

WORKFORCE WORKFIT CHALLENGE

May 2011 Objectives

- Olympic Health Legacy – involving staff in physical activity through their workplace - must be sustainable
- Part of NHS Sport and Physical Activity challenge
- External partners – Businesses and Media to maximise impact

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LET'S GET PHYSICAL Chief Inspector Mark Anastasi took part in the challenge

Police go on the beat for fitness drive

Olympics inspire force's new campaign

Kim Swan working in both area commands with It was very inclusive

- Business Challenge Launched June 2011 – Olympic Theme
- 45 businesses entered
- 8 were awarded funding
- Journal takes up the Challenge as part of their Fit Factor campaign
- Evaluation shows which companies were most successful and why



HIGH MILEAGE Staff from the North East Strategic Health Authority on one of their virtual routes as part of the Workforce WorkFit challenge

Staff clock up the miles on a walk around the world

Wilson, the NHS North East Olympic ambassador, said: "The Pedometer Challenge works on a number of levels. "Walking is easy for anyone to do anywhere and being in a team, together with the element of competition, are all things that motivate people. "Also being able to see feedback on your progress at regular intervals spurs people on to do better."

Fergus Neilson, early interventions programme manager



at Public Health North East, said: "Not being active enough affects our health in many more serious ways than most people expect. "There is strong evidence of links to heart disease, obesity and some cancers. "More than 140 members of staff have worn a pedometer every day for more than two months. "It has been great to hear the chat and get the feedback as they become more aware of how inactive most of us are in our daily lives. Also, how, by adjusting the way we live and work a bit, we can become more active."



FITTER BUNCH The health staff are motivated by seeing their progress



THE GREAT NORTH FITNESS REVOLUTION

Going extra mile to get fitter workers

Grants are given to firms in health quest

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EAST North East businesses have been given grants of between £500 and £5,000 to help their staff get fitter and healthier.

More than 40 businesses from across the North East were vying for a share of £50,000 from the local NHS Workforce WorkFit Challenge fund, launched last month in partnership with the Journal's Great North Fitness Revolution.

Peter Kelly, Acting Regional Director of Public Health, said: "We are extremely happy with the response to the challenge and it shows that despite the recession, businesses in the North East are prepared to take the health of their staff seriously and invest in a fitter workforce."

The successful funds are spread across the region from both the private, public and voluntary sectors, with the largest company employing over 10,000 people and the smallest 40.

Celebrating their success are BAE sys-

tems from Newcastle and Birtley, Arnam, from Stanhope, the North Tyneside Area Command of Northumbria Police, Gosnell, South Tyneside, the Civil Service, Newcastle University, Darlington College and Birtley School in Bedale.

Each business will be setting their workforce an Olympic challenge to get fitter in the run up to the 2012 Olympics. A whole range of activities are being planned which are designed to maximise staff engagement including staff sports days, cycling, swimming, boxing, tennis, volleyball and football.

One of the winners - North Tyneside Area Command of Northumbria Police - is even organising an Olympic torch walking challenge which will match the 100-mile Olympic torch journey from Ladbroke Grove to the Olympic stadium.

Sarah Dodd, from North Tyneside Area Command of Northumbria Police, said: "We're delighted to have been granted this award which will be used to buy pedometers to encourage staff to walk more and increase their personal fitness. It's important that all staff are fit and

WHY GET INVOLVED

The benefits of a fitter workforce to an employer are well documented and include:

- Better staff retention
 - Increased productivity
 - Reduced levels of sickness
 - Improved morale
- Being physically fitter also helps people to cope better with stress at work by relaxing tense muscles, using up cholesterol and toxic stress hormones and giving the body a natural boost.

breaking, whether they are operational officers or police staff who work in an office, so they can continue to deliver a high-quality policing service to the people of Northumbria."

