



Health at Work Evaluation Report

Shape Up Taster Sessions

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Abstract

Overweight and obesity is a significant problem throughout Scotland. To help address the problem in Glasgow, Culture and Sport Glasgow (CSG) developed Shape Up, a 10 week weight management programme. The programme, which combines nutritional advice and exercise, is delivered as ten, one hour sessions. To promote change in healthy eating and physical activity levels in those of working age, Health at Work (HAW) and CSG developed a thirty minute lunchtime Shape Up taster session for the workplace. The programme covered portion sizes, food labelling, the calorie content of alcoholic drinks, and incorporating physical activity into daily activities. Those who attend the sessions receive a £5 discount voucher for a ten week Shape Up programme. 20 sessions were delivered to a total of 156 employees. 96% of employees who attended a session reported that they had increased their awareness of healthy eating recommendations. 85% of employees who attended the sessions reported that they had increased their knowledge of physical activity recommendations. 12% of participants joined a Shape Up programme. The lunchtime taster session is an effective method for promoting healthy eating and physical activity recommendations in the work place. In order to increase registrations to the Shape Up programme it is recommended that the taster sessions are delivered in the weeks prior to the programmes beginning.

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 category¹. In order to help address the problem of overweight and obesity in Glasgow, Culture and Sport Glasgow have developed Shape Up, a 10 week weight management 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; waist, hip and thigh measurements; fitness analysis; and a manual of hints and tips.

In the financial year 2007-2008 joint funding was provided by the Scottish Centre for Health Working Lives (SCHWL) and Health at Work (HAW) to employ a trainer to deliver the Shape Up programme in workplaces in GG&C. HAW worked in partnership with CSG and the Acute Health Improvement team to pilot the delivery of the 10 week Shape Up programme in 3 NHS sites.

A number of difficulties presented in delivering the programme in the workplace setting. Shift patterns within the hospital sites meant that staff

could not access the full 10 week programme. Demands of service delivery resulted in staff not being realised for the full 1.5 hour session. Facilities within the sites were not suitable for the delivery of the exercise section of the session and those that were could not be accessed on a regular basis. The pilot work concluded that the delivery of the full 10 week Shape Up programme was not feasible in the workplace setting and that it would be more appropriate to signpost employees to the programmes delivered at CSG sites.

¹The 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 in 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
- 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

Approach

The findings of the Shape Up pilot recommended signposting employees within Glasgow to the Shape Up programmes delivered in their area. Consequently 2 members of the HAW team worked in partnership with CSG to develop a 30 minute Shape Up taster session that would be delivered during lunchtime in workplaces within Glasgow (see appendix 1 for training content). As CSG trainers would deliver the taster sessions it was agreed that 20 sessions would be available to workplaces within Glasgow. CSG stipulated that each session should have a maximum of 15 employees attending. The sessions were delivered between September and December 2009 in order to engage those employees aiming to lose weight for Christmas.

In addition to receiving advice and guidance on healthy eating and physical

activity recommendations employees who attended also received a £5 discount voucher for a Shape Up programme. CSG arrange for the vouchers to have a code on them which could be traced in order to record the number of people who joined a programme following a taster session. The use of these vouchers was monitored until March 2010.

In order to evaluate the taster sessions 4 questions were developed:

- Did you enjoy today's session?
- Do you intend to sign up for Shape Up?
- As a result of today's session do you now feel you know more about healthy eating?
- As a result of today's session do you now feel you know more about how much exercise you should be doing to keep healthy?

The CSG trainers were responsible for getting those attending to complete the evaluation at the end of each session. Employees were asked to tick yes or no to each of the evaluation questions.

The members of the HAW team developed an advert to promote the taster sessions to workplaces within Glasgow (see appendix 1). In order to encourage the uptake of sessions with HWL registered companies, the advert clearly stated how the session would link to the HWL award criteria. All HWL advisers within the HAW team were asked to send the advert to their non NHS and Council contacts within the Glasgow. The sessions were also advertised through the HAW email alert.

Workplaces who wished to host a session were asked to contact a designated member of the HAW team who booked them a session and informed CSG of the booking. Workplaces were asked to provide a room to host the session as well as advertise the session to their staff. Publicity materials were provided for this purpose. Following the booking the CSG trainer liaised with the organisation to confirm the booking and venue.

