Health is a rewarding business!

Another 31 organisations in Wales, ranging from children’s nurseries to large public bodies, have earned the right to display a coveted award which testifies their commitment to the health and well-being of their employees.

The Corporate Health Standard (CHS) and Small Workplace Health Awards (SWHA) are available to all public and private enterprises and third sector organisations in Wales who can demonstrate policies and actions designed to promote happier and healthier workforces, helping to improve productivity, reduce demands on our health services and promote work-life balance.

The Awards are a key element of the Welsh Government’s Healthy Working Wales programme. Organisations are provided with free expert support by Public Health Wales advisers and highly-experienced assessors from the Independent Assessment Service. The Awards, at various levels, send a powerful message, internally and externally, that employers are committed to creating a better working environment. It also provides a very effective network for sharing ideas.

More than 100 people attended an employer engagement event at Cardiff City Stadium where the Deputy Chief Medical Officer for Wales, Professor Chris Jones, presented SWHA Bronze awards to Crown Fitness, Llantwit Fardre, Flying Start St James in Caerphilly and Twr y Felin Hotel, St David’s. Silver Awards went to Fun Foundations Nursery, Cowbridge, Practice Solutions of Abercynon and Georgie Porgie’s Playgroup in Neath. Gold Awards went to Afan Playgroup, Port Talbot and Positive Lifestyles Porthcawl Ltd.

CHS Bronze Awards were presented to Bluestone Resorts Ltd, Pembrokeshire, City of Cardiff Council, Dunbia (Wales), Eversheds LLP in Cardiff, the Legal Aid Agency and NHS Informatics Service. Silver Awards went to HM Courts & Tribunal Service Wales and the Intellectual Property Office, with Gold going to the Family Housing Association of Swansea. Three organisations – City & County of Swansea, Coleg Y Cymoedd and Velindre NHS Trust – collected the ultimate accolade, a Platinum Award (see inside).

Prof Jones said “Workforce health is vital to business health. When an employer treats an employee well, especially when they may be facing personal difficulties, then that employee is likely to put his or her best back into their jobs.”

The Wales Millennium Centre was the setting for an earlier event which saw Minister for Social Services and Public Health, Rebecca Evans AM, hand Small Workplace Bronze Awards to Barratt & Co Photography, Busy Bees Nursery, Blaenafon, North Road Medical Practice, Cardiff, Healthcare Training, Ebbw Vale and Swn y Gan Nursing Home, Swansea.

Silver Awards went to Belle Vue Nursery, Cwmbran, Career Change Wales, Cardiff and Little Inspirations Nurseries at Llantrisant and Rhydffelin. Collecting their Gold Awards were Engie of Cardiff and Countrywide Ground Maintenance South Wales.

Welsh Government Minister for Social Services and Public Health, Rebecca Evans AM (third left, front) joins award-winners at the Wales Millennium Centre
Crown Fitness in Llantwit Fardre has achieved the notable distinction of becoming the first private fitness club in Wales to obtain the Bronze SWHA.

Owner Paul Conway – who spoke at the latest CHS & SWHA event - said “It’s great to be acknowledged through a national award which shows we provide a safe and healthy workplace and put our people first. I think it is something to shout about and something I think other fitness clubs should subscribe to. I feel very proud to be the first business in the sector to achieve this award”.

SWHA Assessor Ava Fine said the Centre had a ‘real community feel’ to it: “Paul is passionate about the community the club serves; he knows many of his customers personally and strives to deliver a top quality service.”

“Many of his customers are aged over 40 and ‘Active Ageing’ classes are delivered to this target group. In fact, the club has just received an award from Age Cymru for being an age -friendly workplace.”

When deciding on a lifestyle topic for the award, the Crown team chose alcohol as a challenge, meeting the criteria through innovative and creative awareness-raising ideas.

Public Health Wales Workplace Health Practitioner Ian Sullivan said “I am delighted for Paul and his team. I was particularly impressed by the approach taken to managing health and safety and look forward to helping Paul achieve the Silver level of the award soon”.

Payback time at NPT Homes

NPT Homes, one of the largest social landlords in Wales, gave CHS and SWHA network members a clear message about the return on investment possible with employee-friendly policies and activities.

The community housing mutual, which manages more than 9,000 properties and tenant services across Neath Port Talbot County Borough, was set up as an LSVT (landlord stock voluntary transfer) in 2011.

On transfer, the organisation, which employs 500, inherited high absence rates, with some teams as high as 13%, and a large number of bureaucratic policies and procedures.

Kelly Mordecai, Organisational Development Specialist with NPT Homes (pictured) told the 100-strong audience at the Cardiff City Stadium Awards event about their Well@Work initiative and proactive approach to managing health and wellbeing in the workplace which has helped bring down sickness absence levels to under 2%. These rates have been sustained for 5 years running.

(The mutual is another example of a ‘buzzing’ organisation – one that has introduced bee-keeping and honey-producing as a stress-busting pursuit. Among CHS Award holders, there is also a ‘hive of activity’ at Swansea University and at Eversheds solicitors in Cardiff!)

