

Bedfordshire Police

Overview

Objectives

- Maintaining and promoting the well-being of staff
- Reducing sickness absence and ill-health retirement.
- Improving staff morale and motivation as a healthier, happier workforce develops

Challenges

- Difficulty of getting access to staff
- Diverse cultural backgrounds
- Varying awareness of health & well-being, and willingness to change
- Culture of suspicion

vielife solution

- Hydration campaign
- Simple steps campaign.
- Nutrition guide
- Step out programme
- Strength & resilience programme

Results

- 7% improvement in overall health & well-being
- 11% improvement in nutrition
- 7% improvement in stress management

“The pressure of police life means that being in good health is an absolute necessity for our team. Shift work, for instance, can be particularly tough on sleep patterns. Working with vielife, we’ll be able to help our staff be as healthy and productive as possible.”

– Gillian Parker
Chief Constable, Bedfordshire Police

Overview

Bedfordshire Police signed up for vielife in a bid to adopt a more proactive approach to health with a specific focus on lifestyle-related health issues. This moves away from the more traditional reactive approach, designed to purely ‘cure the sick’.

Getting access to the employees was the biggest initial challenge;

- Many of the employees are not office based with no easy access to the internet
- Shift patterns mean that employees are never in the same place at the same time
- Staff are geographically dispersed across the county

These challenges were further complicated by a culture of suspicion towards data protection and security of information, as well as the diverse cultural backgrounds and attitudes of the staff.

Bedfordshire Police recognised stress and work-life balance as issues of concern. Poor nutrition was endemic across the workforce, as were low levels of physical activity, with a strong correlation between lack of physical activity and sickness absence.

Strategy

In May 2004 vielife launched its service across a number of sites and over extended hours (4am - 11pm) in order to meet as many people as possible.

All communications were approved by the appropriate internal groups and staff associations (such as those dealing with diversity issues) to ensure acceptance across the board. vielife & Bedfordshire Police worked together to ensure employees were fully informed about data protection & security of information.

Initiatives have included:

- Hydration campaign – The introduction of water points across the force, and the distribution of vielife water bottles and hydration awareness posters.
- Simple Steps campaign – raising awareness with practical tips in the areas of sleep, stress, nutrition and physical activity; using posters and desk-drop flyers.
- Bedfordshire Police Nutrition Guide was developed to encourage good nutritional choices during working hours – reviewing local eateries by location, price, opening hours, most/least healthy options and healthy ideas for food to bring to work.
- Step Out programme – all employees received pedometers and a newsletter including a guide to local walks, gyms, fun runs, sports and social club facilities.
- Investment in new machinery for gyms in the police stations.
- Strength & Resilience programme – all employees received the Strength booklet and newsletter tailored for Bedfordshire Police detailing sources of support within the organisation and surrounding area for stress and welfare related issues.

Results

During the first assessment drive 49% of the population registered with vielife Online and 70% of those registered completed the health & well-being assessment. In February 2005, 62% of registered users completed the HWB assessment during the second assessment drive. Employees who took both assessments demonstrated a 7% improvement in their overall health & well-being scores, 11% improvement in nutrition and 7% improvement in stress management.