

Edito

Dearest readers,

Over the years, Prevent has informed you on the latest trends and news in occupational safety and health via this newsletter, PreventInfo. We've touched several subjects ranging from safe maintenance, over the importance of quality training for employees and a age-neutral human resources management. Recently we've told you about mental health issues and health promotion at work, and also we tried to catch your attention for return to work policies.

For once, dear readers, we will not use this editorial to promote safe and healthy jobs.

PreventInfo – the very newsletter which you are now reading – will cease to exist. And that, we reckon, deserves some explanation.

In some time – a couple of weeks or a few months – the new Prevent website will be launched. As we consider our international work very important, we've developed an English branch to www.prevent.be. These pages will keep you up to date on the activities of Prevent, new partnerships and trainings, you'll discover our new services and find good practices. The website will help you find your way through the newest evolutions in occupational safety and health. In short, it will replace this three monthly newsletter and keep you informed on anything that we consider important and whenever you feel you need information.

We hope you will enjoy this last PreventInfo and we look forward to welcoming you later this year on our new website www.prevent.be.

Kindest regards,



Marc De Greef, Managing Director

01

Edito

02

**Three companies win the Award
“Work. In tune with life”**

02

**Information brochures about mental health for
employees and employers**

02

**Four brochures on the prevention
of musculoskeletal disorders**

03

DM@Work is ESF ambassador

03

Healthy work for chronically ill employees

CAMPAIGN

Three companies win the Award “Work. In tune with life”

During the closing event of the Belgian Move Europe – Work. In tune with life campaign on 27 January, three companies received an award for their efforts to promote mental health. Their stories were selected during the campaign as examples of good practice from the hundreds of respondents in a survey that looked at where companies stood in term of workplace mental health promotion.

The Move Europe – Work. In tune with life campaign started in 2009. The campaign was initiated by the European Network for Workplace Health Promotion (ENWHP) and was conducted in Belgium by Prevent. Over a two-year period, the theme of mental health was deliberately put on the business sector's agenda – after all, healthy workers are essential for a healthy economy and a healthy society. At present, 11% of the European population suffer from mental health problems.

Since the campaign's start, 300 companies have completed the Mental Health Promotion Check. This questionnaire, which was developed by Prevent for the entire EU campaign, looks at how well companies are doing in terms of workplace mental health promotion. The different aspects of such a policy are scrutinised, such as measures to prevent mental health problems, analysing needs and risks, and supporting people with mental health problems.

A selection procedure based on a more extensive questionnaire and interviews yielded three examples of good practice: the Jessa Hospital, Procter & Gamble and the Union of Independent Health Insurance Funds.

The Jessa Hospital attaches a great deal of importance to the health of its personnel. This is underlined by the numerous initiatives that have already been undertaken by the working group on health promotion, which has been active since 2003. Despite the provision of stress support sessions for employees, a personnel survey revealed that 25% of the employees were at high risk of burn-out, and 9% were in the highest risk group. The Jessa Hospital therefore recently started a campaign called *Off to work with gusto*, with the goal of preventing burn-out by giving people in the risk group intensive support. The project has a sound scientific base, and this greatly increases the chances of success.

At Procter & Gamble, the central theme is 'vibrant living'. This is an overall concept in which the employee's work/life balance is key and both physical health and mental health have a place. The wide range of activities such as work/life balance training, leadership training, employee assistance programmes and so on are intended to prevent mental health problems. And they have been successful: the company's persistent efforts, in both its current and previous programmes, have yielded positive results. Personnel surveys show a clear correlation between elements such as personal well-being, a good work/life balance, a fit and healthy lifestyle and active participation in the health programmes.

The Union of Independent Health Insurance Funds runs a programme called *Fit & Fun* in which the 'fit' aspect (more exercise, healthier eating, physical well-being) and the 'fun' aspect (positive relations with colleagues, creating a pleasant working climate) each have their place. A crucial role is reserved for the Fit & Fun coaches, who encourage their colleagues and support them in the various activities. The programme includes workshops, participation in sporting events and cooking classes.

The seminar brought the campaign to its close, but that doesn't mean everything stops there. The move-europe.be website continues to provide information and tools for working on improved mental health at work.

For more information: www.move-europe.be

PUBLICATIONS

Information brochures about mental health for employees and employers

As part of the Move Europe – Working on mental health campaign, two brochures have been published that tell employees and employers about mental health and its relevance to work. In the 21st century, health is increasingly determined by once mental health. Employees' mental health and welfare are crucial to the success of any organisation. But how can an employer start to address mental health? And what can you do as an employee to remain mentally healthy? The brochures offer more explanation.

Employers will find information in the brochures on:

- how to promote mental health in the workplace,
- understanding and tackling the causes of stress and mental health problems,
- supporting employees with mental health problems,
- developing an effective policy for the reintegration and retention of employees who have experienced mental health problems or are still contending with them.

