



Healthy Employees in Healthy Organisations

Good Practice in
Workplace Health Promotion (WHP) in Europe

Quality Criteria of Workplace Health Promotion



Foreword

The European Network for Workplace Health Promotion has been in existence since 1996. Organisations from all 15 Member States of the European Community and the three countries of the European Economic Area - Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland - take part in this initiative.

The Network's activities are based on the Community Action Programme on Health Promotion, Information, Education and Training. Sponsored by the European Commission (DG V), its members are mainly state organisations involved in occupational health and safety and the public health sector.

With the "Luxembourg Declaration"¹ the members of the Network agreed on a common definition of workplace health promotion and developed guidelines for effective workplace health promotion activities. This was the basis for these quality criteria, worked out in the frame of a project running for 2 years. They are intended to provide assistance in the planning

and implementation of successful, high-quality health promotion measures for all those who are responsible for health at the workplace.

On the basis of the criteria formulated here a questionnaire was drawn up which permits organisations² to easily assess the quality of their workplace health policy. The questionnaire is also available from the BKK Bundesverband.

The following quality criteria in this report are the result of an intensive consultation and coordination process among the experts represented in the European Network. Once again we would like to express our gratitude to all those involved.

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¹ The "Luxembourg Declaration on Workplace Health Promotion in the European Union" was adopted at the Network meeting held in Luxembourg (November 27-28, 1997) by the members of the European Network for Workplace Health Promotion.

² For simplicity's sake, organisations here means all places of work, companies and enterprises both in the private sector and the public sector, the production sector and the services sector.

Introduction

When workplace health promotion measures are implemented, employers tend to have high expectations of the success of these measures. Employers hope for economic advantages through lower absenteeism and accident rates, increased efficiency and motivation, higher quality products and services, improved company image and greater customer satisfaction. Employees tend to expect a better quality of life through increased work satisfaction, a reduction in stress, an improved working atmosphere and fewer work related health complaints.

Health promotion is supposed to “pay dividends” for the organisations. The ratio of cost and benefit must be in line with the organisation’s other investments, too. Only when the effectiveness and efficiency of the health promotion measures are ensured there is a realistic chance that workplace health promotion will develop into an integral part of the corporate policy.

In drawing up the criteria, it was assumed that the statutory provisions on occupational health and safety were already fulfilled.

Naturally, the criteria only describe an ideal health-promoting organisation which in reality is unlikely to

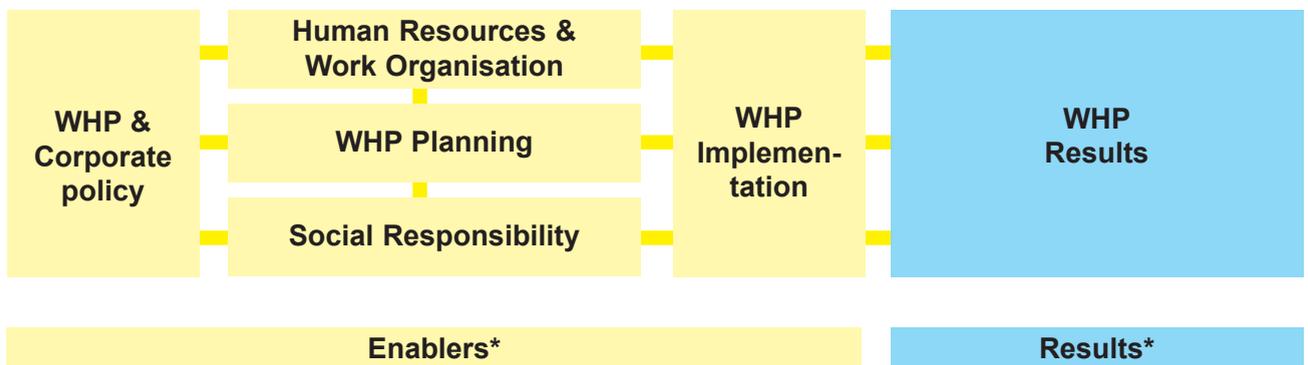
exist. However, the criteria outline how to set about establishing a healthy organisation with healthy employees. They offer a comprehensive outline for the creation of a modern corporate health policy and make it easier for organisations to determine where they stand along the route and how far they are from achieving their ultimate goals.

As organisations have different resources and requirements, the criteria cannot and should not be considered as an absolute yardstick. Rather, the aim is to determine how well the organisation is performing in relation to the individual criteria. Organisations should regard their existing health promotion measures as good practice, even though they may not have satisfied all the criteria; they at least represent a step in the right direction.

The quality criteria formulated here are based on the model of the European Foundation for Quality Management.

The criteria were divided into six sectors which, taken together, produce a comprehensive picture of the quality of workplace health promotion activities:

1. Workplace health promotion (WHP) & corporate policy
2. Human resources & work organisation
3. Planning of workplace health promotion
4. Social responsibility
5. Implementation of workplace health promotion
6. Results of workplace health promotion



* The enablers include all procedures and structures which a health-promoting organisation needs. These lead to the corresponding results.