Anne Wilkinson, BAE Project Manager from BAE systems said: "The BAE Systems, Newcastle and Birtley sites joined together to bid for a share of the Workforce WorkFit Olympic Challenge fund. Both

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If we all did a little then it would help a lot
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THE GREAT NORTH FITNESS REVOLUTION

who are involved with the North East Better Health at Work scheme and this funding will help us in our campaign to improve the health and wellbeing of our staff.

"It's hoped the friendly rivalry between the sites will encourage more people to participate and the fun aspects of the proposal will encourage the less sporty to get involved. The joint site involvement in

the challenge will send a message to the rest of BAE Systems that wellbeing are high on the agenda of our company."

Over the coming months will be reporting on each site's WorkFit journey as they're getting on.

RUNNING IN GRANDAD

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Green exercise at lunchtime

Groundwork South Tyneside and Newcastle are one of the first businesses to launch into their Workforce Workfit Challenge for employees funded by the North East NHS 2012 fund.

Groundwork is part of a national regeneration charity which works in partnership with public, private and voluntary sectors to improve the quality of the local environment, the lives of local people and support local businesses.

"Green" exercise sessions are being delivered during lunch times, and at the employee summer BBQ in the lead up to the 2012 Olympics.

"Green exercise" is exercise delivered outside which has proven added mental health benefits compared to indoor exercise.

Groundwork's sessions aim to raise

awareness of different types of sports and improve overall health and wellbeing of employees.

A wide range of activities will be on offer including rounders, badminton, French Boules, volleyball, Nordic and health walks, cricket and football skills.

The plan is that there will be something to appeal to everyone.

There are almost 80 staff, including volunteers, of mixed ages and it is hoped that at least 50% of them will participate.

The activities will be designed to introduce an element of sport and competition into the workplace, providing a fun and energetic activity to help people relax at the same time as improving fitness levels, relieving stress and improving mental wellbeing.

The sports equipment will also be

available for use after work, and it is hoped that after the initial taster sessions exercise will become a regular part of the working day.

Lunchtime sessions are already proving to be popular.

Alan Jenson, project assistant at Groundwork said: "I joined in with a volleyball session and it was really exhilarating, I felt revitalised and refreshed to come back into the office in the afternoon. It provides some light relief to the daily routine."

Operations manager Geoff Dawson commented: "We are delighted to be the only 3rd Sector organisation participating in the Workforce Workfit Challenge."

"We know that our staff and volunteers will benefit from a wide range of sporting activities that will improve their health and wellbeing and motivate our organisation."



LIGHT RELIEF Playing volleyball are, left to right, Nicola Bruce, Geoff Dawson, Adam Jenson, Fred Baines, Chris Bannon and Den Turner

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Fitness fan Mal will carry Olympic torch

A NORTH East NHS worker has been chosen as an Olympic torch bearer. Mal Glass was given the once-in-a-lifetime honour for his work helping to improve the fitness of staff at the North East Strategic Health Authority (SHA).

Finance manager Mal, 57, inspired colleagues to join in the organisation's Workforce Workfit scheme to create a lasting legacy up to and beyond the Olympics.

He coordinated a pedometer challenge, which saw more than 140 members of staff wear a pedometer every day for six months.

The participants walked in teams at lunchtime and after work to cover 874 virtual miles from Land's End to John O'Groats, followed by a more ambitious Paris to Istanbul virtual route.

Mal, from Sunderland, encouraged those taking part in the challenge by collating the miles and giving weekly feedback.

The Jiu Jitsu black belt also shared his decade of expertise by organising self-defence based classes for staff.



Father-of-two Mal said: "I am looking forward to carrying the torch. It's a great honour and my grandchildren are over the moon I've been chosen."

"I've been told I am carrying it through the Peteslee area and I'm sure my family and colleagues will come to cheer me on."

The Workforce Workfit challenge was launched in partnership with The Journal's Great North Fitness Revolution last year to promote Olympics-inspired fitness.

Elaine Wilson, Olympic Ambassador for the North East, said: "I nominated Mal to be an Olympic torch bearer as he has played a key role in our Workforce Workfit challenge here at the strategic health authority helping to get over 60% of our staff involved in some sort of

physical activity over the past few months.

