

A health policy sets out what your business, in partnership with its employees, will do to promote health.

## KEY ELEMENTS OF A HEALTH POLICY

Workplace health promotion policies should be clearly written so that there is no misunderstanding regarding their content. Try to follow the KISS principle **Keep It Short and Simple**

Since no two businesses are alike, it's impossible to have standard policies for health issues like smoking, substance misuse, mental health and healthy eating. **Your policies should be developed to suit the particular structure, organisation and ethos of your business.**

Workplace health promotion policies should be integral to the overall health and safety policy of your business. They should be linked to other elements of health promotion in the workplace. Policies should be applicable to all personnel, regardless of age, sex, ethnic origin or grade. Each policy should include a clear statement on the roles and responsibilities of each group of employees and management within the organisation.

Developing a workplace health promotion policy is based upon the following key steps:

### STEP ONE: SET UP A WORKING PARTY

This group needs to represent all levels within the workforce with people from:

- senior management
- trade union
- health and safety
- personnel
- occupational health
- staff representatives

### STEP TWO: INFORM THE WORKFORCE

Inform employees about the process that is occurring. It is useful at this stage to identify what is already happening in relation to health issues e.g. your business may already have a smoking policy.

### STEP THREE: CONSULT WITH THE WORKFORCE

Employees must be consulted about their needs and wishes. This will also help address concerns and difficulties. Large businesses may wish to conduct a survey, whereas small businesses may arrange meetings.

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#### STEP FOUR: WRITE THE POLICY

Devise a draft policy and circulate this to the workforce. All employees should receive a copy of the proposed policy. This gives employees the opportunity to comment and suggest changes. The policy should then be revised and employees should be given notice of changes and the date of introduction. The minimum period of notice is usually 12 weeks.

#### STEP FIVE: IMPLEMENT THE POLICY

Once the period of consultation has ended and the final document has been written, the policy should be launched and followed up with awareness sessions regarding the content of the policy. Promote the policy throughout the workplace using e.g. posters and leaflets.

#### STEP SIX: REVIEW THE POLICY

Regularly monitor the policy to gauge its effectiveness. This review should lead to the policy being updated.

**Your local Health Promotion Department is available to provide support and advise on how to develop and implement workplace health promotion policies.**

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Notes