



2017/18

Health & Well-being Report



Co-Ownership
Housing®

Health and Well-being Report 2017/18

Foreword:

We know that our staff are the most valuable resource we have and we work hard to help them to feel their best and increase their feeling of total well-being.

As an organisation, we have seen our Health and Well-being programme go from strength to strength in the last 12 months. We have invested more resources and budget in the last financial year to develop a range of events, initiatives and information which we know have inspired and encouraged our staff to take ownership of their health and inform their decision making around healthy changes which optimise both their physical and mental health.



Health and Well-being Champions:

Our Health and Well-being Champions are the driving force behind the success of our programme. They are the ones who promote our HWB agenda at their Team Meetings, Senior Management Team and Board Meetings. They organise the events and they assist in maintaining our Honesty Box Fruit Bowls and our HWB Information Table.

Without their enthusiasm, research, support and hard work we wouldn't be able to deliver as wide a range or as many events as we do. The events in this report are all down to them and their passion for Health and Well-being.



Our Honesty Fruit Bowls and Honesty Eggs Scheme



Our Health and Well-being Information Table

A year in review:

In 2015, we developed our **Health and Well-being Strategy** with 4 key aims:

- ✓ Employees having improved and sustained energy levels.
- ✓ Employees feel the initiatives have resulted in positive life changes.
- ✓ Employees feel that Co-Ownership cares about their health and wellbeing and is a great place to work.
- ✓ Employees feel more engaged at work as a result of the investment in health and wellbeing.

To understand the needs and interests of our staff we conducted a specific Health and Well-being staff survey in September 2016 which has shaped our Health and Well-being Plan for the 2017/218 year.

Our top 4 areas of focus for this year have been:

1. **Stress**
2. **Cancer**
3. **Physical Activity**
4. **Healthy Eating**

April 2017:

We kicked off the new financial year with a **Health and Well-being Launch Day** which included unveiling our new HWB logo (designed by our Health and Well-being Champion, Julie White) as part of an all staff competition. Included as part of the launch day we provided 2 staff seminars on **Cancer** and **Stress** and to finish off, a healthy lunch for everyone.



L-R Julie White (Health and Well-being Champion) and Mark Graham (Chief Executive)

As part of developing a holistic Health and Well-being initiative we wanted to provide our staff with trained **Mental Health First Aid** support, if they need guidance and advice. During April and May we trained **2 staff** to provide this service.

May 2017:

Our staff love anything that combines fund raising and getting out in the fresh air, so they generously gave up their Bank Holiday to run the **Belfast City Marathon Relay**. We were proud to help support them with raising funds for our chosen charity, the **NI Children's Hospice**.



Our staff prepare for the Belfast City Marathon

June 2017:

In June we started our **MOT Health Checks**, offering a full range of checks including glucose, cholesterol, blood pressure, body composition, facial skin scope and lung function. This initiative has been run previously and provides our staff with some useful information on lifestyle changes and identifying any early signs of ill health.

At the end of June we hosted a healthy eating lunch, cooking demo and talk with Jane McClenaghan from **Vital Nutrition**. Jane has previously visited Co-Ownership to discuss topics such as Good Mood Foods, Working Well, Optimum Health and Eat Your Heart Out.

Our **Health and Well-being Champions** prepare all the food for Jane's lunchtime sessions so we know how delicious her recipes taste and how easy they are to prepare.



Just some of the delicious food prepared by the Health and Well-being Champions

August 2017:

In August we ran the second series of **MOT Health Checks** for staff who couldn't attend in June.

We also attended a recognition event as part of our partnership with **Health Matters** on their **PHA funded Health Matters in the Workplace** initiative. Over the last year we have worked with them to survey our staff, develop our Health and Well-being plan and to shape the interventions and actions we are taking to meet the aims of our strategy. It was an opportunity to reflect on the hard work of the Health and Well-being Champions and celebrate the progression of our plan.



L-R Gillian Hughes (Health and Well-being Champion), Nikki Sturgeon (Health Matters) and Judith McConville (Health and Well-being Champion)

We welcomed **Bogside and Brandywell Health Forum** to Co-Ownership as a recipient of funding from our Social Fund. We asked them to build us the wonderful herb box shown below for our Kitchen. All plants and herbs are edible and we encourage staff to add some flavour to their lunches or take them home and share with their family.



Herb window box provided by Bogside and Brandywell Health Forum

September 2017:

In September we held a 'Lunch and Learn' session in conjunction with **Carers NI**. We understand that some of our staff may be in need of support if they are caring for loved ones. This session was to provide advice and information to any staff that may be a carer either now or in the future.

November 2017:

As we entered winter, we wanted to introduce some physical movement classes which were not dependent on the weather. We began with one class, run by Alexa from **AXIS Yoga Belfast** and were delighted with the response. Our staff loved the class so much; they asked us to provide further sessions.