Workplace health promotion activities are often not sufficiently integrated into structures and routines of the organisation. Therefore they frequently remain isolated. Even successful projects are not extended to other sectors within the organisation or established on a permanent basis. Another deficiency which frequently leads to the failure of workplace health promotion meas-

ures is the lack of prior assessment of the organisation's requirements. When the criteria were being drawn up, emphasis was placed on the extent to which the activities are pursued systematically and on the degree to which they are integrated into the organisation.

1

The Criteria

Workplace Health Promotion & Corporate Policy

The success of workplace health promotion depends on its being perceived as a vital managerial responsibility and its being integrated into existing management systems.

a

The organisation has a written corporate philosophy on workplace health promotion. The executive team is fully behind this philosophy and actively contributes towards implementing it.

b

The health promotion measures are properly integrated into the existing structures and processes of the organisation.

c

The organisation provides enough resources (budget, staff, rooms, further training etc.) for workplace health promotion.

d

The executive team / company management regularly monitors the progress of health promotion measures.

e

Workplace health issues are an integral part of training and retraining (especially regarding the executive team).

f

All staff have access to important health-related facilities (e.g. break and rest rooms, canteen, sports amenities).

The Criteria

Human Resources & Work Organisation

2

The most important task of health-promoting human resources and work organisation is to consider the skills of the staff. The crucial factor for the success of workplace health promotion is that all employees are actively involved as much as possible in planning and decision-making.

All staff have the skills (including health-related capabilities) which they need to perform their work or they are given the opportunity to acquire these skills.

The work is organised so that the staff avoid being overtaxed or that too little is demanded of them.

The staff are not only offered possibilities for personal career development but such development possibilities are specifically created through work organisation measures.

All staff are given the opportunity to actively engage in workplace health matters.

The superiors support their staff and promote a good working atmosphere.

The organisation takes action on the reintegration of staff (especially disabled staff) when they return to work after a longer-term period of sick-leave.

The organisation takes measures to make working life more compatible with family life.

a

b

c

d

e

f

g

3

The Criteria

Planning of Workplace Health Promotion

Workplace health promotion is successful when it is based on a clear concept which is continuously reviewed, improved and communicated to all staff.

a

The health promotion measures embrace the entire organisation and are communicated to all sections.

b

The health promotion measures are based on a careful and regularly updated analysis which is based on health-related information: work stress, health indicators, subjectively perceived complaints, risk factors, accident rates, occupational illnesses, absenteeism due to illness, expectations of all stakeholders in the organisation, especially those of the staff.

c

The entire workforce is informed about all workplace health promotion projects by means of internal public relations work.

The Criteria

Social Responsibility

4

Another crucial factor for the success of workplace health promotion is whether and how the organisation fulfils its responsibility in dealing with natural resources. Social responsibility includes the role of the organisation at local, regional, national and international level regarding its support of health-promoting initiatives.

The organisation has taken clearly defined action (e.g. through an environmental protection management system) to avoid practices which are detrimental to people and environment.

a

The organisation actively supports health-related, social, cultural and welfare initiatives.

b

5

The Criteria

Implementation of Workplace Health Promotion

Workplace health promotion comprises measures for health-promoting job design and the support of healthy behaviour. It is successful when these measures are permanently interlinked and systematically implemented.

a

There is a steering committee, project group or something similar functioning within the organisation which plans, monitors and evaluates the health promotion measures. All health-related key functions in the organisation are represented in this body.

b

All information (internal and external) required for the planning and implementation of health promotion measures are collected systematically and regularly.

c

Target groups and quantifiable objectives are set for all health promotion measures.

d

Measures for health-promoting work organisation and job design as well as measures to promote healthy behaviour are implemented and interlinked.

e

All measures are systematically evaluated and continually improved.

The Criteria

Results of Workplace Health Promotion

6

The success of workplace health promotion can be measured by a number of short, medium and long-term indicators.

Impacts of the implemented health promotion measures on customer satisfaction (regarding products/services) are systematically analysed and conclusions drawn from them.

a

Impacts of the implemented health promotion measures on the satisfaction of the staff with working conditions/work organisation, leadership style and possibilities for participation, occupational health and safety schemes etc. are systematically analysed and conclusions drawn from them.

b

Impacts of the implemented health promotion measures on other health indicators such as absenteeism rates, accident rates, improvement in stressful working conditions, number of suggestions for improvement submitted and implemented, use of healthy lifestyle programmes, level of relevant risk factors etc. are systematically analysed and conclusions drawn from them.

c

Impacts of the implemented health promotion measures on relevant economic factors such as staff turnover, productivity, cost/benefit analyses etc. are systematically analysed and conclusions drawn from them.

d

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