



# Healthy Eating in the Workplace

## A toolkit for Swindon employers

# SBC Eat Well Framework

## How to use the framework:

For each element of the Framework you will need to find appropriate evidence to support your answers. You could do this by consulting with your Human Resources team and line managers who have supervisory responsibilities. You will then need to rate your organisation. **The ratings are:**

**Red - High Risk** – Your organisation has started to look at initiatives and interventions needed to improve healthy eating within the workforce and may have started to introduce a small number. There are low levels of data on the impact, and your organisation needs to build on interventions further to become more effective.

**Orange - Medium Risk** – The organisation has a number of successful initiatives and interventions in place with strong supporting data suggesting that provisions are working for employees in the organisation. More can still be done to support employees.

**Green - Low Risk** – There are many successful preventative interventions in place and data shows that employees are well supported. The organisation excels in this area.

Use this framework to help you identify what good practice looks like within your organisation when supporting employees to eat healthy. You will need to identify appropriate sources of evidence and data to rate each element. Employee engagement can often provide the best source of evidence. There is no requirement to enter any data, but to support your rating and any subsequent actions, it is best to comment on your evidence and what your employees are telling you.

Work through the questions to complete the diagnostic process. Use the ratings outlined above to RAG rate your organisation each time you answer a question. You should also record current strengths, areas for improvement and actions to address these to help you plan your next steps and interventions.'

# Healthy Eating

Working practices and conditions that are identified as contributing to a poor diet and unhealthy eating habits are proactively managed. Workplace support is available for employees to eat well in the workplace.			Documenting your evidence				
Line of Enquiry	What does good look like?	RAG	Current Strengths	Areas for Improvement	Actions	Action Owner	Review Date
Is your workplace an inclusive and safe space for breastfeeding employees?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote facilities to make employees aware of what's available to them.</li> <li>Consider providing quiet, calming and inclusive environments for employees to breastfeed or express.</li> <li>Provide signposting to encourage employees to access support.</li> <li>Consider providing fridges to store breastmilk.</li> </ul>						

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Does your organisation promote healthy eating within the workplace?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider encouraging employees to take breaks that are long enough to eat a healthy option for lunch.</li> <li>Consider promoting healthy eating resources around the workplace, such as information guides, posters and healthy eating campaign materials.</li> <li>Consider running healthy eating campaigns to increase awareness, such as Healthy Eating Week.</li> <li>Consider providing information on eating healthy on a budget.</li> <li>Promote the benefits of healthy eating in kitchens and canteens.</li> <li>Consider organising family days to introduce partners and children to the organisation's healthy eating initiatives. Support at home can really make a difference!</li> <li>Consider running cooking and healthy eating courses. Coaching on what to buy and understanding food labels can also help staff to choose healthier options.</li> <li>Consider offering free fresh fruit and vegetables at strategic points in the workplace, as well as in any existing snack options or vending machines. Consider using a local vendor to bring daily fresh fruit supplies.</li> <li>Consider providing healthier options at meetings and events.</li> <li>Begin a conversation about how special events (birthdays, holidays, anniversaries, promotions) are marked at work. Can 'cake days' be shared, or healthier alternatives be provided?</li> <li>Consider removing sugar-sweetened beverages from canteens and vending machines.</li> </ul>						

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Line of Enquiry	What does good look like?	RAG	Current Strengths	Areas for Improvement	Actions	Action Owner	Review Date
Does your organisation have adequate and appropriate facilities for healthy eating available to employees?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider subsidising healthy options in the canteen or vending machines.</li> <li>If a kitchen isn't available to employees to prepare or reheat food, consider how these services could be offered.</li> <li>Consider the capacity of fridges and microwaves available to staff - Are there enough fridges to store fresh food?</li> <li>Consider stocking vending machines with healthy foods and drinks.</li> <li>If there are cafes, shops and restaurants available within walking distance, could your organisation influence them to provide healthy alternatives?</li> </ul>						
Are your employees aware of healthy diet support available to them both inside and outside of work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share information on support groups, campaigns and programmes run in the community to assist with healthy eating.</li> <li>Consider encouraging team members to become hydration and healthy eating champions.</li> <li>Signpost employees to local businesses and companies offering healthy alternatives or running healthy eating campaigns.</li> </ul>						

# Introduction

Physical inactivity and poor diet are among the top causes of ill health. When we're feeling well, we're more productive and take less time off sick. So, it's no surprise that employers increasingly see that it makes business sense to support the health of their staff.

