



# *Health at Work Evaluation Report*

## Shape Up Taster Sessions: 2009 - 2011

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*Authors: Catherine McMahon, Lindsay Jack and  
Graeme Stevenson*

*Health at Work  
Festival Business Centre, 150 Brand St, Glasgow G51 1DH  
E: [healthatwork@ggc.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:healthatwork@ggc.scot.nhs.uk)  
T: 0141 314 0024  
W: [www.healthatwork.org.uk](http://www.healthatwork.org.uk)*

## Abstract

Overweight, obesity and physical inactivity are significant problems throughout Scotland. To help address the problem in Glasgow, NHS GGC Health Improvement, nutrition, physical activity and healthy weight team developed Shape Up in collaboration with Glasgow Life (GL). Shape Up is a 10 week diet & exercise programme designed to help participants lose weight, feel good and look great. The programme aims to provide participants with the tools they need to make healthy and sustainable changes to their diet and activity levels.

To promote change in healthy eating and physical activity levels in those of working age, Health at Work (HAW) and GL developed a thirty minute lunchtime Shape Up taster session for the workplace. In response to the recommendations resulting from the evaluation of the previous taster sessions delivered, the 2011 content was amended slightly, waist measurements and getting the balance right were removed and the alcohol and calories section changed to 'guess the calories in popular drinks'.

The workshops were delivered in the weeks prior to the programmes commencing at the various GL leisure centres with the hope that employees were motivated enough to sign up. HAW received funding to subsidise the programme through the Scottish Centre for Healthy Working Lives Activity Works programme, providing employees with the opportunity to sign up at the reduced rate of £25 as opposed to £63. 11 sessions were delivered to a total of 114 employees during the second phase of taster sessions.

Over the three year period that the taster sessions were delivered, 89% of employees who attended a session reported that they had increased their awareness of healthy eating recommendations. 92% of employees who attended the sessions reported that they had increased their knowledge of physical activity recommendations. 40% of participants reported that they intended to sign up to a Shape Up session and only 15% had heard of Activity Works. The taster session continues to be an effective method for promoting healthy eating and physical activity recommendations in the work place. Provision of a key fact sheet along with the programme content for each week of shape up and dates of forthcoming courses was well received and recommended for future sessions. Information on the actual number of employees signing up to the Shape Up programme has proven challenging to obtain due to changes in staff at GL.

## Rationale

There has been a steady increase in overweight and obesity in Scotland since

1995. In 2008, 68.5% of men and 61.8% of women were reported to be in this category<sup>1</sup>. To help address the problem in Glasgow, NHS GGC Health Improvement, nutrition, physical activity and healthy weight team developed Shape Up in collaboration with Glasgow Life (GL). Shape Up is a 10 week nutrition & exercise programme.

The programme, delivered in sports centres across Glasgow, consist of a weekly 1.5 hour session which includes information on healthy eating and an activity taster session. The programme also includes weekly weigh ins; a free gym session or fitness class; waist, hip and thigh measurements; fitness analysis and a manual of nutrition facts, hints and tips.

In the financial year 2008-2009 joint funding was provided by the Scottish Centre for Health Working Lives (SCHWL) and Health at Work (HAW) to deliver 30 minute lunchtime Shape Up taster sessions in workplaces in GG&C. HAW worked in partnership with GL to develop the sessions. It was agreed that 20 sessions would be available to workplaces in Glasgow with a maximum of 15 employees per session.

Feedback received reported that all employees enjoyed the 30 minute taster sessions with a significant number indicating that their knowledge & understanding regarding healthy eating and recommendations for physical activity had increased (21% and 10%) above our target. 25% of our target for registrations to the shape up programme following the taster sessions was achieved. This was put down to the time delay in the sessions finishing and new programmes commencing in the leisure centres resulting in a loss of motivation. The 30 minute taster sessions prove to be an effective mechanism of promoting nutrition & physical activity recommendations within the workplace setting and the services available across Glasgow Life centres. It was concluded that the taster sessions should be offered again in line with the recommendations from the previous round i.e. accurately timed to coincide with new shape up programmes starting, revised content of sessions, emphasis of national physical activity guidance for health & well-being.

<sup>1</sup>The Scottish Government. **The Scottish Health Survey 2008**. Edinburgh, 2009.

## **Aim, Proposed Outcomes, Proposed Outputs**

The aim of this piece of work was to promote change in line with healthy eating and physical activity recommendations in the working age population of Greater Glasgow and Clyde (GG&C).