"We are looking forward to supporting him during the torch relay in June. It's a real honour for him and for us at the SHA to be represented during this historic journey."

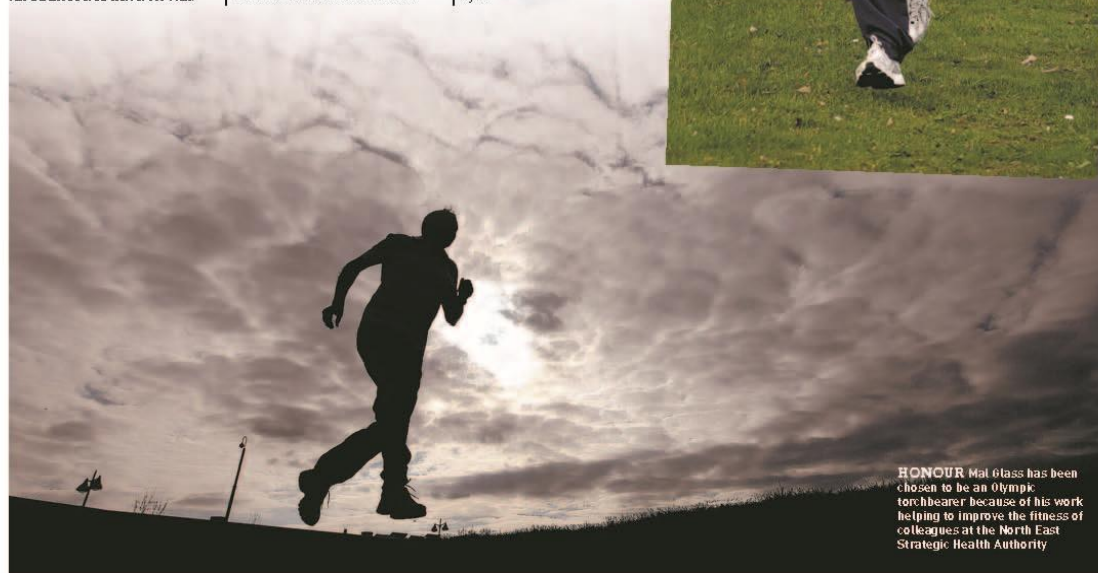
From May 19, the Olympic Flame will embark on its 70-day journey across the UK.

It will cover 8,000 miles and go to more than 1,000 villages, towns and cities along the way.

Visiting some of the UK's greatest landmarks and spectacles and travelling by different methods, the Olympic Torch Relay will visit every geographical county in the UK before it arrives at the Olympic Stadium in London on July 27 to mark the start of the Olympic Games.

More than 30 torchbearers will carry the flame as it snakes its way through Newcastle city centre on its 7.2-mile route.

It will take in the pitch at St James' Park, the Monument and the Millennium Bridge over the River Tyne.



HONOUR Mal Glass has been chosen to be an Olympic torchbearer because of his work helping to improve the fitness of colleagues at the North East Strategic Health Authority

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Zumba classes at the North East Strategic Health Authority, part of the Workforce Workfit Challenge

Workplaces urged to sign up to fitness

London 2012 Olympic Games are motivating employers across the region to launch last year to create opportunities in physical activity

Time was devoted to legacy leading up to London 2012. 40 businesses applied £30,000 from the health fund, which was partnership with The North Fitness help Olympic-inspired started. North East on grants of between



£500 and £5,000 and workers are already reaping the benefits. The Workforce Workfit scheme recently won approval from NHS chiefs when the North East Strategic Health Authority team picked up a top award from Olympic gold medalist Jonathan Edwards. Now even more local workplaces are invited to join in the fun. Elaine Wilson, the NHS North East

Olympic ambassador who devised the programme, is today offering tips to those who want to set up their own Workforce Workfit challenge.

