Healthy Workplaces North Somerset

North Somerset Council

The North Somerset Micro Healthy Workplaces Awards

A flexible micro award – for businesses with around 2-10 employees

Supporting health and wellbeing in smaller businesses

Create a healthier workplace for employees and businesses to thrive

A free scheme to support employee health and wellbeing



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Micro Award

Best suited for:

- Businesses with fewer than 10 employees
- Owner-managed businesses
- Organisations wanting a simple, practical route to improving staff health and wellbeing

Why workplace health and wellbeing matters

Work and health

- Work is one of the biggest influences on health and wellbeing.[1]
- Employers can support physical health, mental wellbeing and healthy lifestyles.[2]
- Good work improves quality of life[3], financial security and community wellbeing. Healthy workplaces help people stay well, engaged and productive.[1]

The business case

- 149 million working days are lost each year in the UK due to sickness absence and injury[4] and the cost of sickness absence and worklessness exceeds £100 billion annually.[5]
- More than 300,000 people leave work each year because of health conditions[6] and poor health can increase absence, reduce productivity and raise staff turnover.[6]
- Investing in staff health and wellbeing helps create a healthier, more productive and resilient workforce.[7]

Workplace health in North Somerset

- Around 105,100 people are employed in North Somerset[7] and the employment rate is 80.7%[7], above the England average of 75.8%.
- 74.1% of employees report a physical or mental long-term health condition.[7]
- Musculoskeletal and mental health conditions are key workforce challenges.[7] North Somerset has the highest rate of long-term musculoskeletal conditions in the South West (22.5%), compared to 18.7% in the South West and 17.9% nationally.[7]

Benefits for employers and employees

Employees

- Better physical and mental health.
- Improved wellbeing and job satisfaction.
- Greater engagement, motivation and morale.
- Better access to health and wellbeing support.
- Increased confidence to discuss health and wellbeing concerns.
- More inclusive and respectful workplace culture.
- Better support to stay healthy, thrive at work and manage health conditions.[8]

Employers

- Helps attract and retain employees.
- Supports staff attendance and productivity.
- Demonstrates commitment to employee wellbeing.
- Strengthens organisational reputation.
- Provides evidence for social value commitments.
- Contributes to recruitment and retention strategies.[8]

Better outcomes for all

Healthy workplaces help people thrive, not just prevent illness. They create supportive, inclusive and positive working environments. They can reduce health inequalities and improve workforce health and wellbeing. Investing in workplace health benefits employees, organisations and the wider North Somerset community.[8]



References

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4. Office for National Statistics (ONS). Sickness absence in the UK labour market. Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes
5. Department for Work and Pensions and Department of Health. Working for a Healthier Tomorrow (Black Review). Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-for-a-healthier-tomorrow-work-and-health-in-britain
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7. Work and health regional data explorer https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/work-and-health-regional-data-explorer
8. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Workplace health: management practices (NG13). Available at: https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng13

The Micro Healthy Workplaces Awards

A free, flexible programme to support and promote the health and wellbeing of staff in small businesses in North Somerset.

Micro-businesses benefit from workplace health and wellbeing support just as much as larger employers, but often do not have the time or resources for lengthy award processes. This streamlined award mirrors the North Somerset Healthy Workplaces Award goals and health and wellbeing topics while adapting the level of evidence and administrative burden to suit very small teams.

The scheme recognises employers at every stage of their health and wellbeing journey, from building strong foundations at Bronze, to embedding whole organisation approaches at Platinum. Workplaces also have the opportunity to become Ambassadors for specific health and wellbeing topic areas.

Whether an organisation is just beginning to explore workplace health and wellbeing or has a mature, embedded programme, the Awards offer support, recognition, and a pathway for continuous improvement.

What is involved?

Workplaces will:

- register to join the programme as a Member
- access tailored support from the North Somerset Healthy Workplaces team
- use the benchmarking tool to develop an action plan
- choose to apply for an award
- gather simple evidence to demonstrate current practice
- celebrate successes.

The process is designed to be achievable, proportionate and meaningful. Our team works alongside each organisation to help them meet the criteria, implement realistic improvements and build lasting, positive change.



What is on offer?

Participating organisations benefit from a comprehensive package of free support, including:

- Tailored guidance and expert advice.
- Access to training, resources and tools.
- Recognition and celebration.
- Networking and shared learning.
- Events.
- Newsletter.
- Funding opportunities.
- Access to specific health improvement services and training, for example, Healthy Lifestyle Service, Stop Smoking, Health Checks, Physical Activity, Food and Nutrition & Mental Health and Wellbeing.