NICE? It’s essential!

In another indicator of the weight of evidence and importance now attached to wellbeing in the workplace, NICE (National Institute for Health & Care Excellence) has developed and issued a quality standard for improving the health and wellbeing of all employees, including their mental health.

NICE says the Department of Health and Department for Work and Pensions found strong evidence that work is generally good for people’s physical and mental health and general wellbeing. There is also a positive association between wellbeing, job satisfaction and an employee’s job performance.

The comprehensive guidance includes having a named senior manager responsible for making employee health and wellbeing a core priority, incorporating it into strategic and business management plans and leading on wellbeing initiatives. Line managers should recognise the importance of the topic and take it into account, for example, when planning tasks and designing jobs.

Employees need to be aware which senior manager is responsible for their health and wellbeing at work and that their organisation is committed to a healthy working environment - and that jobs will be designed with this in mind.

“This can benefit both the organisation and its employees by increasing productivity, lowering staff sickness levels and improving job satisfaction and staff retention rates.”

On the Podium . . .

The Corporate Health Standard and Small Workplace Health Award, funded by the Welsh Government and delivered by Public Health Wales as part of the Healthy Working Wales Programme, are the national frameworks and quality marks for workplace health improvement in Wales. Podium brings you more information about the independent assessment service and highlights the advantages of being involved, including some of the success stories.

We welcome suggested topics for Podium – emails to: chs-swha@a2consulting.co.uk
The fashion is unlikely to hit the High Streets anytime soon, but it does demonstrate the lengths to which CHS assessors sometimes have to go for an in-depth visit to an award contender!

Assessor Wendy Bowler and Richard Jones, Butchery Academy Training Manager (Wales) of meat supplier Dunbia, were suitably garbed for a tour of the company’s offices and abattoir at Llanybydder, near Lampeter, where 670 people work.

Dunbia, with 13 UK locations including Felin Fach, Llanelli and Llanybydder, is one of Europe’s leading meat wholesalers with a turnover of £110m and a 50-year history. Proud of the way they look after their workforce, the company has started climbing the CHS ladder with a Bronze Award.

Good communication with and among employees is one of the fundamental requirements of a CHS award. With 60% of the staff at Llanybydder coming from 12 different countries, the company employs translators to ensure all voices are heard. The international make-up of their workforce has prompted other changes, such as reflecting the different cultures and tastes in the canteen.

Wendy Bowler and fellow Assessor Julie James praised the firm’s comprehensive and varied policies on health and wellbeing.

Swansea University continues to develop as a major centre of academic excellence. 16,000 students, 2,600 staff, an impressive new Bay Campus and a plan to become one of the UK’s top 30 colleges by 2020.

Integral to the University’s overarching strategy is the pursuit of best practice when it comes to both student and staff welfare - and it sees the CHS as both a stimulus and a measure. It is the holder of the CHS Silver Award.

The University has a department of Sustainability and Staff Wellbeing. During a two-day assessment, CHS Assessors discussed policies and actions with the college’s CHS Working Group and chatted with staff at the Singleton Park and Bay Campuses.

Assessors commented on the enthusiasm and commitment of the Working Group and staff appreciation of their “excellent working environment” and management support. The University presented a comprehensive portfolio of wellbeing activities, including stand-up and treadmill desks, bee-keeping, nature trails and a health app which has been nominated for an award.

The assessment report said “Particularly impressive is the SWell initiative, a Sustainability and Wellbeing staff engagement programme. Each staff member can create a personal SWell account where they earn points for participating in a diverse range of activities such as cycling to work, healthy eating, ‘Dry January’, volunteering etc.

“At the time of the assessment, nearly 1,000 employees had signed up to the programme, an excellent take-up rate for the five months it had been in existence. SWell has brought together many different engagement projects under one common identity.”

Teifion Maddocks, Safety, Health & Environment Officer, told the audience at the Cardiff City Stadium Awards ceremony (see page 1) “There is an immense amount of work going on inside organisations (to improve staff wellbeing). Stats show things are improving.”

The fashion is unlikely to hit the High Streets anytime soon, but it does demonstrate the lengths to which CHS assessors sometimes have to go for an in-depth visit to an award contender!

Assessor Wendy Bowler and Richard Jones, Butchery Academy Training Manager (Wales) of meat supplier Dunbia, were suitably garbed for a tour of the company’s offices and abattoir at Llanybydder, near Lampeter, where 670 people work.

Dunbia, with 13 UK locations including Felin Fach, Llanelli and Llanybydder, is one of Europe’s leading meat wholesalers with a turnover of £110m and a 50-year history. Proud of the way they look after their workforce, the company has started climbing the CHS ladder with a Bronze Award.

Good communication with and among employees is one of the fundamental requirements of a CHS award. With 60% of the staff at Llanybydder coming from 12 different countries, the company employs translators to ensure all voices are heard. The international make-up of their workforce has prompted other changes, such as reflecting the different cultures and tastes in the canteen.

Wendy Bowler and fellow Assessor Julie James praised the firm’s comprehensive and varied policies on health and wellbeing.