Elaine, who encouraged an impressive 60% of North East Strategic Health Authority staff to take part in regular fitness activities, said: "The Olympics are a great catalyst to try to get people in your organisation involved in more physical activity."

"Sometimes it's hard to drum up enthusiasm in the ranks but the chances of doing this successfully can be greatly increased by following a few rules which encourage positive behaviour change."

"Involve your staff in designing the programme from the beginning to create a buzz about the new activities – give people a choice of classes,



RECOGNITION The North East Strategic Health Authority picked up a national award from Olympic Gold medalist Jonathan Edwards

teams or fitness sessions from the outset and let them to vote on their favourite options.

"Look for staff with fitness expertise within the organisation to champion or deliver activities and always ask staff what the best time to do activities is for them."

"Use workplace premises wherever possible to save on costs and travel and find out if there is a budget to subsidise activities to start with or whether staff would be prepared to contribute themselves."

"Make sure you try out the

activities yourself first so you are speaking from experience and check that instructors have the right kind of personality to encourage people with different levels of fitness."

"Give staff regular updates about how things are going and make sure some of the activity is competitive."

"Finally, ask for regular feedback from staff taking part – and make sure you listen to it."

For more information on creating a Workforce Workfit programme, email Elaine Wilson at Elaine.wilson@north-east.nhs.uk



IMPROVING: Alix Borthwick's heartbeat was monitored as she worked out

Health checks keep staff on their toes

Ker Carmichael

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BODY checks used to help elite athletes reach their peak have been enabling office workers to learn more about their fitness.

Staff at the North East Strategic Health Authority have had the chance to test out new state-of-the-art fitness monitors.

The Optima Life Firstbeat Bodyguard monitors, which are lightweight and can be worn under clothes over an extended period of time, observe the heart's reaction to the ups and downs of daily life and give in-depth fitness feedback.

Alix Borthwick, a 32-year-old workforce communications leader, from Ryton, Gateshead, said: "The monitor was easy to wear and the insight report and discussion made me really think about my health and fitness."

"For me, the most important thing was that the whole experience was very motivational and made me want to improve."

Colleague Ed Young, a 56-year-old workforce communications manager from Cullercooke, North Tyne, said: "I got feedback that I was exercising and listening to music too late at night, which was affecting my



INSIGHT The heartbeat monitor

sleep patterns. I also found I need to step up my activity to at least 30 minutes, three times a week, if I want to make a difference to my fitness."

The fitness checks are part of the North East Strategic Health Authority's Workforce Workfit scheme, which was launched last year to help businesses create opportunities for staff to engage in physical activity through work.

The programme was devised as part of the NHS 2012 Challenge to create a lasting legacy leading up to and beyond the London Olympics. Elaine Wilson, the NHS North East ambassador for NHS Workfit, said: "When I realised Optima was looking

for volunteers, I thought it would be great to have some of our staff who are taking part in our Workforce Workfit challenge to test it out."

"Different things motivate different people, but I think the detailed data you get from the Optima Bodyguard is a very effective incentive."

The system works by using two snap-on electrodes, eliminating the need to wear a belt around the body. This takes high quality recordings through a sensor, which can record up to five days of continuous heartbeat data.

After wearing the monitor for three days and filling in an online diary recording periods of exercise, stress, sleep and other activities, the data is downloaded.

A report then gives feedback on how the user reacts to stress, recovery from physical activity and how well they are sleeping.

Simon Shephard, from Optima Life, said: "We have sponsored the NHS 2012 Challenge from day one."

"Optima Life specialises in the connections between sport, health and work."

"It helps individuals and organisations understand how the principles used in elite sports performance can be used as effective in delivering a workplace that aims for high levels of productivity and performance."



MOTIVATED Alix was impressed by the performance of





COUNTING DOWN TO GAMES North East Olympic ambassador Elaine Wilson from North East Strategic Health Authority at Newburn Riverside

CHRIS
COOK



Getting out and about in sunshine

WELL, it's fair to say that the change in weather is a massive boost to the soul. And it's great to see people getting fit around the streets and parks.

