

Uxbridge College serves the local community and employers. In June 2007 the college joined Activate Your Workplace after information was passed to the Human Resources department, who recognised the need to provide for the health of their 450 staff, as well as students. The college already independently ran activities for students as part of the 'Every Child Matters' healthy college initiative and were keen to do something for the staff as well. Uxbridge immediately took the opportunity to join AYW and put in to action opportunities for staff.

The AYW programme at Uxbridge College has made the college a more positive place to work and Mike Crane, the Workplace Health Champion, believes this will have a knock on impact by developing the potential of existing staff as individuals, which essentially supports the students.

Many interventions have been running at Uxbridge very successfully and have included a Free Fruit Friday, Chill Out sessions and a Pedometer Challenge. The Pedometer Challenge had a good uptake and was well received by staff. The dynamic appealed to people, partly because of the competitive element; during the four weeks the challenge picked up momentum.

Uxbridge decided not to do a weight loss programme because they felt it would be too invasive but some employees have decided to do weigh in's each week and this is a very positive sign that individuals are taking it upon themselves to motivate one another.

One of the key successes has been raising health awareness in Uxbridge College. There are now healthy meal deals and a greater emphasis is placed upon the nutritional value of the food in the canteen. The pilot has helped Uxbridge place greater pressure on external companies to consider health in their services and promote the health issues concerning some of the food that was being supplied to the college.

Challenges of the pilot included lack of involvement from some staff, due to time constraints. Nonetheless AYW has helped put health on the college agenda and it is hoped it will remain there and help shape objectives in the future.

Mike has enjoyed motivating staff and encouraging them to place greater emphasis on their health and wellbeing. He has enjoyed running the Pedometer Challenge as it created lots of excitement among employees and they felt a sense of achievement if they won. Mike has planned many future interventions one of which will be activities that employees remember from their 'school days' such as netball and squash and has already gained much interest in this concept.

Mike feels he has gained a greater understanding of the health of the staff and is keen to keep health and wellbeing on the agenda. He considers that Workplace Health Champions' need good time management and organisational skills.

Interventions

Free Fruit Friday
Chill Out sessions (Hayes site & Uxbridge site)
Pedometer Challenge (4 weeks)

Organisations and individuals Uxbridge College have worked with for the Activate programme

London Borough of Hillingdon
NHS (Hillingdon PCT)
Scholarest (Catering)