



Sunderland Workplace Health Annual Report 2024-25



Better Health
at Work Award Sunderland



**Sunderland
Workplace
Health Alliance**

IMPROVING HEALTH & WELLBEING IN THE WORKPLACE





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Foreword from the Executive Director of Public Health and Wellbeing



As we reflect on the past year, I am proud of the collective commitments shown by our local employers, public services, and community partners in Sunderland. Together, we have continued to champion the vital connection between good work and good health, a relationship that has never been more important.

The national focus on economic inactivity has highlighted two key points: poor health can be a significant barrier to employment, and conversely good work can be a powerful driver of improved health and wellbeing. In Sunderland, we are well placed to respond to this challenge. Thanks to our long-standing commitment to initiatives such as the Better Health at Work Award and the Workplace Health Alliance, we have laid a strong foundation for progress. These programmes are not only about improving health outcomes; they are central to enabling access to good work and building a more resilient, inclusive and healthy city.

Our efforts are firmly aligned with the recently refreshed Sunderland Healthy City Plan, which sets out a vision for a fairer, healthier, and more sustainable city. By embracing the 'Building Blocks of Health' approach, we recognise that good work is one of the essential determinants of health, alongside housing, education, and community wellbeing.

This integrated perspective ensures that workplace health is not seen in isolation but as part of a broader strategy to tackle inequalities and create opportunities so that every person in Sunderland can thrive.

Together, we are shaping a city where health and prosperity go hand in hand. Let us continue to lead with ambition, collaboration and compassion because when we invest in good work, we invest in the health and wellbeing of our people.

I want to extend my sincere thanks to every individual and organisation who has contributed to this work. Your dedication is helping to shape a future where good work leads to good health for all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gerry Taylor'.

Gerry Taylor

Executive Director, Public Health and Wellbeing, Sunderland City Council



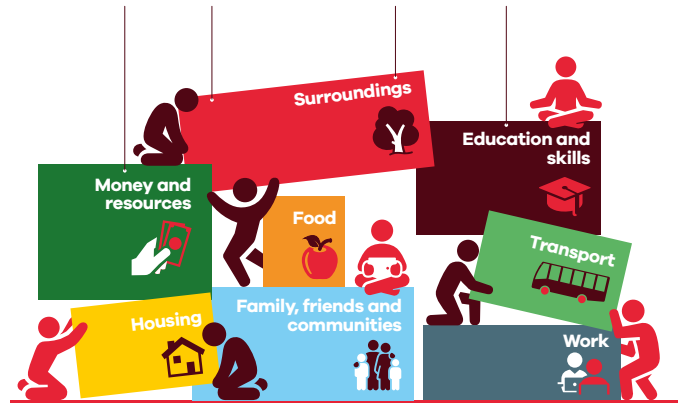
Context

Workplace health and wellbeing in Sunderland continues to evolve in response to both local insight and national challenges. The challenges we face from mental wellbeing to the physical demands of modern working environments highlight the need for proactive, equitable, and prevention-focused approaches, and a shared commitment to creating healthier, more inclusive workplaces across the city.

Sunderland's commitment to creating healthier workplaces is firmly embedded within the broader ambition of the **Healthy City Plan 2020–2035**, which aims to ensure that everyone in Sunderland can live healthy, happy lives, with no one left behind. The continued success of initiatives such as the **Better Health at Work Award** and the **Workplace Health Alliance** reflects our shared determination to strengthen the building blocks of health, including access to good work, financial wellbeing, and supportive communities. These efforts are central to creating a fairer, more resilient city where health and employment go hand in hand.

This year's Annual Report highlights the progress made under the **Sunderland Workplace Health Strategy 2024–2027**, which aligns closely with the Healthy City Plan's priorities around **healthy places, healthy communities, and healthy people**. Together, these strategic frameworks are helping to reduce inequalities, support mental wellbeing, and foster inclusive, health-promoting work environments across the city. In the UK, an estimated 36 million working days were lost to work-related ill health across the UK in 2023/24¹.

The building blocks of health



With nearly half of these cases attributed to stress, depression, or anxiety. In Sunderland, the rate of self-reported work-related illness remains above the national average, highlighting the importance of continued investment in mental health support and early intervention.

Sunderland's regeneration and health-focused practices are helping to embed health in everyday decision-making, from strategic leadership to frontline management. By working collaboratively across sectors, we are building a city where the workplace is not just a site of economic activity, but a building block for lifelong health and wellbeing.

This report stands as a testament to the dedication of our local employers, public services, and community partners. Through collaboration, innovation, and a shared commitment to equity, we are shaping a healthier, more resilient workforce, one that reflects the ways of working and aspirations of Sunderland as a Healthy City.

¹Health and Safety Executive (HSE) (HSE: Information about health and safety at work)

Sunderland Healthy City Plan 2020-2035



Our ways of working are

-  Prevention focused
-  Intelligence led and technology enabled
-  Focused on inequalities and people who need extra support
-  Strengths based and community focused
-  Equitable

Addressing the eight Marmot policy objectives

1. Give every child the best start in life
2. Children, young people and families maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives
3. Fair employment and good work for all
4. A healthy standard of living for all
5. Healthy and sustainable places and communities
6. Strengthen the role and impact of ill-health prevention
7. Tackle racism, discrimination and their outcomes
8. Pursue environmental sustainability and health equity together

