

Royal Society for Public Health working
with Employers

Understanding Health Improvement

lifestyle



RSPH
ROYAL SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH
VISION, VOICE AND PRACTICE

Supported by the Department of Health



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RSPH's *Understanding Health Improvement* qualification enables you to support the health and wellbeing of your staff, with all the associated business benefits.

This unique qualification—supported by the Department of Health—helps employers and organisations of all types and sizes in the private, public, not-for-profit and voluntary sectors, support a healthy workforce and assists front-line staff perform better in any general “health promotion role”.

What is The Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH)?

The RSPH is a leading independent body with an international reputation dedicated to the promotion, practice and protection of the highest standards of public health.

As a registered charity, the RSPH is an awarding body recognised by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and provides a portfolio of qualifications that are directly relevant to the workplace.

The RSPH developed the unique *Understanding Health Improvement qualification* - a one-day training course and 45 minute assessment - in direct response to the government's *Choosing Health: Making healthy choices* and tackling health inequalities agendas.

The qualification equips staff to motivate and support individuals to adopt a healthier lifestyle.

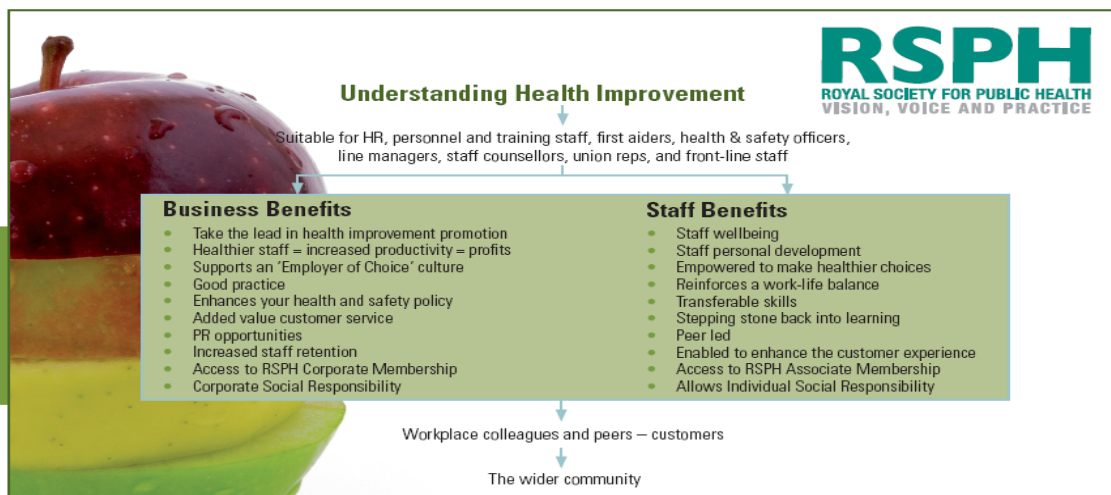
Will my organisation really benefit from it?

Yes. Both the RSPH and Department of Health believe that the workplace offers a real opportunity for health improvement, and employers are increasingly supporting the issue of staff health and wellbeing as good practice.

Improving the health of employees gives many business benefits including reduced staff sickness and absence rates—leading to improved productivity and profits—lower staff turnover and improved staff retention, and supports an ‘employer of choice’ culture.

Health improvement: what's it all about?

Healthcare is changing. The emphasis is shifting from just treating illness, to promoting good health and individuals taking responsibility for their own health and wellbeing—whether it be quitting smoking, doing more exercise, losing weight, drinking alcohol wisely or eating five pieces of fruit a day.



Your organisation may wish to use this Award as an opportunity to enhance your health and safety policy or staff health and wellbeing / welfare strategy. Investors in People (IIP UK) for example, is currently researching the focus on health and wellbeing at work for the next version of its Standard.

How can my organisation get involved?

Human resource/personnel staff and line managers are in the 'natural' position to be approached by staff seeking advice on health and work life balance issues, and are well placed to offer advice and provide signposts to health and wellbeing information within a work environment.

