

The Learning and Skills Council is a non-departmental public body which began work in 2001, taking over the roles of the former Further Education Funding Council and Training and Enterprise Councils. There is a national office in Coventry and nine regional offices overseeing the work of local partnership teams throughout the county. The West London Learning and Skills Council branch consists of just over 30 employees who are mainly office based staff. Activate Your Workplace (AYW) has been taken up with much vigour and has begun to play a central role within the organisation. Attendance has exceeded expectations with more than 20 employees taking part in activities organised through the AYW programme so far.

Information about the project was given to the Area Director, Clare Arnold who recognised the potential of AYW, and was especially interested in improving fitness, and reducing sickness absence.

The Learning and Skills Council have succeeded in running many interventions, such as on site massage and a fruit club, which proved to be very popular. An area for improvement highlighted in a staff health survey, was the need for staff to engage with each other more and it was felt this could be achieved by getting people away from their desks at lunch. As a result, lunch time walks and a 'Healthy Lunch Club' were organised. The lunch time walks were well attended and helped staff build up their daily steps towards a 'Pedometer Challenge', which provided an opportunity for staff of all fitness levels to be involved in the programme.

The 'Healthy Lunch Club' ensured that healthy food was available for members of the club everyday and encouraged staff to have a break from their desks. There was also positive informal feedback about gym membership. At least five members of staff have carried on with their membership and are now paying regularly to go to the gym. Those who have taken advantage of what has been on offer all felt they have benefited. Most interventions were easy to organise and The Learning and Skills Council London West have been pleased with the progress that has been made, but time constraints have limited the organisation of more activities.

Challenging aspects of the pilot project have included a lack of 'buy in' and take up from some members of staff. Over the next couple of months The Learning and Skills Council will continue the promotion of AYW and hopes it will remain on the agenda in the foreseeable future.

Edwin is happy in his role as a Workplace Health Champion and encourages others to spread health promotion messages, including the health benefits of healthy eating and stop smoking. He enjoys organising events and feels that his role as Partnership Manager means he is more visible in the company, which is useful when promoting activities. Edwin has learnt a great deal about healthy eating and exercise through the workshops organised by Activate and hopes to continue running a variety of activities for colleagues to try.

#### Interventions

fruit club  
on site massage  
pedometer challenge  
lunchtime walks  
healthy lunch time club  
fortnightly badminton and basketball sessions  
subsidised gym membership

Organisations and individuals London West LSC have worked with for the Activate programme

Little Massage Company  
Administrators and Colleague (Partnership Advisor)