Assessments for the CHS and SWHA programme are carried out by a 23-strong team of highly-experienced, independent assessors drawn from business, health and public life. Here we profile Caroline Whittaker.

Qualified in general and occupational health nursing, Caroline worked in the private sector before joining the University of South Wales as an OH specialist from where she helped revolutionise OH education in Wales. A former member of an RCN steering committee, Caroline is an international conference speaker, author and was runner-up in the RCN Welsh Nurse of the Year Awards for Nurse Education in 2014.

Currently Chair of Occupational Health Wales, Caroline is also a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army Medical Services Reserve and has undertaken operational tours to Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan. She was decorated in the 2004 Queen’s Birthday Honours for services to nursing during the Iraq War in 2003. She is second in command of 203 (Welsh) Field Hospital and holds the Order of St John.
John bows out on a healthy note

One of the original architects of the Welsh Government’s highly-successful Healthy Working Wales scheme – and one of its guiding hands and lead assessors - John Griffiths, has announced his retirement from the programme this summer.

John was principal author and project manager for the forerunner workplace health accreditation scheme when he was with Health Promotion Wales 22 years ago. He subsequently established his own international consultancy, work2health and has played a leading role in developing the programme, often chairing independent assessment panels and employer support events.

John, who is also Chairman of ASH, the anti-tobacco campaign in Wales, has been heavily involved in many workplace health initiatives throughout Europe and the Middle East which have informed governments and employers. He said “It’s been very rewarding to have helped influence the sea-change that has come about in organisational approaches to health and wellbeing.

“The CHS & SWHA have developed to become arguably the best vehicles of their kind for promoting workplace health in the UK, and Wales has a world leading programme of which it can be justly proud.”

Ava Fine, Joint Manager of the independent assessment team, said “Over the years, public and private organisations in Wales employing more than 350,000 people have taken part in the CHS & SWHA programme and we would like to place on record our appreciation for John’s professional input.”

Staff wellbeing is part of the program

It would be difficult to overstate the importance of informatics staff in the operation of health and social care. NHS Wales Informatics Service (NWIS) works in partnership with other organisations to support and deliver digital services that helps doctors, nurses and other health professionals provide care in hospitals, GP practices and throughout the community.

NWIS has secured the CHS Bronze Award. Sarah Brooks, NWIS Workforce and Organisational Development Manager, said “We recognise that the health and wellbeing of our workforce is of utmost importance which is demonstrated by our achievement of the Corporate Health Standard award. This helps us to attract and retain staff” - One of the initiatives NWIS put in place was organising a week of events where staff could drop in to find out more Health and Wellbeing information.

CHS Assessor Ava Fine said “The Health and Wellbeing Working Group, with representatives from each of the NWIS five offices, is enthusiastic and committed. Congratulations – now for the Silver Award!”

We’ve reached the top!

Three of Wales’ big employers are congratulated by the Deputy Chief Medical Officer for Wales Professor Chris Jones (left) on achieving the highest level in the Corporate Health Standard – the Platinum Award. They are, from left, David Spencer of Coleg Y Cymoedd, David Williams of Velindre NHS Trust and Craig Gimblett of the City & County of Swansea Council.

The Platinum Standard is awarded to exemplar employers who demonstrate sustainable development as an integral part of their business practice and culture - improving the social, economic and environmental well-being of people and local communities to achieve a better quality of life for our own and future generations. Congratulations to all three.

‘CHS - a strong framework...’

The CHS and SWHA team welcome feedback from participating organisations about everything from the structure of the award, the assessment process and advice received on the way forward. Here’s a selection of comments:

• We are doing well, but have more to do. It has been motivational to obtain the bronze, but even more so knowing we are within reaching distance of the silver.
• We learnt that as an organisation, we have lots of great “Wellbeing” initiatives and processes led by different groups and the CHS process helped us piece them together in one big jigsaw, which made a great picture.
• The assessment reinforced that the Corporate Health Standard requires engagement at all levels rather than the contribution of an enthusiastic few.
• The assessment provided a strong framework for us to follow and highlighted areas we needed to progress further.
• In a large and complex organisation it was a pleasure to be able to bring together staff groups that would not normally meet to share their experience and learn from each other.
• Very in-depth but fair approach to assessing businesses under the health and wellbeing topic. But also gives you a sense of satisfaction for achievement.
• Being made aware of the units in alcohol led to all of us reducing the amount we drink. We all lost lots of weight through the fitness groups and running clubs we joined. It brought the team together and raised moral.
• It was a very professional process which left us in no doubt that the award was earned (i.e. not a tick-box exercise).
• We have changed our lifestyles!

Healthy Working Wales
promoting health, work and wellbeing

The CHS and SWHA network has become a leading forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences on workplace health among a huge variety of enterprises. All employers, from SMEs and public authorities to multi-national businesses, have easy access to free, professional advice and support. Here’s how to get in touch:-

0845 609 6006
workplacehealth@wales.nhs.uk
Healthy Working Wales
@Healthywork_HWW
Healthy Working Wales
www.healthyworkingwales.org