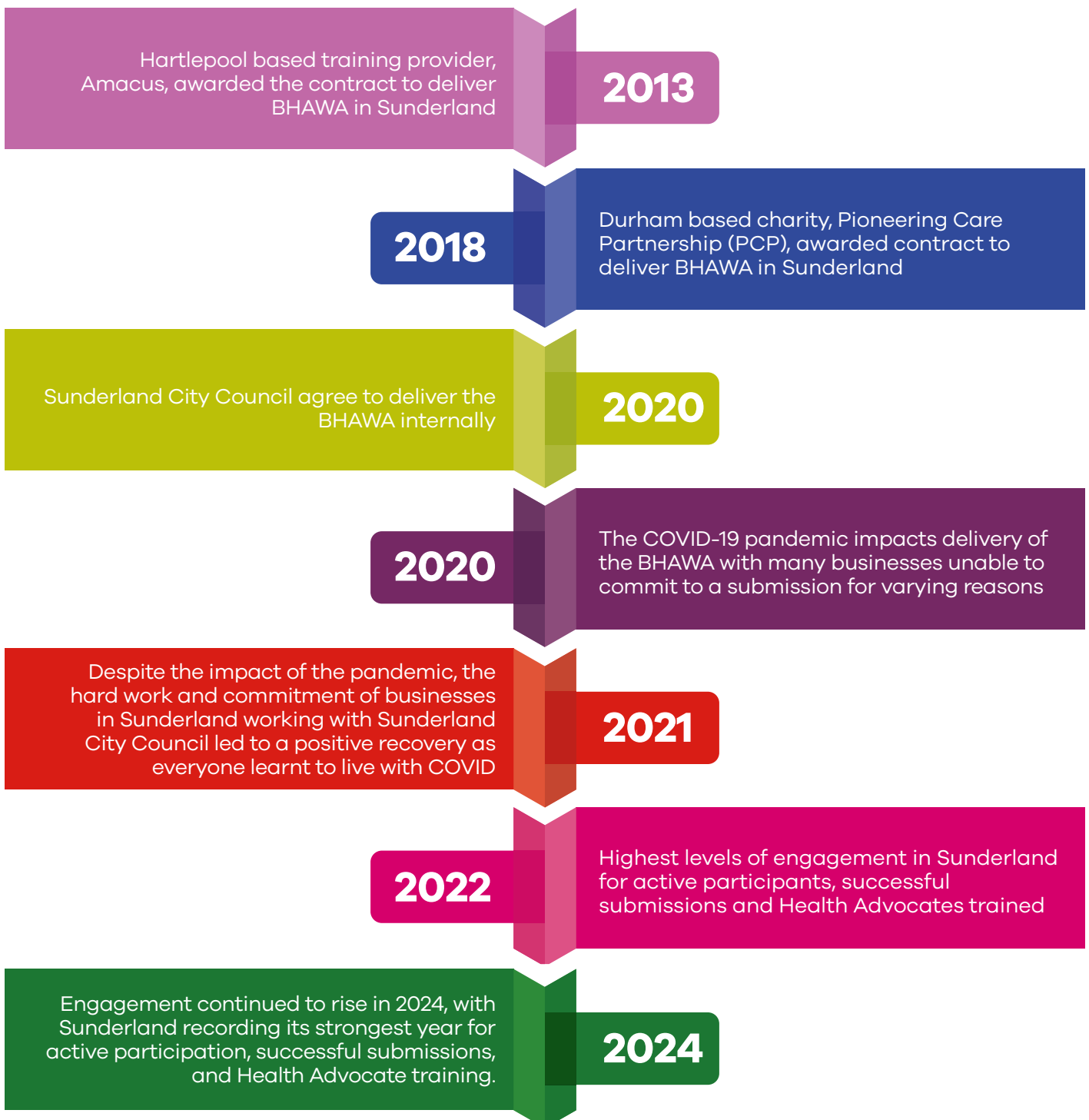


Our Better Health at Work Award Journey

Since its launch in 2009, the Better Health at Work Award (BHAWA) has become a cornerstone of Sunderland's Workplace Health Strategy, building a strong and resilient workforce across the city.

We are seeing a clear and positive trend in employer engagement. This year alone, we have seen a 12% increase in employers participating in workplace wellbeing programmes, with over 60% of all medium-to-large employers in Sunderland now engaged in structured health initiatives.

This level of engagement is a powerful testament to the value employers are placing on their employees' health and wellbeing.





Better Health at Work Award

Bronze Award

The Bronze level of the Better Health at Work Award is the critical first step in building a resilient and productive workforce. It's not just a tick box campaign, but a strategic framework that helps employers understand their employees' needs and implement targeted initiatives with measurable impact.

At this level, employers are guided to:

Benchmark with a health needs assessment:

By conducting an assessment, companies gain valuable insights into the specific health challenges their employees face, ensuring that all subsequent efforts are data-driven and effective. This is an essential starting point that prevents wasted investment.

Launch targeted health campaigns:

Based on their assessment findings, employers must deliver at least three health campaigns. This ensures that their first interventions are relevant and impactful.

Focus on foundational health pillars:

The Bronze level focuses on core areas critical to business success, including:

- **Mental health:** Promoting positive mental health through support and awareness-raising.
- **Workplace environment:** Ensuring a healthy, safe, and positive work environment.
- **Data and strategy:** Collecting and monitoring absence data to inform future strategies and demonstrate return on investment.

This foundational work empowers employers to build a culture of health and wellbeing that benefits both their employees and their bottom line.

In 2024 employers achieving bronze are:

AESC UK Ltd, BAE Systems Land, Canford Audio Ltd, Faltec Europe Ltd, GS-Hydro UK Ltd, Harry Watts Academy, Northern Gas Network, UK Direct Business Solutions Limited, Walker Filtration.

AESC

BAE SYSTEMS

CANFORD

FALTEC
EUROPE LTD

CELEBRATING
50
GS-Hydro

HARRY WATTS
ACADEMY

Northern
Gas Networks

Direct Business
Group

WALKER
FILTRATION



Case Study – Walker Filtration

Raising Awareness of Men’s Health– November 2024

At Walker Filtration, 30% of our employees who completed the Health Needs Assessment advised they would like us to include Men’s Health in our wellbeing strategy. As this is almost a third of our employees we decided to raise awareness of Men’s Health for our first campaign.

In week 1 – Get ready to grow - we asked men to be clean shaven on 1st November and not to shave until the end of November. This was a powerful symbol that stood for healthier men and a healthier world. A male employee created a just giving page and raised over £500 for the Movember charity.

In week 2 - Joshua Morgan, from Movember charity hosted a lunch and learn – Josh talked us through the key areas of focus for Movember, all of which are very real challenges that men are facing today. Over 20 employees both men and women attended the lunch and learn– we learnt that men typically die 5 years before women and often

the cause of death could have been prevented if they received help earlier.