I've been taking part in a personal challenge to commit to fitness even though I'm covering vast amounts of miles up and down the country, travelling from school to school inspiring our young people.

My challenge is to not get fat, not eat poor convenience foods, and to remain as active as I can.

In my last article I mentioned that variety is a great way to stay fit, but one de-motivating factor is that you can often feel like you're flitting from one exercise to the next without any structure.

My biggest tip when you are mixing training is to use two measurements:

The first is heart rate. Get to know your heart rate and your zones of training. This is a brilliant way of getting lost in your training session and getting the most out of your body.

The second indicator is feel. If you feel great after the session then just enjoy it! Aside from results, this is what I do exercise for.

Recently I've added a little yoga into my training again. I'm a huge fan of yoga as I was introduced to it by my physiotherapist, Penny Macutkiewicz, after I suffered a nasty injury in 2006.

Yoga was one area of my training that saved my career and introduced me to a completely different way to stay supple and injury-free while developing strength.

Now I'm back enjoying yoga once a week, I'm looking forward to building the sessions and having it as part of my regular fitness goals - it's brilliant for mind, body and spirit.

Public Health Office, said: "The Workforce Workfit programme has been extremely successful both with our NHS organisations and with the wider business community.

"We hope that we can build on what we have achieved so far as we head into the countdown for the Olympic games and beyond."

Elaine Darbyshire, director of communications and corporate affairs for NHS North of England, said: "The Workforce Workfit Challenge has been a huge success in the North East and we are keen to replicate this across the rest of NHS North of England.

"We are committed to making sure that the catalyst of the Olympics leaves a real health legacy for all of our staff working in the NHS."

national governing bodies of sports to create opportunities and support for NHS staff to participate in activities.

"For those who are less sport-orientated, we have recently partnered with Walk England and established an NHS Walking challenge."

Fergus Neilson, from the Regional



For those who are less sport-orientated, we have recently established an NHS Walking Challenge

A PROJECT to bring Olympic-inspired fitness to the region has been hailed a success.

With the London 2012 Games just around the corner, the North East Strategic Health Authority (SHA) has been generating enthusiasm by promoting physical activity initiatives in schools, businesses and NHS organisations over the past three years.

Last year Elaine Wilson joined the SHA team as the North East Olympic ambassador.

She developed the Workforce Workfit Challenge, in partnership with the Journal's Great North Fitness Revolution.

Businesses across the region joined in the challenge and got creative in

thinking up ways to getting their workforce's fitter, from pedometer challenges to green exercise programmes and Bollywood dancing.

Elaine's background in social marketing helped her to recruit partners and staff for the challenge, which has been so successful it achieved a 65% participation rate in the SHA's flagship fitness programme.

Elaine said: "Being the Olympic ambassador for NHS North East is a great role.

"We want to make sure that the North East is well-represented and that our NHS staff are encouraged to participate in activity despite the fact we are so far away from London.

"We have our regional programme but we're also working with the

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How did we engage staff?



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SHA's programme followed a social marketing model
achieved a 60% participation rate in six months



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Ten Top Tips to getting Your Workforce Fitter

- Involve your staff in designing the programme from the beginning – create a buzz about the new activities
- Give people a choice of classes, teams or fitness sessions from the outset and let them to vote on their favourite options.
- Look for staff with fitness expertise within the organisation to champion /deliver - activities.
- Always ask staff what the best time to do activities is for them. Is lunchtime good or better straight after work?
- Use workplace premises wherever possible to save on costs and travel (do you have a board room which isn't used all the time?)



Ten Top Tips to getting Your Workforce Fitter

- Find out if there is budget to subsidise activities to start with or whether staff would be prepared to contribute themselves.
- Make sure you try out the activities yourself first so you are speaking from experience.
- Check that instructors have the right kind of personality to encourage people with different levels of fitness.
- Regular updates are key
make sure some of the activity is competitive.
- Ask for regular feedback from staff taking part –
and make sure you listen to it!



