

## Case Study

Addressing workplace health inequalities

Workplace Team, Health Promotion Services



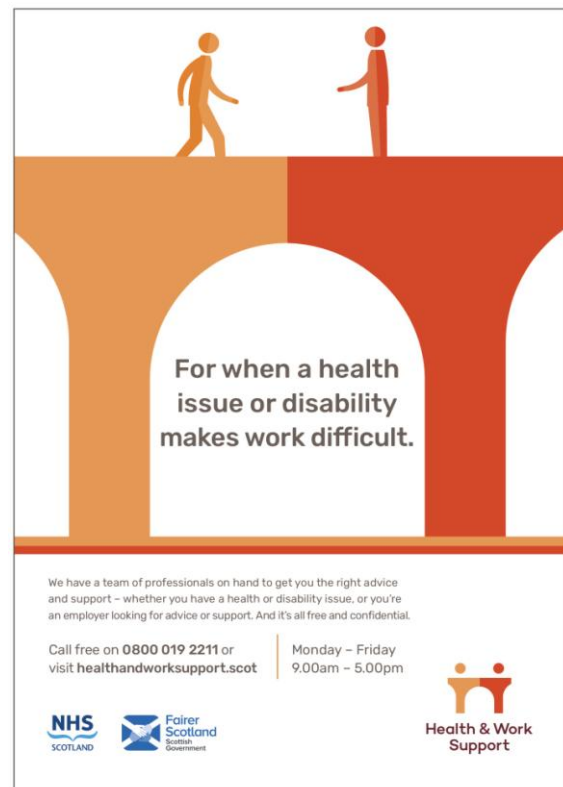
Poverty and inequality remain the biggest and most important challenge to Scotland's health, as the majority of health differences find their root cause in differences in wealth and income. Being in good work is important to addressing health inequalities. Paid work has the potential to protect health, and contribute to reduced health inequalities, by increasing incomes through earnings and by meeting important social and psychological needs. Conversely, lack of work is bad for your health.

Research has shown that good work is good for you and the health and safety of the working environment is a key component in addressing health inequalities in the workplace. Workplace Team, Health Promotion Service, part of Fife Health and Social Care Partnership, and Fife Council Environmental Health, Food and Workplace Safety Team, have both worked in partnership for over 5 years to deliver the REHIS Elementary Health and Safety Certificate in Fife. Health & safety legislation requires workplaces to have access to competent health & safety advice irrespective of their size. The main aim of providing the REHIS Elementary Health and Safety course in Fife is to help workplaces move on from a basic awareness of health & safety issues. It is aimed at workers in smaller workplaces and voluntary organizations. Many of these face challenges with resources but still need a greater understanding and knowledge of health & safety matters and how to apply this in their own workplace.

The partnership organises training throughout the year and were recently approached by a local voluntary organisation to provide support to their workers and volunteers. CLEAR Buckhaven stands for Community-Led Environmental Action for Regeneration, a small but active charity. They operate in the town improving the environment and building civic pride and engagement through volunteering. CLEAR has a number of projects including organising an active planting programme extending community woodlands, orchards as well as spring bulbs and flowerbeds in greenspaces around town. They also run a vibrant Community Growing Space as the hub for their efforts around Buckhaven. The work of this organisation itself is helping to address inequalities so the health, safety and wellbeing of staff and volunteers must be ensured.

All attendees successfully obtained their REHIS certificates. They were also advised of the help available from Workplace Team, Health Promotion Service and Fife Council Food and Workplace Safety Team to help them fulfill their statutory obligations and promote good health, safety and wellbeing in the workplace. In particular information was provided on the new free and confidential Health and Work Support service being piloted in Fife at the moment. Health and Work Support provides specialist support for people experiencing mental health problems in the workplace and is a single point of contact for people who live and work in Fife. It allows people with a health issue or a disability who are struggling to stay at work or recently unemployed, to get fast access to support. Employers also have an important role to play and the service can help with policies and procedures, mental health training for managers and other workers, and provide lots of resources and information.




Course organiser Alan Gow, Workplace Team, Health Promotion Service said afterwards, "We were delighted to work in partnership with Fife Council to provide this training to CLEAR Buckhaven. It is important that organizations like this who are at the forefront of addressing local health inequalities are supported themselves to ensure health, safety and wellbeing. There are a number of free services available to workplaces in Fife just like this and we would encourage workplaces with health, safety and wellbeing needs to get in touch".



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