In week 3 - 18 employees (both men and women) took part in a manufacturers ramble. It was a 10k walk and an opportunity for everyone to talk about men’s health issues – all money raised was donated to Andy’s Man Club.

In week 4 - Kathy McKenna, from MIND Washington charity provided A LIFE worth living suicide prevention training –The feedback was phenomenal; thus we arranged for a second session.



Feedback

“Kathy was warm, welcoming and had the whole audience captivated, hanging on her every word, it was very educational and emotional at times (well for me it was) those that know me understand. She gave a great insight to those who may be suffering and in need of our help, we all have different triggers that set off suicidal thoughts and she explained what they may be and how to spot them and coach the answers out of people, so we can get to the root cause and hopefully the correct outcome saving someone’s life?”

“I have learned how to avoid stressful situations and to take care of myself more. Also to check in on others”.



Better Health at Work Award

Silver Award

Building on the strong foundations established at Bronze Level, achieving the Silver Level award reflects a deeper, more integrated commitment to employee health and wellbeing. This milestone recognises the continued effort to embed the award across the organisation.

At this level employers are guided to:

Embed a Substance Use Policy:

Introducing an alcohol, drugs, and other substances policy, ensuring a clear and supportive framework for both prevention and intervention.

Launch targeted health campaigns:

A minimum of four targeted health campaigns were delivered and fully evaluated, each tailored to address specific workforce needs and promote sustained engagement.

Build on foundational health pillars:

Some of the core areas the silver award focuses on include:

- **Physical Activity:** encourage physical activity and incorporating movement into daily routines.
- **Healthy Eating:** consulting with staff to agree a healthy eating statement or policy.
- **Equality and Diversity:** addressing equality and diversity needs, ensuring health and wellbeing approaches are inclusive and diverse.

In 2024 employers achieving Silver are:

Clearly Drinks Limited, Marelli Automotive Ltd, SCS, tombola, Wear Recovery.







Better Health at Work Award

Gold Award

Achieving Gold Level award marks a significant growth in an organisation's journey. This level recognises organisations that have not only embed health and wellbeing internally but also act as champions of health promotion within the wider community.

At this level employers are guided to:

Further benchmarking:

A follow-up health needs assessment is to be conducted to better understand changing priorities and tailor interventions accordingly.

Strategic Health Planning:

Developed a comprehensive three-year health strategy, supported by a detailed one-year action plan.

Launch targeted health campaigns:

Organisations are encouraged to provide five health campaigns—one of which was sustained throughout the year.

Strengthen health pillars:

Gold level looks deeper into health and wellbeing by addressing the wider building blocks of health by including:

- **Support for Preventative Health:** encouraging and supporting employees to attend regular health checks and screening appointments, reinforcing a culture of prevention and early intervention.
- **Support for Long-Term Health Conditions:** supporting staff on long-term sick leave, including tailored return-to-work plans and increased awareness of long-term medical conditions.
- **Embedding Social Value:** adopting a social value approach across the organisation and ensuring health and wellbeing initiatives contribute meaningfully to the wider community and align with core values.

In 2024 employers achieving gold are:

**Mint Automotive (UK) Company Ltd,
Northern Housing Consortium, Stagecoach
Sunderland.**





Case Study – Stagecoach Sunderland

Alcohol Awareness Week – 11th July 2025

As part of our Alcohol Awareness Week campaign, we kicked things off by sharing an informative leaflet on alcohol guidelines.

To make the learning fun and engaging, we followed this up with a quiz where staff were challenged to guess the number of alcohol units in common drinks like beer, cider, wine, and alcopops. This interactive activity proved to be both educational and enjoyable, with small Stagecoach merchandise prizes awarded to those who came closest to the correct answers.

On the 11th of July, we hosted our very own “DRYvers Inn” pop-up bar — a fun, alcohol-free event accompanied by great music and a BBQ

for all staff to enjoy. The highlight was our wide range of mocktails and 0% alcohol wines and spirits, paired with a selection of mixers, giving everyone the opportunity to explore tasty and refreshing alternatives to alcoholic drinks.

The event was a huge hit with staff, and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. We’re thrilled with the success of this initiative and are already looking forward to bringing it back next summer.



Here are some of the colleague comments about the DRYvers Inn Bar:

“Loved, The DRYvers Inn Bar!”

“The DRYvers Inn Bar was great, I have never tried alcohol free alternatives before, I was pleasantly surprised!”

“I am going to get some 0% alcohol Gin for my wife to try, I don’t think she will notice the difference!”



Better Health at Work Award

Continuing Excellence

The **Continuing Excellence level** highlights the sustained commitment of organisations that not only maintain the momentum of their health and wellbeing journey but also embed long-term strategies and actively share their expertise to support and inspire others.

At this level employers are guided to:

- **Delivering on Long-Term Strategy:** Implement and evidence progress against our three-year strategy developed at gold level, ensuring our actions remained aligned with organisational goals and evolving workforce needs.
- **Mentoring and Advocacy:** Actively promote the award and share best practice with other organisations, take on a mentoring role to help build a healthier employer community.
- **Celebrating Success:** Provide a detailed case study showcasing achievements and highlighting the impact of campaigns and initiatives.
- **Launch targeted health campaigns:** Keeping health firmly on the agenda organisations are asked to complete five campaigns.

Reinforce health pillars: health awareness remains a priority at **Continuing Excellence level**; employers are asked to address any new elements that have been added to the previous Award levels as a result of the annual criteria review process.

In 2024 employers achieving continuing excellence are: **END., Nissan Motor Manufacturing (UK) Ltd, Ocado, Oxclose Community Nursery School, Together for Children.**

END.



Ocado



together for
children
SUNDERLAND





Better Health at Work Award

Maintaining Excellence

Reaching the **Maintaining Excellence level** represents the highest standard of long-term commitment to workplace health and wellbeing. This level is awarded to employers who have consistently demonstrated excellence by successfully completing all previous stages of the award, including rigorous portfolio submissions, criteria documentation, and full workplace assessments.