Working adults spend a third of their waking hours in work, which means our workplaces are key spaces for improving wellbeing. They shape our behaviour in how active we are and what we eat. Employers have a legal duty to provide a safe workplace that does not damage employees' health, therefore organisations should strive to aid employees to make healthy choices when it comes to nutrition and hydration.

While personal responsibility is important, employers can make positive changes within their organisation to help staff make healthier choices. While it may take time, small incremental changes in physical activity and diet can make a big, positive difference over time.

Diets based on fruit, vegetables and wholegrain starchy carbohydrates have been demonstrated to reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, stroke and some cancers. Creating a healthier food environment for employees is one way to reduce absenteeism, increase performance and ensure a healthy workforce.

## Benefits to Healthy Eating

By promoting healthy eating in the workplace, you are promoting good health in your employees. Research has shown that the benefits of improving health in the workplace include:



- Increased motivation of employees and a better working atmosphere.



- Increased quality of services, more innovation and creativity, and a rise in productivity.



- Improved public image of the organisation, making it more attractive as an employer.



- Reduced absenteeism rates in your workplace.

# Stats and Figures

While the figures regarding overweight and obesity levels in Swindon are high, it is useful to gain an understanding of its prevalence and how this can impact on your organisation's environment and day-to-day operating of the business.

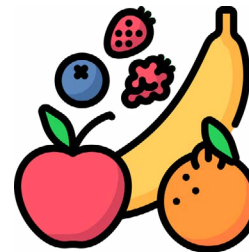
Obesity was a factor in **1,400** hospital admissions in Swindon in the period 2019-2020.



**69%** of adults in Swindon are classified as overweight or obese.



The proportion of the adult population in Swindon who eat 5 portions of fruit and veg a day is **51.47%**



Swindon has the highest number of admissions for alcohol-specific conditions at **891 per 100,000**.



The NHS spent an estimated **£6.1 billion** on overweight and obesity related ill health in 2014 to 2015.



Nearly **37%** of children aged 10-11 are overweight or obese in Swindon.



In reception aged children, nearly **24%** are overweight or obese in Swindon.

# What Support is Available to my Business?

## Workplace Health Needs Assessment

Similar to the framework we have created above, the Workplace Health Needs Assessment has been developed by Public Health England and Healthy Working Futures to help organisations decide where best to invest and improve. It consists of 16 questions relating to the health and wellbeing of employees and provides information and guidance on how to interpret results, suggestions and advice on next steps and useful facts and figures.

Some staff may find the questions intrusive and be suspicious of the motives behind the survey, therefore it can be beneficial to use an external organisation to run the survey, reducing concerns about confidentiality and drawing on external expertise to develop an action plan.

Many companies offer workplace lifestyle assessment services that organisations can employ to better understand their employees' needs. A needs assessment within the workplace can:

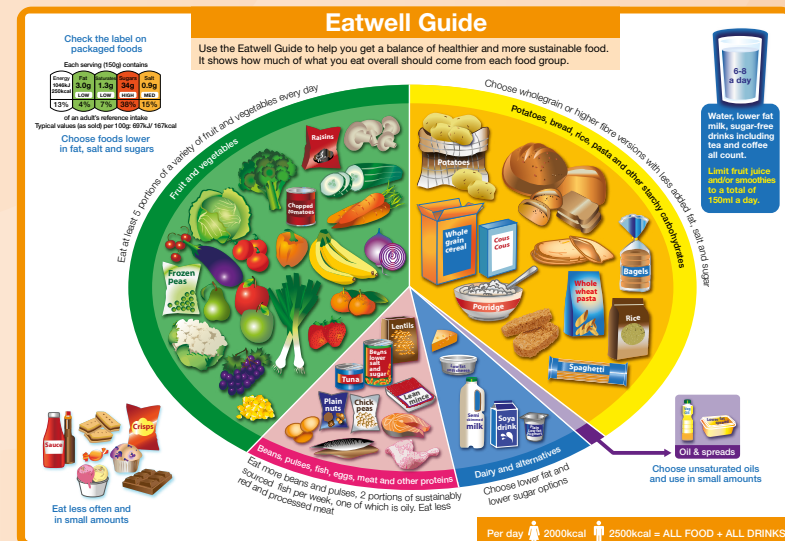
- ↑ Increase productivity
- ↑ Improve energy and focus
- ↓ Reduce absenteeism

The Workplace Health Needs Assessment suggests developing a healthy eating policy or statement for your organisation.

## The Eatwell Guide

Your approach to food and drink provision at work can also be underpinned by the national Eatwell model. It shows the proportions in which different types of foods are needed to achieve a healthy, balanced diet. The proportions are representative of food consumption over the period of a day or even a week, not necessarily each meal time.