Proposed outputs:

- 20 Shape Up taster sessions delivered. 15 employees per session.
- Session content
- Advert
- Key fact sheet

- Evaluation report

Proposed outcomes:

- Increase awareness of healthy eating recommendations
- Increase awareness of physical activity recommendations
- Increase the number of people attending the Shape Up programme
- Increase awareness of Activity Works

## Approach

The findings from the previous series of taster sessions delivered in 2008-2009 recommend that the content of the session is reduced by removing waist measurements & advice and getting the balance right. The alcohol and calories section was changed to 'guess the calories in popular drinks' to reflect what is actually delivered in the session.

The advert for the taster sessions was again sent to organisation via the email alert and their HWL advisor. This proved to be an effective method of promoting the sessions. 14 organisations signed up for the initiative. However, two of the taster sessions were unsuccessfully delivered due to reasons out with our control. The advert developed for the previous sessions was amended to reflect the new dates and booking details, which were directly through GL based on recommendations from the previous sessions.

Organisations were offered the taster sessions over three slots i.e. 10:15am-11am, 11:45am – 12:30pm and 1:15pm – 2pm. Of the 38 sessions offered 14 were booked with 11 being actually been delivered. The short lead in time to advertising the sessions and dates of delivery may have contributed to a low uptake and the timing co-incided with the summer holiday period. There was an equal spread of sessions being delivered at each time slot. Again the sessions were open to a maximum of 15 employees.

As recommended the taster sessions were delivered prior to GL's Shape Up programme commencing. A key fact sheet was developed reporting costs, course start dates at various GL leisure centres, booking information and provided an overview of the content for each week of the 10 week programme. This was distributed during the sessions by the coaches.

In the previous report, it was highlighted that the physical activity section of the sessions was delivered to an inconsistent standard by the coaches. In the planning meetings, this was discussed with the shape up co-ordinator who ensured that the coaches would be briefed on emphasising the Scottish Governments recommendations for activity for health & well-being and how employees can become more active. As recommended spot checks were undertaken to ensure this was being delivered. Coaches emphasised the importance of being active and how this dovetails with healthy eating. Activity works was also advertised to promote ideas for becoming more active and to

enable in-house training to be delivered at a reduced rate to organisations requesting this as recommended from the initial taster sessions.

As agreed, GL took on the administration work, as it is easier for them to manage the coaches' diaries.

To ensure successful monitoring of the sessions, Diane forwarded the evaluation forms from each session on a weekly basis as previously recommended.

Obtaining information on the number of employees signing up for the shape up programme at a GL leisure facility, or organisations requesting and having a programme delivered in-house as a result of the taster sessions, has proven difficult. This has been due to the co-ordinator going on maternity leave with no key contact established.

## Results

11 out of the possible 38 Shape Up taster sessions were delivered to workplaces in Glasgow during 2010-2011. This brings the total number of sessions delivered during the three year period up to 31, giving a target of (155%). 114 employees attended, bringing the overall target to 90% over the three year period. Our initial target assumed that each taster session would have the maximum of 15 employees attending. This was not the case with 8 out of the 11 sessions having 10 or more staff attending. The reason for not all taster sessions being filled could be attributable to the short timeline and holiday period.

89% of employees who attended a session reported that they had increased their awareness of healthy eating recommendations; 14% above our target of 75% over the three year period.

92% of employees who attended the sessions reported that they had increased their knowledge of physical activity recommendations; 17% above our target of 75% during this three year period.

Of the 114 employees who attended a session, 40 indicated that they would sign up for the Shape Up programme. This demonstrates an increase in knowledge around healthy eating and physical activity recommendations compared to previous taster sessions run showing that the recommendations from the previous report have been addressed.

Our target over the three year period for registrations to the Shape Up

programme following the taster session was 25%. Due to lack of communication from GL and changes to staffing, it has proven difficult to obtain information regarding the number of employees signing up to Shape Up following the taster sessions.