At this stage, organisations are recognised as leaders in workplace health and wellbeing. Rather than undergoing routine assessments, they transition to the Maintaining Excellence Framework, where the focus shifts to sustaining and evidencing impact over time.

At this level employers are guided to:

- **Launch targeted health campaigns:** organisations are asked to continue to complete five campaigns.
- **Mentoring and Advocacy:** Continue to champion the award by sharing best practices and maintaining established mentoring relationships, supporting other organisations on their workplace health journeys.
- **Continue building on previous health pillars:** employers are asked to address any new elements that have been added to the previous Award levels as a result of the annual criteria review process

In 2024 employers achieving maintaining excellence are: **Adient Seating UK Ltd, Asset55 Ltd, Barclays Bank Sunderland Contact Centre, DWP Wearview House, EDF Energy, Education Partnership Northeast, Gentoo, Grundfos Manufacturing, Kasia UK Ltd, South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust, Sunderland City Council, Sunderland Job Centre Plus, University of Sunderland.**





Case Study – Grundfos Sunderland

Blood Donation Drive

In 2025, Grundfos Sunderland proudly organised a workplace blood donation drive that saw 15 employees participate, many of them first-time and younger donors. The initiative was made possible by offering two hours of paid time off during work hours, which was highly appreciated by staff and praised by NHS nurses on site. The campaign not only supported a vital cause but also fostered a culture of giving and community spirit within the workplace.







Engagement





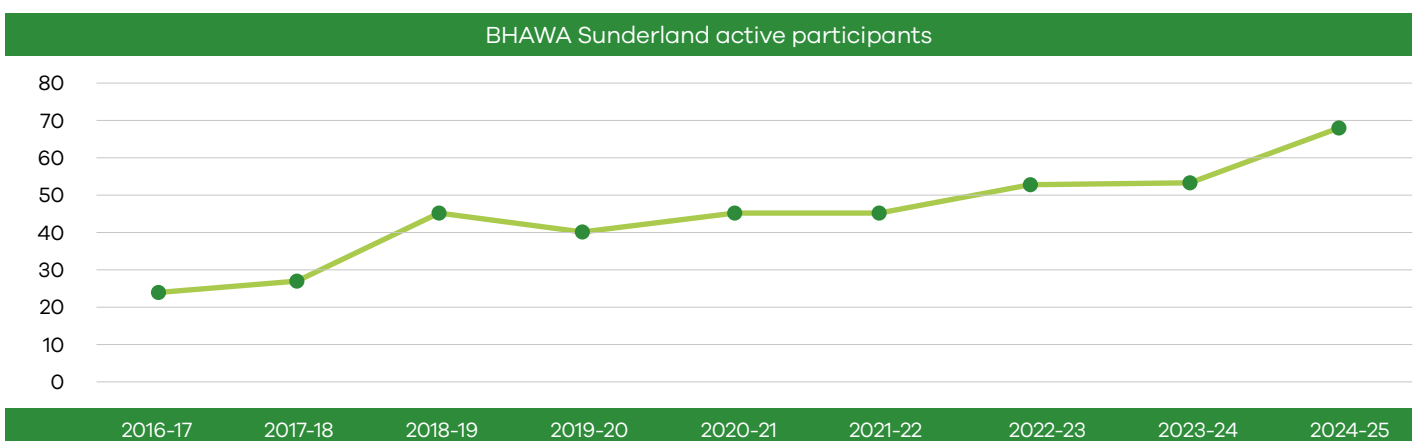
The data below further highlights the encouraging progress being made through the Better Health at Work Award in Sunderland. In 2024-25 there was a total of 35 BHAWA submissions demonstrating tangible progress (our highest number yet!):

Bronze: 9 employers laid a firm foundation for a healthier workplace.	
Silver: 5 employers took a more holistic view of wellbeing, building on their initial efforts.	
Gold: 3 employers demonstrated a commitment to promoting health beyond their own walls, into the wider community.	
Continuing Excellence: 5 employers sustained their progress and now act as mentors to other organisations.	
Maintaining Excellence: 13 employers continued to embed their established health and wellbeing practices, showcasing long-term commitment.	

This steady, upward trajectory shows that the BHAWA in Sunderland is a successful model for driving meaningful change and creating a healthier, more productive workforce for the future.

Active Participants

An 'active participant' refers to any employer enrolled in the Better Health at Work Award at any level, actively working towards a submission or achieving an accreditation. While employers may defer their assessment if circumstances permit, they are still expected to deliver campaigns that promote employee health and wellbeing. Additionally, employers who have achieved the 'Maintaining Excellence' level may choose to withdraw from the Award through a 'sustainable withdrawal' process. These employers continue to be recognised as active participants, contributing to the ongoing success of the programme.