In the brochure, employees will find answers to these questions:

- What is mental health?
- What can you do as an employee to remain mentally healthy?
- How do you cope with stress?
- How should you support colleagues with mental health problems?

The brochures are available via www.move-europe.be

PUBLICATIONS

Four brochures on the prevention of musculo- skeletal disorders

The Federal Public Service for Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue, with support from the European Social Fund, has published four practical new brochures on the prevention of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) for personnel in the cleaning sector, childcare, domestic help and hospitals.

The brochures are compiled by Prevent and illustrated with photos of real work situations. They provide an answer to three questions:

1. What is a musculoskeletal disorder?
2. What are the risks of getting MSDs?
3. How can you avoid MSDs?

The brochures can be obtained via the website www.beswic.be

QUALITY

DM@Work is ESF ambassador

Every year, the Flemish European Social Fund chooses three projects to serve as ambassadors for the organisation. On 28 January, during the ESF Flanders New Year's reception, the projects *DM@Work*, *Talententrotter* and *Kansenwerkvloer* were picked. By means of the ambassadorship, the ESF seeks to give these projects a helping hand and find wider support for their realisations. During 2011, the three ambassadors will organise events to make their projects known to a broader public.

DM@Work, a Prevent project with partners ACT Désiron, IDEWE, Adhesia, Mensura, ACV, ABVV, ACLVB and Unizo, was well received thanks to its "very comprehensive bundling of expertise and ways of dealing with the issues of reintegration after long absence due to health problems or work accidents." The project has been praised for its focus on the approach at both company and individual level. "It is precisely this focus on individual support that ensures that more vulnerable groups are also addressed. The project reflects an issue that is particularly relevant: absenteeism is a highly topical theme in companies and organisations."

DM@Work has published four manuals to support companies and service-providers with the implementation and execution of a systematic policy on job retention and reintegration for employees with long-term health problems. The manuals focus on companies in the private sector, and specifically on three sectors: construction; well-being and health; and chemicals and petrochemicals. These manuals can be obtained via the website www.disability-management.be/ downloads.

Talententrotter is a project of the Provincial Development Agency (POM) for East Flanders which is moving competency management away from the traditional approach. The highly accessible brochures are designed to offer readers guidance in this area. They emphasise a realistic development pathway and takes account of the need to build support for competencies at all levels of the organisation. *Talententrotter* can be found at the following website: www.expertisepunt.be/tool/533.

Finally, *Kansenwerkvloer* is a project of the West Flanders Job Centre, which sought to identify new methods and tools for offering job-seekers with a workrelated disability even more efficient support with finding a mainstream job. Among other things, ergonomics concepts are used as a starting-point for making the workforce more accessible for people from disadvantaged groups.

More information at www.disability-management.be

CAMPAIGN

Healthy work for chronically ill employees

PHWork (full name: *Promoting Healthy Work for Employees with Chronic Illness - Public Health and Work*), is the new campaign of the European Network for Workplace Health Promotion (ENWHP), which started in Berlin on 2 March. During the *PHWork* campaign, which will run for two years, good practices will be collected concerning job retention and reintegration of chronically ill employees. A guide for employers in the public and private sectors will also be issued. *PHWork* is a follow-up to the *Move Europe - Work. In tune with life* campaign.

Chronic illnesses have a definite impact on the labour market: they affect pay, employment, employee turnover and incapacity for work. Employees who drop out due to chronic illness have little chance of ever returning to work. They rapidly drift into a situation of incapacity for work and dependence on benefits.

However, better contact between the different actors involved, such as the public health services and employers, occupational health and safety services and HR, can in itself considerably improve the situation for the employee, since collaboration puts them into a stronger position to support the employee, for example by researching and arranging support measures and adapted work. A systematic approach that coordinates interventions at all levels is thus necessary in order to keep chronically ill employees at work or help them return to work.

More information: Karen.muylaert@prevent.be

Prevent is a multidisciplinary institute centred on the prevention of occupational risks through the promotion of the quality of working conditions and the improvement of work organisation. The institute provides support, advice and information for businesses and organisations, such as occupational accident insurers, external prevention and protection services, sectoral organisations, the social partners, the government and other societal actors.

Prevent is dedicated to the development, collection and mobilisation of occupational safety and health knowledge. To this end, the institute carries out research and studies centred on practical experience. In addition, it gathers information and documentation from all over the world. Lastly, the institute contributes actively to the development of regional, national, and international networks in order to exchange information and experience.

The institute transfers its accumulated knowledge using various means such as consulting, disseminating information and documentation, writing and editing publications, developing training programs and carrying out information and awareness campaigns. The institute gives particular attention to the issue of occupational safety and health in SMEs.

prevent

Rue Gachardstraat 88/4
B-1050 Brussels
prevent@prevent.be
www.prevent.be
T +32 (0)2 643 44 44
F +32 (0)2 643 44 40