By displaying the Eatwell guide within your workplace it can help raise awareness of healthy eating and aid employees in making healthy choices. Consider displaying the guide in kitchens, canteens and by vending machines within your organisation.





# How Can my Organisation Make a Difference?

There are lots of simple changes that can be made within your organisation to help your staff eat healthier. But remember, taking part in healthy eating events and programmes should always be voluntary! Consider trying some of these easy to follow steps for a healthier workforce:



**Get staff engaged and involved in the process to find out what they feel is a top priority.**



**Provide information and guidelines on nutritional content, ingredients and methods of cooking.**



**Take part in local healthy eating campaigns and publicise this on posters, leaflets, intranets, screen savers and through employee meetings.**



**Consider running a breakfast or lunch club for employees.**



**Encourage employees to bring in healthy lunches with healthy recipes.**



**Run taster sessions to encourage people to try different healthy foods.**



**Consider running recipe exchanges between staff.**



**Ensure suitable facilities for cooking, eating and storing foods within the organisation.**



**Link into local businesses and grocers to run healthy eating campaigns.**



**Consider offering fresh fruit and vegetables in the workplace.**



**Have a healthy option at business lunches, meetings and functions.**



**Provide a supportive environment and set up support groups for those wanting to eat healthier and lose weight.**



**Keep promoting healthy eating with posters, screensavers and on the intranet.**



**Review vending machines and catering options for healthier alternatives.**



**Ensure there are drinking water facilities throughout the organisation.**



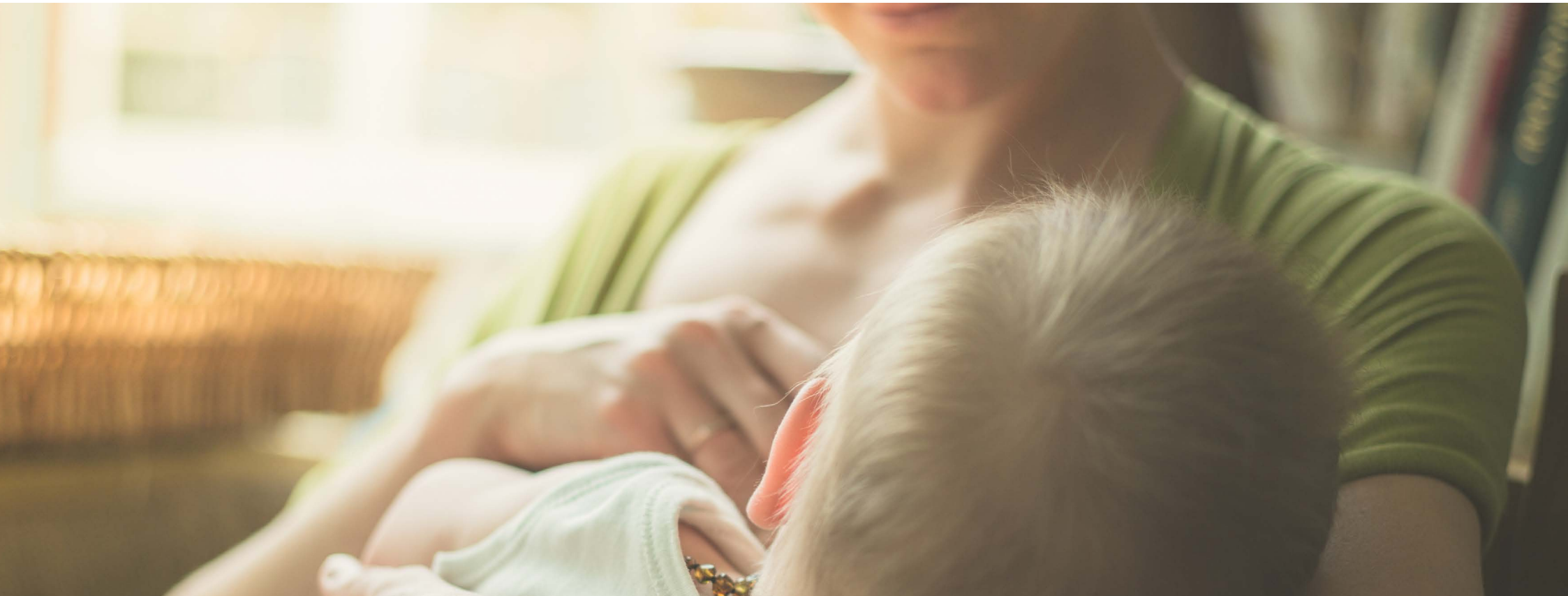
**Make it fun! The more fun it is, the more people will want to get involved.**

# Breastfeeding

Organisations legally must provide somewhere suitable for employees to rest if they are breastfeeding. An inclusive workplace could also provide somewhere for employees to breastfeed or express during the working day. For example, a private room with somewhere to lie down and a fridge to store milk. You could also consider creating a network for mums within your organisation.