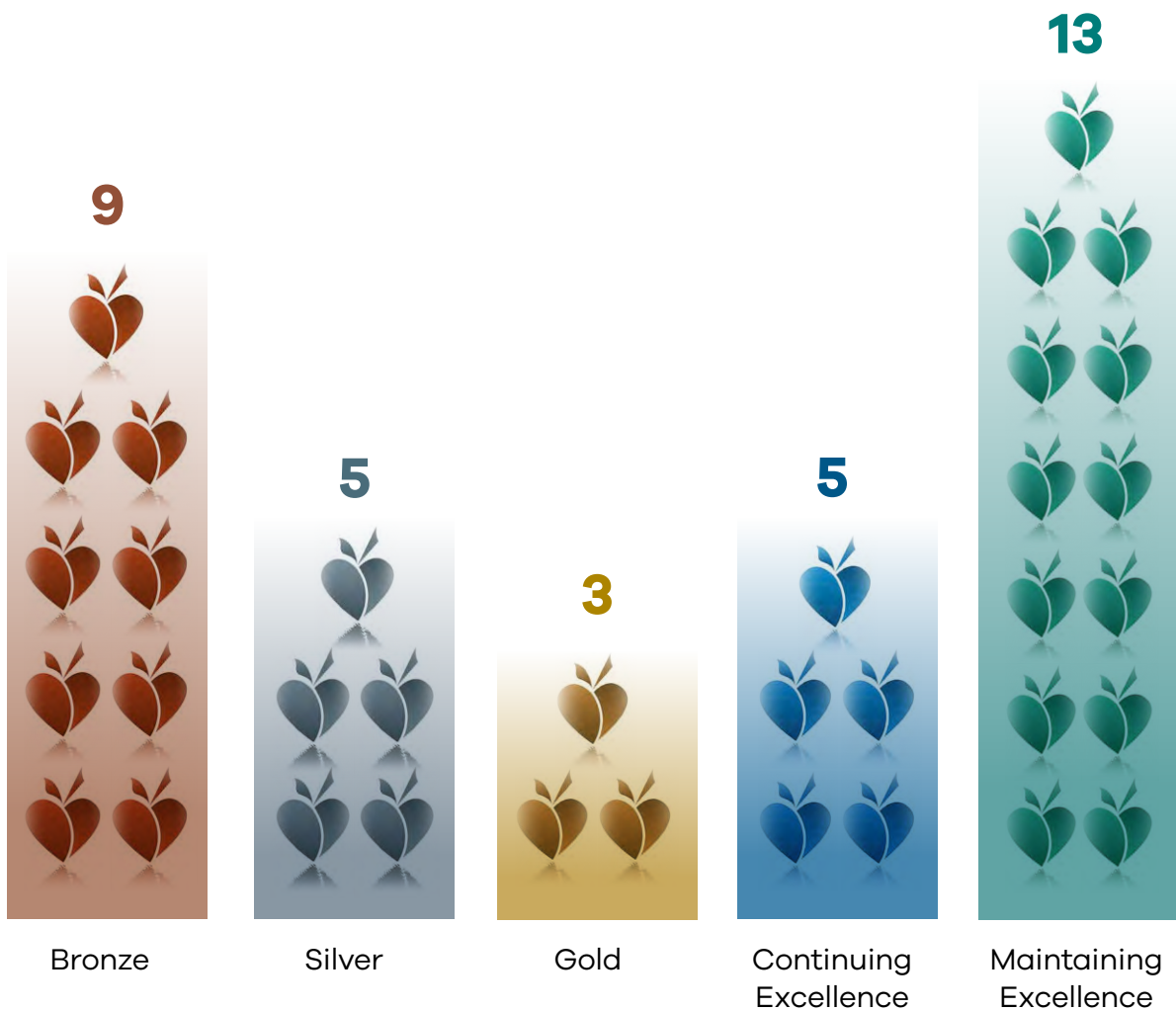


Successful Employers

Any employer that achieves their respective level within the most recent assessment period is recognised as a 'successful employer'.



2024 Assessment overview



Total submission – 35



Sunderland Better Health at Work Primary Care project

In January 2021, the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) expanded the Better Health at Work Programme into primary care settings. This extension aimed to strengthen Pillar 3: Promoting Good Work and Employer Engagement, and Pillar 2: Supporting the Health and Care Workforce, as part of the 10-Year Plan for Health and Wellbeing in England.

In 2024, the regional NHS Workplace Health Improvement Specialist, supported 15 Sunderland-based organisations to achieve the BHAWA at their respective level.

The branch of the BHAWA programme continues to grow, annually, and contributes directly to the priorities by:

- Improving staff health and wellbeing
- Creating inclusive, compassionate workplace cultures
- Supporting retention and reducing sickness absence

This work strengthens the local health system's capacity to deliver high-quality care through a healthier, more resilient workforce².



Multi-Site Employers: Overcoming Challenges with the Better Health at Work Award

Multi-site organisations often face unique challenges when it comes to promoting workplace health and wellbeing. These include engaging teams across different locations, maintaining consistent wellbeing messaging and supporting remote and hybrid workers.

The Better Health at Work Award has provided a structured, flexible framework to overcome

these barriers, allowing employers to tailor health initiatives to their workforce while progressing through award levels.

We are proud to deliver a flexible and responsive workplace offer in Sunderland, strategically designed to enable businesses across the city to thrive, supporting productivity, resilience and inclusive growth.

Case Study - Northern Housing Consortium (NHC) A Sunderland Success Story

NHC, a Sunderland-based housing membership body, operates across multiple sites and achieved the Gold BHAWA in 2024. Their approach includes:

- A staff-led wellbeing group that shaped campaigns based on employee feedback
- Focused initiatives on nutrition, mental health, financial wellbeing, and men's and women's health

- Access to mental health first aiders, a wellbeing portal, and group activities like health screenings and budgeting workshops

Despite hybrid working, NHC maintained high engagement by embedding wellbeing into their culture. Staff reported feeling more supported, and the organisation saw improvements in morale and productivity.





Health Advocates

Health Advocates are fundamental to help organisations achieve the award; Workplaces use Health Advocates to promote health and wellbeing in the workplace.

What are Health Advocates?

A Health Advocate is someone in the workplace who is passionate about health and wellbeing, wants to help raise awareness of health topics, and contribute to developing a positive wellbeing culture. This can be anyone in the organisation, regardless of role or experience. The Health Advocate role is voluntary, and can be a great addition to a CV. It is a good opportunity to develop and practise skills such as communication, persuasion and motivating others.

Health Advocate responsibilities include:

- Compiling a portfolio of evidence required to achieve the award.
- Working in partnership with the BHAWA team to address, develop and deliver on agreed actions.
- Organising and promoting health initiatives and activities within their workplace.



Over the last 9 years, 757 people have been trained as Health Advocates in Sunderland.







Each year a celebration event is held which all businesses who successfully receive an award are invited to attend.

On Thursday, 13th March 2025, employers got together at the George Washington Hotel for an evening dedicated to recognising outstanding achievements in workplace wellbeing. This annual celebration provided a valuable platform to formally acknowledge the commitment, innovation, and impact of our Better Health at Work Award (BHAWA) employers, from emerging participants like Walker Filtration to long-standing advocates such as Barclays.