Following completion of the 20 sessions the evaluation results were sent back to HAW to complete the initial evaluation report. Details of the Shape Up registrations were sent to HAW as they occurred.

Results

20 Shape Up taster sessions were delivered to workplaces in Glasgow. Our target of 300 employees attending the sessions was not achieved. 156 employees (52% of target) attended. Our initial target assumed that each taster session would have the maximum of 15 employees attending. This was not the case.

96% of employees who attended a session reported that they had increased their awareness of healthy eating recommendations; 21% above our target of

75%.

85% of employees who attended the sessions reported that they had increased their knowledge of physical activity recommendations; 10% above our target of 75%.

Of the 156 employees who attended a session, 48 indicated that they would sign up for the Shape Up programme and 62 indicated that they may sign up. By the end of March 2010 12 employees had registered for the 10 week programme, corresponding to 12% of all participants. 11 attended an in house programme delivered at Glasgow Housing Association and 8 attended a programme delivered at a Glasgow Club facility.

Our target for registrations to the Shape Up programme following the taster session was 25%. The reduction in the number of employees registering for the programme compared to the target may have been due to the fact that the final Shape Up programmes before Christmas began in September prior to the majority of the taster sessions being delivered. The next Shape Up programmes did not begin until January 2010. It is likely that employee's motivation to join the programme may have reduced as they waited for the next programme to begin.

Recommendations

The advert for the Shape Up sessions was sent to organisations via the email alert and their HWL adviser. 19 of the organisations who had a session booked it following the email from their adviser. This appears to be an effective way of communicating training/initiatives to our organisations.

All 20 sessions were booked within 3 weeks of the advert being sent out. 10 organisations requested additional sessions and 9 other organisations were placed on the reserve list. The advert clearly stated that the sessions would count as an interactive activity for the HWL award. This may have encouraged organisations to sign up as it removed the need for them to organise and deliver one of the interactive events required for their portfolio. The sessions were designed to be delivered for 30 minutes over lunch time. Again this may have encouraged organisations as they were not required to release staff during core hours. Despite this 15 of the organisations gave staff the time off to attend the session.

Culture and Sport stipulated that each session had a maximum of 15 employees in attendance. This made the sessions more inclusive for our companies as other workshops that we offer must have a minimum of 15 employees attending. This can exclude many of our smaller organisations.

It is necessary that future Shape Up taster sessions are delivered prior to Culture and Sport's Shape Up programmes beginning. This will enable employees to join a programme while they are still motivated to do so. Culture and Sport stated at a recent meeting that they will send HAW their calendar of dates so that our taster sessions can be scheduled around them.

The physical activity section of the session was not delivered to a consistent standard by the trainers. Fewer employees were aware of the physical activity recommendations than were knowledgeable about healthy eating. It must be ensured the trainers discuss the Scottish Government's recommendations for physical activity and how employees can become active for health. It is important that the emphasis is on activity for health rather than exercise for fitness. It is recommended that "spot checks" are again carried out at sessions ensure this is happening.

In order to help ensure all sections are delivered to a high standard it is suggested that the content of the session is cut. Waist measurements and advice should be removed as they were not requested as should "getting the balance right". The alcohol and calories section should be changed to "guess the calories in popular drinks" as this better reflects what was covered in the session.

The £5 discount voucher should still be given to employees as an incentive. As Culture and Sport have received requests for in-house programmes to be delivered it has been suggested that they also promote the Activity Works programme to allow in-house training to be delivered at a reduced rate. This option should be explored.

Culture and Sport have suggested that they take on the booking of the sessions as it is easier for them to manage the trainer's diaries.

It was difficult to get the evaluations of the sessions from Culture and Sport. It was agreed that they would be sent to us by Diane at the end of the week. This did not happen as it appears Diane was having difficulty in getting the evaluations from the trainers. This should be resolved for 2010 programmes and the importance of receiving these evaluations on a weekly basis emphasised so that we can monitor the success of the sessions.



FREE Lunchtime 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? September – December 2009

Where? Your workplace

Who? Maximum of 15 employees

For further information or to take advantage of this free training please contact Lindsay Jack on:

Tel: 0141 314 0024

Email: lindsay.jack@ggc.scot.nhs.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.