The micro award framework

All levels of award are based on the following criteria:

- Leadership, commitment & inclusive management
- Engaged and supported staff
- Workplace environment
- Mental health & wellbeing
- Musculoskeletal health
- Healthy lifestyles (nutrition, hydration, activity, smoking/vaping, alcohol, drugs and gambling)
- Support for all life stages
- Health conditions: prevention and management

Benefits to businesses

- Employee retention
- Improved workplace reputation
- More engaged workforce
- Increased productivity
- Increased morale
- Reduced absence rates
- Decreased cost of health-related sick leave



Award levels

Summary of the award levels.

- **Member** – Getting started
- **Bronze** – Foundations in place
- **Silver** – From awareness to action
- **Gold** – Embedded and influential
- **Platinum** – Sustained excellence
- **Ambassador** – Topic leadership and influence

Ambassador status is available to Platinum organisations that demonstrate leadership in a specific topic area (for example, mental health). Ambassadors share good practice, mentor others, and influence healthy work across North Somerset within their chosen focus.

How to apply for an award

The Micro Award is designed to be simple, accessible, and proportionate for small businesses.

Businesses can apply for each level of the award (Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum and Ambassador). To achieve an award, businesses are asked to demonstrate how they meet the criteria for each topic area, using practical examples from their workplace.

Evidence does not need to be complex and may include:

- short written responses explaining what the business does
- simple supporting evidence such as staff survey results, policies and procedures, photos of initiatives, communications to staff, training records, meeting notes or action plans.

Once ready, businesses should email: healthyworkplaces@n-somerset.gov.uk

The Healthy Workplaces team will review the submission and provide a feedback letter confirming:

- whether the award has been achieved, or
- any additional evidence needed to support the application

Award recognition

Successful organisations receive:

- award certificate;
- digital logo/badge;
- recognition through programme communications;
- opportunities to share good practice;
- eligibility to progress to higher award levels; and
- presentation of award at annual celebratory event.



Framework criteria

The Micro framework combines several elements of the full Healthy Workplaces framework into simplified criteria suitable for small businesses.

Leadership, commitment and inclusive management

Bronze

The owner/director demonstrates a visible commitment to employee health and wellbeing and recognises it as an important part of running the business. Responsibility for health and wellbeing is clearly identified, and leaders promote a supportive, respectful and inclusive working environment where all employees are treated fairly and with dignity.

Silver

The owner/director takes an active role in supporting employee health and wellbeing and considers wellbeing when making business decisions. Leaders demonstrate compassionate and inclusive behaviours and consider the needs of employees with different backgrounds, circumstances and experiences.



Gold

Health and wellbeing is embedded into day-to-day business practices and leadership behaviours. Leaders proactively support employees, provide reasonable adjustments where appropriate, and ensure workplace practices such as recruitment, induction, development and retention are fair, inclusive and accessible.

Platinum

Leadership commitment to health and wellbeing, inclusion and belonging is consistently demonstrated across all areas of the business. Leaders regularly review workplace practices and use learning, feedback and experience to make improvements that help all employees feel valued, respected and able to thrive at work.

Engaged and supported staff

Bronze

Information about available health and wellbeing support is accessible and regularly communicated to staff.

Silver

The business regularly gathers employee feedback which is used to shape health and wellbeing activity. Staff feel valued, respected and able to contribute ideas about their needs.

Gold

A comprehensive range of health and wellbeing support is available and promoted to employees. Staff are actively involved in designing health and wellbeing initiatives that are inclusive and meet the needs of the workforce.

Platinum

Staff voice is embedded, giving a positive inclusive culture in which staff feel involved and empowered, and can give feedback for ongoing improvements.

Workplace environment

Bronze

The business provides a safe and healthy working environment that complies with relevant health and safety requirements. Appropriate policies, risk assessments and procedures are in place to protect employee health and wellbeing.

Silver

Employees are actively involved in maintaining a safe and healthy workplace, have training and opportunities to identify risks and suggest improvements.

Gold

The physical and working environment actively promotes health and wellbeing through suitable facilities and spaces. This may include quiet areas and breakout spaces to encourage social connection.

Platinum

The workplace environment is regularly reviewed to meet employee needs and support wellbeing. The business demonstrates a commitment to creating restorative, inclusive and accessible environments, including making use of outdoor and green spaces where possible.

Mental health and wellbeing

Bronze

The business provides access to mental health support. Managers are appropriately trained to support staff needs and signpost to relevant sources of information.

Silver

The business introduces regular wellbeing support and builds confidence to respond to mental health needs. The business adopts a preventative approach considering workload and stress management.