The event highlighted the collective progress being made across the city, showcasing how organisations are embedding wellbeing into their culture and driving meaningful change

for their workforce. It was an evening of peer-to-peer learning, shared success, and strategic networking, reinforcing Sunderland's position as a leader in workplace health.

We were delighted to welcome back Katie Bulmer-Cooke as our host. As a qualified life coach, former UK Personal Trainer of the Year, and Wearside Role Model of the Year, Katie brought a unique blend of expertise and energy that perfectly aligns with the values of the BHAWA. Her continued support remains a key part of the event's success.

Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, and we look forward to building on this momentum in 2026, welcoming both returning and new organisations as we continue to champion workplace wellbeing across Sunderland.



"Seeing colleagues from all the workplaces receive awards. There was a lot of effort gone into the event which I appreciate."

Shining a spotlight

Special Recognition awards

The Special Recognition Awards provide an opportunity to highlight outstanding practices and celebrate innovation, commitment, and dedication across our Sunderland employers. For 2024, we were excited to introduce several new categories to these awards, allowing us to shine a spotlight on even more great achievements. The deserving winners were celebrated during the evening, receiving well-earned recognition for their exceptional contributions.





**Better Health
at Work Award**
Ambassador Status



Barclays Bank Sunderland Contact Centre

Ambassador Status was created to recognise those employers who demonstrate both long term commitment and outstanding practice around workplace health and wellbeing, not only achieving but consistently going above and beyond at every stage of the assessment.

Picking just one organisation for ambassador status this year was a difficult task we have so many deserving of the status.

Barclays Sunderland Contact Centre

demonstrated outstanding commitment to workplace health and wellbeing through its 2024 Maintaining Excellence submission.

Key achievements included the launch of a comprehensive sustainability programme, the creation of a neurodiversity support framework, and impactful campaigns on financial wellbeing, cancer awareness, domestic abuse, and gender-specific health.

Initiatives such as, menopause support, mortgage clinics, and partnerships with local charities like Heel & Toe, showcased a holistic approach to colleague wellbeing.

Barclays also led the way in promoting diversity through Black History Month celebrations, positioning the organisation as a beacon of best practice in employee health, inclusion, and social value.



Barclays Bank Sunderland Contact Centre team picking up their Ambassador Status Award.



Better Health at Work Award Sunderland *Best Newcomer*



**WALKER
FILTRATION**

Walker Filtration

Walker Filtration's submission was quoted as one of the most outstanding submissions seen in the last 10 Years, it was clear a lot of time and effort had been put into this submission as well as passion and determination to provide colleagues with outstanding health and wellbeing initiatives.

They delivered an exceptional Bronze-level submission for the Better Health at Work Award, demonstrating a strategic and inclusive approach to employee wellbeing.

Key campaigns focused on men's health, stress awareness, and mental health, with high engagement across the workforce. Highlights included suicide prevention training by Washington Mind.

Walker Filtration took part in a company-wide step challenge achieving nearly 16 million steps, and onsite health MOTs. The organisation embedded wellbeing into its culture through cross-departmental committees, proactive communication, and senior leadership support. Additional initiatives such as alcohol awareness, smoking cessation, CPR training, and healthy eating promotion further enhanced the workplace environment.

With 100% staff retention and widespread participation, **Walker Filtration** has set a benchmark for health and wellbeing excellence.



Walker Filtration team picking up their Best Newcomer Award.



BAE Systems Land

As part of Mental Health Awareness Week, **BAE Systems Land** hosted a Mental Health Support Fair in 2024, showcasing best practice in workplace wellbeing. The event, themed “Movement: Moving more for our mental health,” aimed to reduce stigma, promote understanding, and empower employees to prioritise their mental health.

Held in the facility’s presentation suite, the fair featured a wide range of internal and external support services including local charities, addiction services, menopause support groups, nutritional experts, and personal trainers.

Staff were released from duties in small groups to attend, ensuring inclusivity across shifts. Engagement was boosted through competitions, promotional materials, and multi-channel communications.

The fair led to tangible outcomes including increased use of the Employee Assistance Programme, re-establishment of the mental health noticeboard, and a rise in staff volunteering as Mental Health First Aiders.

The initiative was praised by assessors as a model of best practice.



BAE Systems picking up the Best Individual Campaign award.



Better Health at Work Award Sunderland

Health Advocate team of the year



CANFORD



Canford Audio Limited

Canford Audio Ltd demonstrated exceptional commitment to employee health and wellbeing throughout their Bronze Better Health at Work Award journey.

Central to their success was the dedication of the Health Advocates team, whose passion, time, and effort were instrumental in motivating staff and embedding wellbeing across the organisation. Their emotional investment and pride in honouring the company's history and founder were evident in every aspect of their submission.

The team delivered outstanding campaigns on stress, cancer awareness, and back pain, each informed by a health needs assessment and supported by creative activities such as guest

speakers, interactive workshops, and wellbeing competitions. Notable initiatives included the creation of dedicated wellbeing rooms, a wildlife garden, and the Canford Marketplace, alongside environmental improvements like solar panel installation.

Mental health support was strengthened through partnerships with Washington Mind and Andy's Man Club, and the provision of trained Mental Health First Aiders.

Canford also promoted healthy lifestyles with free flu jabs, fresh fruit deliveries, and healthy eating resources.

Health Advocate teams play a vital role in helping organisations achieve the Better Health at Work Award, and Canford Audio's team demonstrated true dedication in their 2024 submission.



Canford Audio Limited picking up the Health Advocate Team of the Year award.



Better Health at Work Award Sunderland *Community Champions*



Gentoo

Gentoo has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to social value and community wellbeing throughout 2024, delivering over £4 million in social value across its operations. The organisation raised money for charity Love Amelia through staff-led fundraising activities, which included volunteering.

The Aspire Grants programme distributed a considerable amount of money across 44 local community groups, supporting initiatives such as Marta Card Craft, Choice Wellbeing Service, and Houghton Boxing Club.

Collaborative efforts with contractors and suppliers enabled impactful outreach, including 1,300 Christmas gifts, 200 festive dinners, and Easter hampers for families in need.