Employees may also turn to friends for advice, or a colleague who is a first aider, health and safety officer, union representative or staff counsellor, or, in larger organisations, a member of the occupational health or corporate social responsibility team.

Your organisation can choose to involve staff in both informal and/or formal health improvement channels.

Informal channels include incorporating health improvement training in core staff and management training programmes, or recruiting volunteers to become workplace health champions to develop healthy activities and be available to signpost practical routes to living a healthy lifestyle.

More formal channels involve supporting the learning and development of designated health trainers, facilitators, navigators or promoters, who are equipped to work with staff, in groups or on a one-to-one basis, to help make changes to improve their health, and evaluate the interventions suggested.

What have other organisations done?

Royal Mail has chosen to cascade *Understanding Health Improvement* to its first aid trainers and health and safety personnel—giving 'health' and 'safety' a more equal focus and emphasis.

Royal Mail believes that this approach will deliver fundamental health improvement messages to employees in line with the company's strategy to give all possible support to its people—ranging from lifestyle and healthy diet advice to safety information—as a healthy and fit workforce is key to providing consistently reliable, high quality service to customers.

The British Army is committed to supporting the ethos of good health for soldiers and their dependants, and aims to inform and encourage individuals to make healthier choices.

In support of this commitment, the Army has developed its own Health Trainer training for Physical Training Instructors—which incorporates the *Understanding Health Improvement* learning outcomes—and the Army Health Branch has a website dedicated to Army health.

The Army sees the benefits in peer-led constructive advice on a number of health issues including reducing alcohol misuse, improving diet and nutrition, stress management, smoking cessation and general health and wellbeing.

Will our staff really benefit?

Yes. Qualifying your staff in *Understanding Health Improvement* not only empowers employees in making healthier lifestyle choices, but also enables them to give advice

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Right to left: Audrey Carlin, Company Secretary and first workplace health trainer in England, T Allen Stockholders, Derbyshire—receiving her RSPH Level 2 Understanding Health improvement qualification from Rt Hon Dawn Primarolo MP, Minister of State (Public Health)

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and support to workplace colleagues and peers, friends and family, and ultimately the wider community.

Employees benefit from the support given to make healthier choices and adopt healthier lifestyles, and employers have found that by introducing health promotion activities and workshops into the workplace, employees feel more valued and develop increased morale.

Gaining an externally accredited qualification from a reputable public health awarding body may re-introduce staff to learning, as well as assisting them in their personal and professional development.

Understanding Health Improvement—a basic Level 2 qualification—is suitable for all levels of staff, and no pre-course entry requirements are needed.

How about our customers?

For some employers, wellbeing and general health promotion is not only an issue for their workforce, but also for customers.

Staff qualified in *Understanding Health Improvement* are enabled to enhance the

customer experience and give added-value customer service—either directly through a ‘health promotion’ role e.g. pharmacies, health food retailers, the sports and fitness and leisure industries, or indirectly through the provision of general information and advice e.g. osteopaths, chiropractors and physiotherapists, local authority and housing association housing officers.

What do we do next?

For further information or to book a place on a course, please contact Kerry Neville on:

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Email: Kerry.neville@gateshead.ac.uk or betterhealthatwork@gateshead.nhs.uk

Website: www.nbetterhealthatwork.nhs.uk

Better Health at Work

Gateshead College
(in association with Amacus Ltd)
Baltic Campus
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Other RSPH workplace qualifications available:

- Healthier Foods and Special Diets—Levels 1 and 2
- Nutrition and Health—Certificate and Diploma
- Health and Safety in the Workplace—Foundation Certificate
- Hazard Awareness—Level 1
- Food Safety (Retail, Manufacturing or Catering) - Levels 2, 3 and 4
- Food Hygiene—Foundation Certificate
- HACCP Principles—Foundation, Intermediate, Advanced
- Recognising and Responding to Substance Misuse—Level 3

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