## Recommendations

The recommendations from the Shape Up taster sessions delivered in March 2010 were all taken on board when organising and delivering this round of taster sessions. The recommendations included:

- Sending the advert for the Shape Up sessions via the email alert and HWL adviser
- Highlighting on the advert that the sessions would count as an interactive activity for the HWL award.
- Reducing the content of the session by removing waist measurements and advice and getting the balance right.
- The alcohol and calories section was changed to “guess the calories in popular drinks”
- Delivering the sessions over lunchtime period
- Maximum of 15 participants per session
- Obtaining start dates for shape up programmes commencing at all GL leisure centres to ensure taster sessions are planned and delivered prior to classes starting.
- Trainers discussed the Scottish Government’s recommendations for physical activity and how employees can become active for health
- Spot checks carried out
- Partnership established with Activity Works to offer a reduced rate when signing up to shape up and, to also provide employees with the opportunity to have an in-house programme delivered at the reduced if there are 10 or more interested staff.
- GL took on the bookings as it is easier for them to manage the coaches diaries
- The importance of receiving the evaluations on a weekly basis was emphasised and Dianne sent these over each week so the success of the session could be monitored.

Not as many employees signed up for the taster sessions compared to phase 1. However, sending the advert via the email alert and HWL advisor still appears to be an effective method of communication and promotion. As reported earlier, this could be attributable to the short lead in time to the taster sessions and the summer holiday period. It is recommended that there is at least a 3-4 week period of advertisement before taster sessions are run and link advisors encourage organisations to sign up, emphasising that it would count as an interactive activity for the HWL award.

The sessions were designed to be delivered over a 30 minute lunchtime

period so organisations did not need to release staff. This time round there were three slots available...and there was an even spread of uptake between them. Again, some organisations released staff to attend the session.

As outlined in the previous report the session was capped at 15. This made the session more inclusive for organisations as other workshops that HAW run must have a minimum of 15 employees attending, excluding many smaller organisation.

Receiving the calendar of dates for Shape Up programmes starting in all GL leisure centres was useful in planning the taster sessions to ensure they coincided with programmes starting. Less than half of employees said they would sign up for the shape up programmes. This could be due to many of the participants living out with the Glasgow area. It is therefore recommended that HAW explore the opportunity to negotiate with other local authorities a proposal to roll out the programme and taster sessions within there locality. This may encourage more employees to sign up.

One spot check was carried out and the feedback regarding the standard of the delivery and content was very positive and there appeared to be good level of emphasis on activity for health rather than exercise for fitness. It is recommended that 2 spot checks are undertaken to ensure quality & consistency is being maintained.

The option of promoting Activity Works was explored and led to HAW receiving subsidised funding from the SCHWL through Activity Works to provide employees with the opportunity to sign up for the 10 week programme at the reduced rate of £25 as opposed to £63. This was also to enable organisations to have the programme delivered in-house through activity works. Due to breakdown in communication from GL and changes to staffing there is no information on the rate of uptake to these options. However, it is recommended that this model is used for future sessions and explored in other LA.

GL co-ordinated the bookings and this appeared to more efficient and more effective use of resources. 2 of the 14 sessions that were booked did not go ahead. Again it has proven difficult to establish the reason why. Diane forwarded the evaluation forms directly so that we could monitor the success of the sessions. It is recommended that this remains part of the model.

It has been difficult to obtain information on the uptake rate of the shape up programmes by employees as a result of the taster sessions. For 2011 programmes the importance of receiving this information must be emphasised and clearly built into the agreement between GL and HAW to enable us to monitor whether this is an effective workplace HI activity to encourage sign up to NHSGGC & GL health & wellbeing services.

Reducing the content of the session ensured the 30minutes taster sessions were delivered to a high standard and the change from 'getting the balance right' to 'guess the calories in popular drinks' was more appropriate to what

was being delivered in the sessions. This section was well received.





## FREE Shape Up Taster Session

Shape Up is a diet and exercise programme designed to help you lose weight and feel great. Health at Work are offering a series of 30 minute Shape Up Taster Sessions. A qualified Shape Up instructor will advise staff on:

What is a portion? – A practical look at portion size

Making sense of food labels

Alcohol and calories – Guess the calories of popular drinks

Activity – How to fit activity into a daily routine

Waist measurements and advice (optional)

**When?** 3 different daily time slots between 16<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> August 2010

**Where?** Your workplace

**Who?** Maximum of 15 employees

For further information or to take advantage of this free training please contact Jenny Scott on:

Tel: 0141 287 0964

Email: [jenny.scott@glasgowlife.org.uk](mailto:jenny.scott@glasgowlife.org.uk)

**NB** For those workplaces engaged in the Healthy Working Lives Award programme a Shape Up Taster Session will contribute as a health promoting activity.