Gentoo also facilitated discounted water rates worth £1.3 million, provided winter warm packs, and supported foodbank collections and gift donations throughout the year.

Staff volunteered time for clean-up campaigns and community events, while the organisation supported 28 apprenticeships and 124 student placements in partnership with local schools and colleges. These initiatives reflect Gentoo's dedication to social value and its unwavering dedication to supporting vulnerable communities across Sunderland.



Gentoo picking up their award for Community Champions.



Better Health
at Work Award Sunderland
Regional and Local Health advocate of the year



Kasmir Isadore

We are delighted to announce that **Kasmir Isadore** from **Walker Filtration** has been awarded both the Local and Regional Health Advocate of the Year. Health Advocates are the driving force behind the success of the Better Health at Work Award, playing a vital role in helping organisations achieve accreditation by engaging and inspiring their colleagues to take part in workplace health initiatives.

Kasmir has been an exceptional advocate this year. Her enthusiasm, positivity, and genuine commitment to improving the wellbeing of her colleagues have made her a joy to work with. Her infectious energy and dedication have not gone unnoticed—Kasmir received the highest number of nominations for both awards, a testament to the impact she has made within her organisation.

Being recognised at both local and regional levels highlights the outstanding contribution Kasmir has made in supporting Walker Filtration to achieve their 2024 Award. Her efforts represent the spirit and purpose of the Health Advocate role.

We are also proud to share that Sunderland has once again been recognised at a regional level, with the Health Advocate of the Year award returning to the city for the second consecutive year. The standard of workplace health advocacy in Sunderland continues to rise, and we look forward to seeing even greater achievements in the years ahead.



Kasmir Isadore being presented with her local and regional Health Advocate of the Year awards.





Sunderland Workplace Health Alliance

IMPROVING HEALTH & WELLBEING IN THE WORKPLACE

The Sunderland Workplace Health Alliance is a dynamic and growing network of over 150 local employers, united by a shared commitment to improving health and wellbeing in the workplace. What sets the Alliance apart is its collaborative, cross-sector approach, bringing together businesses of all sizes to create healthier, more resilient workforces and thriving organisations.

Membership is open to any workplace that values employee wellbeing and wants to embed a culture of health that enhances productivity, organisational performance, and staff morale. By joining the Alliance, businesses gain access to:

- **Tailored health interventions** that enable early identification of issues and rapid access to bespoke support services.
- **Expert-led training and development** opportunities focused on key health topics affecting today's workforce.
- **Regular networking and practice-sharing events**, fostering innovation and peer learning across sectors.
- **Strategic partnerships** with local health providers and support services, ensuring members stay ahead of emerging health challenges.

In 2024–2025, the Alliance has continued to go from strength to strength, engaging with a wide range of organisations to raise awareness of critical health issues, deliver impactful training, and build a community of practice that champions workplace wellbeing.

For employers, the benefits are clear: improved employee engagement, reduced absenteeism, enhanced reputation, and stronger overall business performance.



What we've achieved...

Quarterly Network delivery

Workplace Health Alliance 2024-2025

May 2024

Workplace Health Alliance: Gambling Harms Awareness

The first instalment of this year's Workplace Health Alliance spotlighted Gambling Harms, a growing concern impacting individuals and workplace wellbeing. The session opened with local insights and research from Sunderland City Council's public health team, shedding light on the scale and nature of gambling-related harms across the city.

We were joined by NECA – Gambling Support Service, who shared the vital support they provide across Sunderland. Their presentation highlighted how workplaces can take a proactive role in identifying and supporting employees affected by gambling harms, and offered practical steps for creating safer, more supportive environments.



September 2024

Annual Practice Sharing Event: A Showcase of Innovation and Wellbeing in Action

As part of our ongoing commitment to fostering healthier workplaces, the Sunderland Workplace Health Alliance proudly delivers an annual **Practice Sharing Event** - a flagship opportunity for members to connect, learn, and collaborate.

In **September 2024**, the event featured a **jam-packed agenda** designed to inspire and inform.

Attendees benefited from:

- A vibrant **marketplace of services and information stalls**, showcasing local support organisations and workplace wellbeing resources.
- A unique **sound bath experience**, offering a moment of mindfulness and stress relief and a powerful reminder of the importance of mental wellbeing in the workplace.
- **Six diverse workshops**, each tailored to address key health and wellbeing themes relevant to today's workforce. Topics included:
 1. **Neurodiversity in the workplace**
Neurotide Ltd
 2. **Miss Menopause**
Sharon MacArthur
 3. **Alcohol and Drug Awareness**
Wear Recovery
 4. **Resilience in the Workplace**
Washington Mind
 5. **The Power of Empathy Practice at Work**
Paul Cheetham
 6. **Ageing Well/Ageism in the Workplace**
Jackie Nixon and Age UK

This annual event is a cornerstone of the Alliance's offer, providing members with **practical insights, peer-led learning, and direct access to local expertise**. It exemplifies the Alliance's mission: to empower employers with the tools and knowledge to create thriving, health-focused workplaces.





December 2024

Workplace Health Alliance: Climate Action and Mental Wellbeing

In Quarter 3, we were pleased to welcome **Sunderland City Council's Low Carbon Team** for an insightful session exploring the **environmental challenges** facing our communities and workplaces. The session covered key topics including:

- **What is climate change?**
- **What are greenhouse effects?**
- **What can you and your workplace do to make a difference?**

This engaging session sparked important conversations around **environmental responsibility**, inspiring attendees to reflect on how they can make **meaningful changes** both personally and professionally.

In addition to the environmental focus, we also heard from **Joe Middleton of Growth Planner Co.**, who introduced his Mental Health and Wellbeing Project centred around the power of **journalling**. His presentation helped build awareness and enthusiasm for the initiative, which launched in **early 2025**.

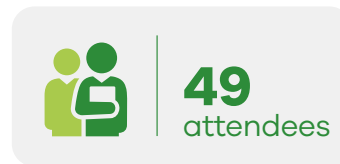


March 2025

Workplace Health Alliance: Neurodiversity and Inclusive Practice

As part of Quarter 4's Workplace Health Alliance, we were delighted to welcome **Neurotide Ltd** to deliver an introductory talk on **Neurodiversity**. The session aimed to raise awareness, challenge misconceptions, and promote **inclusive practices** within the workplace.

