

THE FACTS

- Smoking remains the greatest cause of preventable death and disease in our society. Losing employees as a result of smoking related diseases has a devastating effect on the workplace.
- Smokers take 50% more sick leave than non-smokers do; it's estimated that 35 million working days are lost in the UK each year due to smoking related illness.
- Non-smokers are affected by passive smoking and many non-smokers dislike working in a smokey environment.
- The law requires employers to protect the health and wellbeing of staff. Staff subjected to passive smoke may sue their employer if their health is affected.
- It is estimated that cigarettes or matches cause one in five workplace fires. This can result in higher insurance premiums for workplaces that permit smoking.
- Smoke free workplaces not only protect non-smokers, they also create an environment that encourages smokers to cut back or quit.

WHAT A WORKPLACE CAN DO

- If your workplace does not have a smoking policy, you should think about designing and implementing one promptly. Have a look at the card entitled 'Policy Development And Implementation'; assistance can also be obtained by contacting the agencies listed below under 'Help is at Hand'.

The policy should guard the rights of smokers as well as non-smokers and should also address the issue of passive smoking. It should clearly describe where and when smoking is acceptable, if at all.

- Participate in No Smoking Day and provide employees with information about giving up.
- Provide information about smoking cessation services that are available locally.
- Some employers offer active support to employees who are trying to quit, for example
 - By having a smoking cessation support service available during working hours. Indeed an employee can be trained as a Smoking Cessation Advisor. Contact the Smoking Cessation Co-ordinator listed overleaf for further information.
 - By arranging a smoking cessation support group at lunch time.
 - By supporting and encouraging employees to participate in Government schemes targeting pregnant women who smoke, smokers who are disadvantaged in any way and young people who smoke.
- If your workplace already has a smoking policy in place, it may be time to revisit it to ensure that it is not only protecting the health of non-smokers but is actively encouraging and supporting those employees who wish to give up. Doing this demonstrates your commitment to providing and maintaining a smoke free workplace.

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HELP IS AT HAND

- Health Promotion Department
12c Gransha Park, Clooney Road, Derry/Londonderry.
028 7186 5127
- Smoking Cessation Co-ordinator
for the Western Health and Social Services Board.
028 7186 0086
- Ulster Cancer Foundation.
028 9066 3281
- Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland.
Smokeline a free-phone help-line for smokers
0800 848 484 (open from 12pm to 12am)

RESOURCES

- Smoking Issues, by Paul Hooper, published in 1995 by Daniels Publishing.
- A Workplace Smoking Policy, by Yvonne Bostock, published in 1994 by the Health Education Authority.

The above resources are available from the Resources and Graphics Centre at the Health Promotion Department.

Notes

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