Gold

A structured and proactive approach is in place to support mental health and work–life balance. Mental health is considered across the business, and regular staff feedback ensures positive outcomes.

Platinum

The business creates an open culture where mental health is reviewed and improved over time. A wide range of support services are available to staff and are incorporated into company policies.





Musculoskeletal health

Bronze

The business assesses and manages musculoskeletal risks and ensures that staff are aware of how to report concerns at an early stage. Appropriate workstation and workplace assessments are undertaken where required and employees are encouraged to take responsibility for maintaining good musculoskeletal health.

Silver

The business actively promotes musculoskeletal health by providing staff with information, training and resources that support prevention, early intervention and self-management. Employees are encouraged to adopt safe working practices and engage in regular movement throughout the working day.

Gold

The business provides timely access to support for employees experiencing musculoskeletal problems and ensures that workplace adjustments, rehabilitation and return-to-work support are available when required. Evidence is gathered to demonstrate that interventions are accessible and effective.

Platinum

The business routinely analyses workforce information e.g. sickness absence trends and employee feedback to understand musculoskeletal health needs and identify opportunities for improvement. Workplace design, policies and interventions are regularly reviewed to ensure they continue to support long-term musculoskeletal health and wellbeing.

Healthy lifestyles

Bronze

The business promotes healthy lifestyles by providing employees with access to information, resources and signposting relating to key health behaviours, including healthy eating, physical activity, smoking and vaping, and alcohol, drugs and gambling. Staff have access to drinking water and appropriate facilities for storing and consuming food. The business promotes a smoke-free workplace, communicates expectations relating to smoking, vaping, alcohol and drug use, and encourages employees to take regular breaks and move throughout the working day.

Silver

The business actively encourages healthier lifestyle choices through regular communication, awareness activities or workplace initiatives. Employees are supported to access local and national health improvement services where appropriate, and leaders promote a culture that encourages positive health behaviours, such as healthy eating, physical activity, smoke-free lifestyles and responsible attitudes towards alcohol and gambling.

Gold

Healthy lifestyle promotion is embedded within day-to-day business practices. The workplace environment supports healthier choices wherever possible, and employees are regularly encouraged to take part in activities that support their physical and mental wellbeing. Managers and business leaders understand how to signpost staff to appropriate support and create a supportive environment for employees who may be experiencing lifestyle-related health challenges.

Platinum

The business takes a coordinated approach to promoting healthy lifestyles and regularly reviews its activities to ensure they meet the needs of employees. Feedback, participation levels or workplace observations are used to identify opportunities for improvement, and healthy lifestyle initiatives are continually developed to support employee health and wellbeing.

Support for all life stages

Bronze

The business understands how different life stages and major life events may affect health and wellbeing and are able to access appropriate guidance and support to help employees manage these transitions.

Silver

The business provides flexible and person-centred support that reflects the needs of individuals at different stages of life. Policies or practices support employees experiencing pregnancy, fertility, parenthood, caring responsibilities, menopause, bereavement, retirement and other significant life events and transitions.

Gold

Guidance is available to support employees through key life transitions, e.g. returning from parental leave, balancing caring responsibilities and preparing for retirement. The business gathers feedback to ensure support remains relevant and accessible.

Platinum

An age-friendly and inclusive approach is embedded throughout company policies and practices. Workforce demographics and staff feedback are used to review, evaluate and continually strengthen support across all life stages.





Health conditions: prevention and management

Bronze

The business provides employees with information and signposting on health improvement, disease prevention, NHS screening programmes and support for long-term health conditions. Compassionate sickness absence and return-to-work processes are in place to support employees who experience periods of ill health.

Silver

The business actively promotes awareness of a broad range of health topics, including men's health, women's health, cancer awareness and NHS screening programmes. Managers understand how to have supportive conversations about health conditions and how to implement appropriate workplace adjustments.

Gold

Structured support is available for employees living with long-term health conditions, including diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer and other chronic conditions. Policies, workplace adjustments and early intervention approaches are consistently applied, and evidence is gathered to demonstrate their effectiveness.

Platinum

The business uses information e.g. workforce data, employee feedback and evaluation findings to understand health needs and target support where it is most required. Health inequalities are considered and addressed through tailored action, and continuous improvement is demonstrated through measurable outcomes.

Ready to get started?

- Join the Healthy Workplaces programme free of charge
- Complete a short registration form
- Access guidance, resources and support
- Begin working towards your first award level

Contact us

healthyworkplaces@n-somerset.gov.uk

https://www.betterhealthns.co.uk/professionals/healthyworkplaces

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