Before an employee returns to work following maternity leave, it is important that managers discuss and plan their return, considering factors such as breastfeeding. Speak to your organisation's HR to help plan the employee's return.

For more information on employee's rights when returning to work, see the [ACAS returning to work guide](#).



# What Support is Available to my Employees?

There are many apps and online tools available to everyone. You can signpost your employees to some of the following:



**NHS Food Scanner** – Use this app to scan food and drinks items for information on how much salt and sugar they contain – Click on the tick icon for more information.



**NHS Weight Loss Plan** – Track your eating habits and develop a healthier lifestyle with this 12-week weight-loss plan – Click the tick icon for more information.



**BMI Calculator** – Check your body mass index with this handy tool - Click the tick icon for more information.



**NHS Drink Free Days** – This app is for people who like a drink but want some support in tracking and cutting down on the booze. It also helps you understand more about your current drinking and risk levels - Click the tick icon for more information.



**British Nutrition Foundation** – There is lots of great information and tips on their website to help people understand about nutrition and how we can live healthier lives. Search British Nutrition Foundation for more information.

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There are many apps and online tools available to everyone. You can signpost your employees to some of the following:



**Mind** - Mind have a whole web page dedicated to helping explain the links between food and mental health. There's lots of tips and tricks to help managing diet when we're feeling unwell. Search Mind, food and mental health for more information.



**Eatwell Guide** - This handy NHS tool helps explain the different food and drinks groups and how much we should eat to achieve a balanced diet. Search NHS Eatwell Guide for more information.



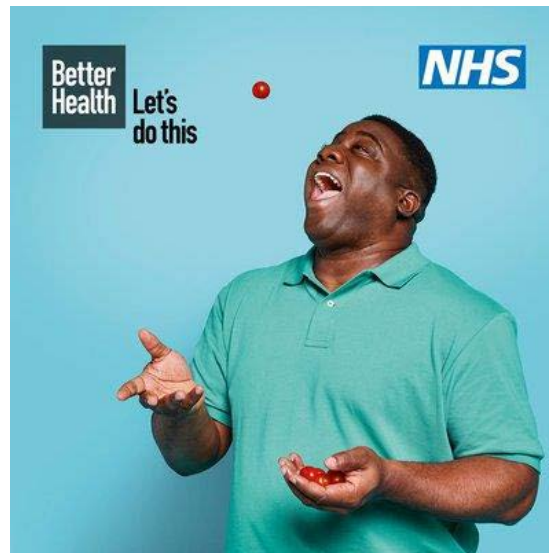
**NHS Better Health** - A dedicated NHS page to help people lose weight. From advice and tools to weight loss plans and how weight can impact on our physical health. Search NHS Better Health for more information.

# Campaign Materials

Use these helpful resources from the Department of Health and Social Care for your organisation's healthy eating campaigns in both internal and external comms, including social media.

Visit [www.campaignresources.dhsc.gov.uk](http://www.campaignresources.dhsc.gov.uk)

Its quick and simple to use, just register and download the resource materials that relate to your organisation's promotional campaign.



# Appendix 1:

## Employee Staff Survey Questions

Do you eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables every day? Remember that fresh, frozen and tinned fruits and vegetables all count, but fruit juice and dried fruit only count as 1 portion per day each, regardless of the amount you have. Potatoes also count as starchy foods, not as vegetables. For your information, a portion is about a handful.

- Always
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Rarely
- Never

Do you drink six to eight glasses of fluid every day? Water, lower-fat milk and sugar-free drinks, including tea and coffee, all count.

- Always
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Rarely
- Never

Do you choose lower fat foods when available?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Rarely
- Never

Do you base your main meals around starchy foods, like potatoes, pasta, rice and bread?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Rarely
- Never

Do you regularly choose wholegrain foods when available, such as wholemeal bread rather than white bread?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Rarely
- Never

# Appendix 1:

## Employee Staff Survey Questions

Do you add salt to your meals, either while cooking or at the table?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Rarely
- Never

Do you eat cakes, biscuits, sweets or chocolate?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Rarely
- Never

Do you skip breakfast?

- Always
- Most of the time
- Some of the time
- Rarely
- Never