We also used our yoga class to raise funds for our chosen charity of the year, all participants paid for their classes with all money going straight to the **NI Children's Hospice**.

With flu season approaching we ran a **flu clinic**, offering the flu vaccination without the need to leave the office. Almost 50% of staff attended the clinic and we hope to increase this number for next year.

December 2017:

In the run up to Christmas, we printed and sold our first **Co-Ownership Housing Recipe Book**. All recipes were provided by our staff and compiled by Julie of our Health and Well-being Committee. We were overwhelmed with the amount and range of recipes.

All funds from the sale of the Cookbook were donated to the **NI Children's Hospice**.



Co-Ownership Housing Recipe Book 2017

January 2018:

We kicked off the New Year with more sessions from **AXIS Yoga Belfast** and encouraging staff to get away from their desk, stretch and move. As the sessions progressed our staff started to learn more about the physical and psychological benefits of taking the time to relax and breathe.

We partnered with **Cancer Focus** to deliver a 'Lunch and Learn' on **Women's Cancer**. This session provided our staff with information on female specific cancers, how to reduce their risk of cancer and methods to check for early warning signs.

To end the long month of January we welcomed Anne Costello from **Wellness For Life**. Anne delivered a **Sleep Clinic** focusing on sleep hygiene, how to prepare for bed and to maximise potential for a great night's sleep. Our staff loved her session and useful guidance on how to 'digital detox' and meditation to aid sleep.

February 2018:

As spring arrived, we hosted a **Round Table Lunch** session with Jane from **Vital Nutrition**. Our staff had the opportunity to attend a sit down lunch and ask Jane any questions about nutrition and health and have expert advice on eating for wellness.



L-R Judith McConville (Health and Well-being Champion), Gillian Hughes (Health and Well-being Champion) and Jane McClenaghan (Vital Nutrition)

We again partnered with **Cancer Focus** to deliver a 'Lunch and Learn' on **Men's Cancer**. This session provided our staff with information on male specific cancers, how to reduce their risk of cancer and common warning signs.

To end the shortest month of the year, we welcomed Anne Costello from **Wellness For Life** back to deliver a **Mindfulness** session. Anne has been a champion of Mindfulness and its benefits for a number of years. She delivered a relaxing session on how to get started with mindful meditation, mindful eating and the health benefits of mindfulness in everyday life.



L-R Judith McConville (Health and Well-being Champion) and Anne Costello (Wellness for Life)

March 2018:

We finished this financial year by researching the health benefits of benzene and formaldehyde absorbing plants for our **Office Planting**. We try to incorporate Health and Well-being into our corporate business decisions and in addition to looking beautiful, the plants we have chosen will cleanse the air and remove toxins.

The year ahead:

Our commitment to Health and Well-being will continue into the 2018/19 financial year with our Health and Well-being Champions identifying best practice and innovative new ideas to keep developing our Health and Well-being programme. In addition, we plan to review our Health and Well-being Strategy to ensure we move the organisation forward and meet the changing needs of our staff.

What our staff think:

It is important that we understand the needs of our staff and the impact that we can make on their life. We love to hear about changes they have made to their lifestyle following some inspiration from one of our events. We thought we would share one story with you and how Stuart (one of our Senior Legal Advisors) has made changes to his lifestyle as a result of our Health and Well-being programme.



"I have found the Health and Wellbeing initiative run by Co-Ownership to have had a really positive impact for me. I have attended a number of healthy eating seminars run by Co-Ownership Housing at lunchtime. My diet has traditionally been very poor. I would eat at least a big packet of sweets a day, lots of fizzy sugary drinks, crisps and chocolate. This was often because I had not planned my meals, was under pressure and needed something to eat quickly.

Eating this type of food would leave me feeling groggy and lethargic. I would get an instant energy boost but this was not sustained. When I ate a lot of junk food I struggled to sleep well at night and would wake up in the morning with sinus problems. I had always done a lot of exercise which helped to keep the weight off but disguised the fact that I was really unhealthy.

The seminars I attended educated me about the impact that food you eat can have on your body and mind. It did not say to diet but gave some insights into what foods are good for you, what foods to cut out and what times of the day to eat. It provided lots of healthy easy to cook recipes and encouraged you to plan your meals. As a result of the talks I have implemented some simple changes to my diet. I have reduced the amount of sugar I eat, reduced the amount of caffeine I consume, eaten a greater variety of foods and now drink a lot more water (I even got a branded water bottle supplied to me). I also now eat lots of fresh fruit and vegetables. I no longer go out at lunch for my £1 packet of sweets!!

I really do feel better for it. I sleep better, have more energy and no longer have the sinus/allergy problems. The Health and Wellbeing Initiative has been a very welcome programme carried out by Co-Ownership."



NI Co-Ownership Housing Association Ltd,
Murray House, Murray Street, Belfast BT1 6DN DX 2003 NR Belfast 2
Phone (028) 9032 7276 Textphone users 18001 028 9032 7276
Website www.co-ownership.org