This event also served as a **launchpad** for the **neuro-inclusion training programme**, which was delivered in **2025**. The session was a real hit with attendees, sparking **meaningful conversations** and generating strong interest in the full training series.



Project highlights

Neurodiversity in the workplace - Neurotide Ltd

At the beginning of 2025, Neurotide Ltd delivered a programme of nine training sessions tailored to various workplace roles. These sessions included:

- **An introduction to Neurodiversity**
- **An in-depth training on fostering a neuro-inclusive culture,**
- **Focused modules on the responsibilities of managers, leadership teams, recruiters, talent acquisition professionals, and HR personnel.**

The expertise and insight Neurotide brought to workplaces across Sunderland proved invaluable in shaping how organisations support neurodiverse individuals to thrive professionally.



Feedback



- “I enjoyed hearing from someone with ADHD - you can't beat personal experience.”
- “The session will help me make the recruitment process more comfortable neurodiverse people.”
- “I now understand the challenges that neurodiversity communities face at workplace.”



Building Resilience in the Workplace - Washington Mind

In 2024, Washington Mind was commissioned to deliver a series of Workplace Resilience Training sessions aimed at strengthening mental wellbeing and adaptability across local organisations.

The training model was designed to be both informative and practical, covering, **what is resilience, how can resilience be delivered and maintained** and **practical tools and strategies to support attendees and their workplaces to thrive.**



Feedback



- “Gaining awareness that there is no such thing as “good stress” so focusing on my own self care.”
- “I'll now take micro breaks as I've learned how important they are not only for myself but also so I can be a better leader.”
- “To ensure I focus on myself and building my resilience going forward but also to support others in the workplace.”





Sit Strong, Stand Tall: Building Happy Backs at Work - **Charlotte Wood Pilates**

We invited **Charlotte Wood** to host a dedicated webinar focused on **back pain prevention techniques**.

The session aimed to equip employees with practical knowledge and strategies to reduce the risk of **musculoskeletal issues**, particularly those related to **posture, movement, and desk-based work**.



50+
attendees



1
webinar delivered

Feedback



“Thoroughly enjoyed the session and found it super useful as I suffer with lower back and shoulder pain. Also prompted me to be more mindful of my posture when sitting at my computer.”

“Really enjoyed the session, I found the hints and tips really good and easy to fit into my everyday workday.”

“Charlotte was very knowledgeable and explained in great detail why its important to strengthen our health to ensure you work on your posture while sitting at work, I will use the tips and positions in my daily routine.”



Healthy Eating Workshops - **Pioneering Care Partnership**

To strengthen our health and wellbeing offer, we partnered with **Luke from Pioneer Care Partnership** to deliver two interactive **Healthy Eating Workshops**.

These sessions were designed to empower individuals with the knowledge and confidence to make healthier food choices, on a budget.



20+
attendees



2
workshops delivered

Feedback



“Thank you, the session was great for people with little knowledge.”

“The session was very interesting with lots of information; Luke was very knowledgeable.”

“I found it very interesting and loved the interaction.”



The Power of Journaling – Growth Planner Co.

As part of our commitment to supporting mental health, **Growth Planner Co.**, led by **Joe Middleton**, successfully delivered multiple coaching workshops focused on mental health and wellbeing.

Through this initiative, 300 wellbeing journals were distributed to participants. Each session explored the science behind evidence-based wellbeing tools and provided practical guidance on how journaling can be integrated into daily life to enhance mental health and emotional resilience.



300
attendees



10
workshops
delivered

Feedback



“Interesting hearing the background story for the development of the planner. The acknowledgement that there are many tools and it’s not a one size fits all was helpful.”

“Absolutely brilliant session. Feel hopeful I can get on top of things.”

“Joe is a really relatable and engaging presenter. I’ve learned a lot about how to set actionable goals for my wellbeing.”

GROWTH PLANNER CO.





Join the Sunderland Workplace Health Alliance



IMPROVING HEALTH & WELLBEING IN THE WORKPLACE

Our Workplace Health initiatives are a strategic investment in your organisation's most valuable asset: your people. By partnering with us, you'll gain access to the tools, expert guidance, and supportive community needed to boost productivity and achieve your business goals through a healthier, more engaged workforce.

Why Join?

Membership in the Alliance is free and offers significant value. You'll become part of a network of over 150 local employers committed to improving health and wellbeing across Sunderland.

As a member, you'll benefit from:

- ✓ **Expert-Led Training**
Access exclusive local insights, workshops, and evidence-based guidance.
- ✓ **Peer-to-Peer Networking**
Connect with fellow business leaders and collaborate on workplace health initiatives.
- ✓ **Actionable Resources**
Receive tailored health services and information to help you identify and address key issues early.

Ready to build a healthier workplace?

Email us today at: workplacehealth@sunderland.gov.uk

Better Health at Work Award



The Better Health at Work Award is a structured, complimentary framework that helps you build a robust wellbeing strategy, regardless of your organisation's size or sector. Supported by Sunderland City Council's public health team, the award provides a clear roadmap to create lasting positive change.

Establish a strong foundation by starting at the Bronze level and implementing data-driven health campaigns.

Demonstrate commitment

to your employees and stakeholders by progressing to higher award levels.

Receive recognition

for your efforts, enhancing your organisational reputation and helping you attract and retain top talent.

To begin your award journey and transform your workplace, visit our website to get started: www.betterhealthatworkaward.org.uk/get-started/ or email workplacehealth@sunderland.gov.uk

You can view our Workplace Health Strategy - [Sunderland-Workplace-Health-Strategy-2024-27.pdf](#)





Sunderland Workplace Health Annual Report 2024-25



Better Health
at Work Award Sunderland



**Sunderland
Workplace
Health Alliance**

IMPROVING HEALTH & WELLBEING IN THE WORKPLACE