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**Providing a flexible approach to assessing employee health in a 24/7 organisation**

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everyone fit  
for the future

As part of its commitment to its people, Network Rail set itself an ambitious, long-term Occupational Health and Wellbeing Strategy, 'Everyone Fit For The Future', spanning the years 2013 to 2024. Within the Strategy, one of the ten strategic measures of success was specifically related to physical health and wellbeing:

*The proportion of our workforce identified as having a low risk of cardiovascular disease will be at least 10% better than that of the general working population.*

In order to be able to develop a baseline measure against this target, to map risk 'hot spots' and to identify the factors contributing to cardiovascular health in the workforce, it was necessary to be able to assess a number of health measures within our employee base. However, with a largely mobile workforce of 34,000 people spread all across the UK, and with limited budget to implement a programme of health assessments, the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Strategy (OH&WS) team faced a challenge as to how they could feasibly assess the health of the workforce in a cost-effective way that would also be available to the large number of our employees who work at nights and weekends.

By reviewing potential options, the OH&WS team identified an organisation who leased mobile health kiosks, which were able to measure height, weight, Body Mass Index (BMI), body fat, blood pressure and pulse. In addition, a series of questions related to demographics, health history and health behaviours were collected from users. Together, these objective measures and questions were assessed using the clinically validated Q-RISK2 algorithm, which provides a measure of ten-year cardiovascular risk and assigns individuals into

- 'low risk' (<10% risk of experiencing an acute cardiac event in the next ten years),
- 'moderate risk' (10 to 20% risk of experiencing an acute cardiac event in the next ten years), and
- 'high risk' (>20% risk of experiencing an acute cardiac event in the next ten years).

After completing the kiosk tests, each user received a short print out of the test results and, if they registered an email address, received a further copy of the results as well as health information factsheets advising on healthy lifestyle changes. If any potentially diagnostic results were found to be outside of a recommended level, individuals were recommended to visit their GP within the following weeks.

After procuring the service, the OH&WS team engaged local business units and established a plan to have 13 of the kiosks visit a total of 75 of Network Rail's most populated buildings over a six month period (February to September 2014). Positively, the financial cost of the kiosks was significantly lower than a comparable cost to have a health professional visit each site and the kiosks were able to be left switched on all day and therefore could be used by those of our staff who worked night shifts. During the six month period, over 11,000 employees (approximately 30% of the workforce) used a health kiosk at least once and feedback from employees was strongly positive.



Data from the health kiosks at the end of the six month period gave a wealth of insight into our employees' physical health and the general risk of cardiovascular disease. For example:

The average blood pressure of employees was 128/85mmHg, which meant that the average person was in the 'pre-hypertensive' range

44% and 26% of users were identified as being overweight and obese (based on BMI), respectively. Interestingly, male employees were much more likely to be overweight or obese than female employees (75% v 51%, respectively)

In total, 89% of employees were identified as having a low risk of cardiovascular disease (using Q-RISK2). This compared to a figure of 91% for the general working population, allowing for our baseline comparator to be established.

Overall, the use of health kiosks was received extremely well by Network Rail employees and enabled the provision of helpful health insights to employees so that they can make healthy lifestyle changes. In addition, it provided the necessary strategic baseline measures required for the Occupational Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

*Network Rail Occupational Health and Wellbeing Strategy Team  
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