-01-2001
Achievements	A questionnaire showed that awareness of back care issues amongst employees had been raised. Changes were made within the participating businesses, including the purchase of equipment and changes in working practice.
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Project Title	The Costs and Benefits of Office Ergonomics
Programme Of Work	Continuous Improvement - Programme 2
Industry Group	Other
Objective	To identify the costs and benefits of office ergonomics. The ergonomic intervention to date has been costly though beneficial so staff were keen to compare the costs and benefits.
Description	<p>The Free Ads department within Loot employs 170 staff, the majority of whom are involved in data entry. Since 1992 Loot have made efforts to improve the working environment of their offices with prevention of work related upper limb disorders in mind (WRULDs).</p> <p>A considerable amount of time, money and effort has gone into improvements. A consultant ergonomist assessed the work environment and suggested a number of changes. The H&S staff calculated the sickness and disruption costs avoided by use of ergonomics. The tool used also calculates the effect of this on the productivity of staff and produces a period in which the cost is repaid. Loot offers injured employees physiotherapy, counseling and retraining as well as extended sick leave.</p>
Project Cost	£10,000 - £50,000
Project Start Date	01-01-1995
Project End Date	01-01-1998
Achievements	<p>The analysis showed that the resulting benefits would equal the cost of the intervention in approximately two years following the implementation (in fact it took 2.2 years).</p> <p>The study also revealed a number of additional relevant benefits, which could not readily be costed or included in a financial analysis. There were a few negative aspects - some staff commented on the way in which staff have raised expectations of their employer and come to take the efforts towards preventing WRULDs for granted. Some staff believed that the ergonomics intervention may have contributed to the image of the company as a caring employer - this attracts potential employees and current staff are encouraged to stay.</p>
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Project Title	Morecambe Bay Back in Work Project 2000
Programme Of Work	Support - Programme 5
Industry Group	Non-specific
Objective	To develop partnership working between Health and Local Employers with the aim of developing good practice in the management of backpain in the workplaces.
Description	<p>11 small and medium size employers (SMEs) have been signed to the project. Education sessions have been held for all employees and those experiencing acute backpain can fast track to physiotherapy assessment and treatment.</p> <p>Ergonomic assessment are offered to employers. In addition employers are encouraged to help employees remain at work or return earlier to lighter duties. A good practice booklet is being developed and being piloted in the project with a view to circulating to other employers at the end of the project.</p>
Project Cost	£10,000 - £50,000
Project Start Date	01-01-2000
Project End Date	01-02-2001
Achievements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good practice booklet produced. 2. SMEs had education sessions and ergonomic assessments. 3. Better communication between GPs and employers – share the same view and concerns. 4. Less time taken off work – a small sample showed up to 50% less time taken off work so results need to be carefully considered. 5. Better relationships between employers and employees on lighter duties. 6. Reduced working week or duties– managed return to work as part of rehabilitation rather than waiting until someone is 100% fit to return to usual duties.
Source of Funding	HSE
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Partners	<p>Glaxo Wellcome BAE Systems Bay Community Trust Health Promotion Private/Industry Physiotherapists HSE</p>

Project Title	Evaluation of the effectiveness of an in house physiotherapist for treatment of Low Back Pain within the London Underground Limited (LUL).
Programme Of Work	Continuous Improvement - Programme 2
Industry Group	Railways
Objective	To determine whether an in-house physiotherapy service can reduce staff absenteeism associated with low back pain.
Description	<p>One full time physiotherapist worked within London Underground Limited (LUL), treating low back pain for a period of one year. The service enables LUL employees to have fast-track access to physiotherapy assessment and treatment.</p> <p>For chronic pain sufferers a programme of four two-hour advice, exercise and relaxation group sessions were offered. A variety of outcome measures were used to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the physiotherapy service. These included: · Sickness absence · Pain levels · Pain and impairment relationship scale · Roland and Morris disability questionnaire · Modified somatic perceptions · Modified Zung depression questionnaire.</p>
Project Cost	£10,000 - £50,000
Project Start Date	01-05-2000
Project End Date	Ongoing
Achievements	<p>London Underground Limited now employs a full time physiotherapist. Preliminary analysis shows that the physiotherapy service is reducing the periods of sickness absence taken by staff when experiencing episodes of back pain.</p> <p>The data collected by the physiotherapists also suggests that by treating staff with back pain early, staff are less likely to take time off work. The physiotherapists pay particular attention to the jobs people do and recommend specific exercises and postural advice to help combat the everyday stresses and strains placed on the back.</p>
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Project Title	Working Backs Scotland
Programme Of Work	Support - Programme 5
Industry Group	Non-specific
Objective	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To share new understanding with the general public on the treatment of acute low back pain. 2. To ensure a CONSISTENT message is given to all back pain sufferers. 3. To increase dialogue between employers, employees and practitioners to ensure everyone is working together.
Description	<p>Development of a pack which contains relevant information for GPs, therapy providers, back pain sufferers, employers and pharmacists, as well as a radio advert campaign.</p> <p>See www.workingbackscotland.com for further information.</p>
Project Cost	£100,000 - £500,000
Project Start Date	16-10-2000
Project End Date	Ongoing
Achievements	In the first six months since the launch tracking evaluation has shown a 7% population shift in awareness of what to do (and what not to do) for acute low back pain. By February 2003 awareness had increased to 30%.
Source of Funding	HEBS and Scottish Executive
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