NHS Sport and | Physical Activity Challenge – A Gold Award from David Nicholson November 2011



- Workforce Workfit TV Advert made July 2012
 - Shown at the Olympic Live Sites
 - Launches Workforceworkfit.com site











Phase 2 –
Things get more adventurous!



OARSOME NHS staff get fit and have fun in the water tank at the Tyne United Rowing Club

Dipping an oar into a new way of keeping fit

Mieka Smiles

B RITAIN'S rowing success at this year's Olympics has helped to promote the sport to a whole new audience ... and now NHS staff have become the latest to stick their oar in.

Fourteen members of NHS staff took to the new state-of-the-art rowing tank at the Tyne United Rowing Club on the south bank of the Tyne at Newburn last week.

It is the latest activity to be offered to staff as part of the Workforce Workfit programme which aims to get employees more engaged in physical activity through their employers.

The tank, which holds nine tonnes of water, is a real asset to the club as it is an excellent all-weather training aid.

The coaches can easily wander right around it to give individuals support and tips.

The tank can even circulate water to replicate the conditions on the

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Tyne and is unique in that it can accommodate eight people in line, either in a rowing or sculling configuration.

The feedback was so positive from NHS staff involved that negotiations are now under way to take things to



the next level with a full learn-to-row course.

Tony Baldasera, clinical programme lead at NHS North East, said: "That was the most fun I've ever had on water without the risk of capsizing or drowning!"

David Bell, project coordinator, added: "I thought the whole experience was great and it felt really surreal being in the tank."

"I think with this being one of the big successes in the Olympics it was great to have a go."

"You don't realise how hard it is and you learn to appreciate how much hard work the athletes went through to get to that standard."

Elaine Wilson, the NHS Olympic Ambassador, said: "The UK had such a lot of success in the Olympic rowing events this year and our office is right next to the Tyne ... just two reasons why it made sense to include

FULL BODY WORKOUT

ROWING is a full body workout and can provide a robust base fitness for almost anyone.

This is how it works the body:

The legs: Each stroke involves full compression and extension of the legs, working the muscles of the calves, thighs, buttocks and hips in a low-impact way that is much kinder on the knees than most activities.

The core: Rowing is one of the few activities that will work your core abdominal and back muscles. Fitness experts believe a strong core yields numerous benefits, from a stronger back to better posture.

The upper body: Rowing will strengthen and tone your shoulders, back and arms.

some rowing activity in our Workforce Workfit programme!" Tyne United Rowing Club (TURC) was only founded in 2007 but has grown substantially in a short

time. TURC also has a suite of 18 Concept2 Ergo indoor rowing machines which are used for training and they also offer indoor rowing courses.

**CIPR PRIDE AWARDS
2012 SHORTLIST**

CIPR



Horse Riding stress buster

Mental agility required



Flashing blades on route to fitness

Kim Carmichael

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IT was blades at the ready as health workers took on an Olympic-inspired fencing challenge.

Staff at the North East Strategic Health Authority were put through their paces with an expert instructor as part of the NHS Workforce WorldFit scheme.

The sessions, held after work at the organisation's Newburn headquarters, are part of a campaign launched in partnership with the journal's Great North Fitness Revolution to improve the health of workforces across the region.

Kenny Helyer, communications officer at the health authority, was among those who took part in the fencing.

He said: "It was really good but there's a lot more to it than I thought."

"I loved the outfit, just putting it on got you in the mood - it's definitely a skill not just a sport."

Instructor Nicola Aberdeen, from Let's Fence, said: "Fencing is a great way to keep fit and mentally active. It's also a good release after a day at work."

"Sometimes, when people put on a fencing mask there is an amazing transformation and a true fencer appears."

"I love the skill and speed of fencing, the tactics required to outwit your opponent, and the excitement of scoring the winning hit."

