

Sutton and Merton Primary Care Trust (PCT) serves a population of around 390,000 people and employ staff in a wide range of job roles, the majority of whom are healthcare professionals. The Trust joined AYW in June 2007 and the programme has grown in popularity among employees since; to date over 183 members of staff have taken part in interventions developed through the programme.

AYW offered a programme that would assist the PCT to achieve actions from the Physical Activity and Sport Strategy, which was part of a joint agreement between Sutton & Merton PCT and The London Borough of Sutton.

Exercise classes such as yoga and aerobics have already extended from two existing sites and there are now six classes everyday at different PCT sites. Interventions such as weight management and health screening sessions have been very successful and were well attended. These opportunities were supported by exercise advice led by a Dietician and Nurse, which helped to motivate staff. A bike lending scheme was also organised to encourage staff to take up cycling, and after a period of four weeks some staff enjoyed it so much they purchased the bike. Plans for the next couple of months include lunchtime walks and a 'Pedometer Challenge' for all employees.

Early results show that employees at Sutton and Merton PCT are happy that the PCT are providing activities and providing opportunities to better their health, which has helped to increase staff morale.

It is hoped Activate will help change the culture in the organisation and encourage Sutton and Merton PCT to be committed to improving workplace health, now and in the future. As the model progresses, it will be developed by the PCT and Council into a format that can be used by organisations within the two Boroughs. In this way, the benefits of workplace health can extend to the local community, with the PCT and local Council acting as 'gold standard' healthy workplaces for local employers to follow.

Sarah has enjoyed meeting new people through the programme and feels she has provided something that can have a positive effect on people's lifestyles. Being a Workplace Health Champion fits in well with her main role as the Trust's Physical Activity Advisor. One of her main challenges has been not having enough time to dedicate to the role; as the programme develops Sarah hopes she will have more allocated time for running 'Activate Sutton and Merton PCT'. Sarah is looking forward to the Royal Institute of Public Health (RIPH) Level 2 Health Improvement training for all Activate champions, which will give her a recognised qualification.

Interventions

Exercise classes (yoga, aerobics)
Lending bike scheme (4 wks)
Weight management (4 sessions)
Planned 'Pedometer Challenge'
Planned lunchtime walks
New notice boards with Activate information

Organisations and individuals Sutton & Merton PCT have worked with for the Activate programme

Sutton Council
Smarter travel Sutton
Self employed exercise teachers
Dietitian
Nurse
Public Health Department