



The workplace health promotion (WHP) principles were developed jointly by the management, the human resources department, staff representatives and the health and safety experts on the basis of a resolution of the Bridgend County Borough Council.

A steering group covering all departments is responsible for the health-oriented activities, for which a separate budget is available.

In search of work-related health risks

Back related illnesses as well as stress are the main reasons for sickness leave in the workforce. The relationships between certain fields of activity and work-related illnesses and health risks can be analysed with the aid of a new "personal information system". Staff representatives are always involved in the planning and implementation of WHP programmes. The employees are involved through staff surveys, for example, or questionnaires on the assessment of the projects implemented. The employees participate in the planning of new work areas and workflows etc. Experts check materials, new technologies or workflows for potential health risks. Risk profiles are drawn up for individual work areas and ergonomic analyses were conducted at the workplaces. More than 1,500 employees who frequently have to lift and carry heavy loads have already attended a training programme for coping with loads without sustaining back injuries. Flexible working hours which take the school timetables of children and the opening times of the crèches into account permit better reconciliation of working and family life.

Leisure time and sports facilities are available to the employees at reduced prices. Healthy food in the company's canteen is also available.

The municipality together with Bradford in England has been selected to undertake a national project on stress and its management with the University of Hertfordshire. Additionally, the Head of the Council's health promotion team has been sharing workplace health promotion policies with municipalities in Russia in arrangement with the Netherlands School of Public Health.

Success after a short time

A positive impact of the varied and extensive programmes on health promotion has already been felt after a very short time. Since 1996/97 absenteeism due to illness has fallen from 11.0% to 4.1%: The costs relating to time lost due to illness have been reduced by 60% in the last two years. The staff turnover rate has decreased. The image of the authority has improved considerably through its commitment to WHP.



Branch:

Local authority

No. of employees:

8.139

Products/Services:

Housing, engineering, highways and environmental protection, social services, education and leisure/cultural services

Locations:

Bridgend, Wales

Miscellaneous:

The catchment area of the council covers 140,000 inhabitants.