Elaine Wilson, NHS Olympic ambassador, said: "I wanted to give staff the chance to try a real Olympic sport which is quite different to some of the other activities we have offered."

"It encourages strength and agility and also has a fascinating mental dimension to it which is great fun,



Picture: Andy Connors www.journallive.co.uk/doiaphoto ref: 00724247

Alchemist Fitness
come on board

ON GUARD Chosen for its flavour of the Olympics, fencing proved popular with the staff who took

too." The Workforce WorldFit challenge was launched last year in partnership with the Great North Fitness Revolution to promote Olympic-inspired fitness.

Since then, workplaces across the region joined in the challenge and got creative in thinking up ways to getting their staff fitter - from

pedometer challenges to green exercise programmes and Bollywood dancing.

The Workforce WorldFit scheme has already won approval from NHS chiefs and Olympic bosses.

The Great North Fitness Revolution is challenging everyone to make a pledge to get active and make the

positive changes that better quality of life.

From training for 10 Run, to something as increasing the number of walks each day - every involved.

For more information on Workforce WorldFit

THE JOURNAL

Thursday August 9, 2012

journallive.co.uk

Health & Fitness

Trainers are brought in to get NHS workers fit

HEALTH workers have been given a lifeline after personal trainers were drafted in to help them back to fitness.

NHS employees are benefiting from health checks and tailored fitness and nutrition programmes as part of the Workforce WorldFit challenge.

Staff have been given the opportunity to work with Gateshead-based personal trainers Alchemist Fitness, who specialise in body transformations using a combination of specialised nutrition and exercise.

One person benefiting from the scheme is 59-year-old Margaret Wilkinson.

Margaret, who works as an occupational health nurse for the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) has been looking after ambulance crews for years and would now like to spend a bit of time and effort looking after herself.

Margaret, who is about a stone overweight, is concerned about her

core strength and stability as she gets older. She also feels like she is more sluggish and has a real sugar addiction.

Margaret is now going to be following a personal training plan at home, working with kettlebells together with a nutrition programme.

Also taking part in the Olympic-inspired programme is NHS training advisor Nick Storey, 43.

Nick, who previously worked as a health promotion officer at Gateshead Council, said: "I was quite good at keeping active when it was my day job and ran and cycled regularly but now my job is much more sedentary I have piled on the weight and my diet is poor. I'm definitely not getting my five a day."

"I want to reduce my body fat and have more energy. I'm really hoping that this will give me the incentive to make a real difference to my fitness."

Nick is going to be following a distance training programme which will rotate weights, cardio exercise



WORKING OUT Nick Storey takes part in a fitness programme with personal trainer Daire Fitzgerald

and abdominal workouts.

Daire Fitzgerald from Alchemist Fitness, who specialises in 12-week body transformations, said: "People are very aware of what they look like on the outside and we need to try and be more aware of what's going on inside too."

"The less you do the lazier you become. It's as much about mental as physical energy and developing

discipline."

Elaine Wilson, the NHS North East Olympic ambassador, said: "Getting the most out of life and work includes taking your health and fitness seriously and it's great to see NHS employees leading by example."

The Workforce WorldFit challenge was launched last year in partnership with The Journal's Great North Fitness Revolution to promote

Olympics-inspired fitness.

Since then, workplaces region joined in the challenge got creative in thinking up getting their staff fitter - pedometer challenges to exercise programmes and dancing.

For more information on Alchemist Fitness, visit www.alchemistfitness.co.uk



KITTED OUT Staff from the Strategic Health Authority Newcastle take part in a fencing class. Pictured from left, Iain Scott, Alex Glover, Kenny Helyer, Elaine Wilson, Ross Gingles and fencing coach Nicola Aberdeen



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Our Activ8 are here to help you reach your fitness goals

Results

- Nearly 10,000 staff involved in activity over 12 months
- National work to extend NHS Challenge – sustain benefits
- Staff morale improved at the SHA – programme continues to evolve
- January 2013–
the Workforce Workfit
Cycling Challenge with Storck Cycles

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