

13 September 2011

## **NHS Borders Promote Health and Wellbeing to staff**

NHS Borders will be raising awareness of cancer in men and the benefits of being physically active for their staff through their Workplace Health and Wellbeing programme this month.

The Board will be participating in two nationwide campaigns; Blue September, an international initiative to raise awareness of all the cancers which affect men, and Workout at Work Day, an initiative, which has been organised by the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) to mark World Physical Therapy Day.

The Blue September campaign aims to raise men's awareness of cancer and help them to reduce the risk of developing and dying from cancer by making better lifestyle choices and seeking help sooner rather than later. According to the Men's Health Forum, men in the UK are 40% more likely to die from any cancer than women and at least one in three cancer cases is preventable. Thousands of men's lives could be saved by making healthy lifestyle decisions such as quitting smoking, reducing alcohol intake, taking more care in the sun, regular exercise, maintaining a healthy weight and eating a balanced diet. More lives can also be saved if more men know about the symptoms of cancer and contact a health professional as soon as they notice something worrying such as a lump or a nagging cough.

To emphasise the link between cancer prevention and healthy lifestyles, NHS Borders also participated in the national Workout at Work Day last week which aimed to encourage staff to be more physically active during the working day. The initiative encourages workers to do more exercise and lead healthier lives, and to highlight to employers the benefits of having a fitter and healthier workforce. Taking more exercise not only helps to prevent cancer and recover from cancer treatment, it also provides many more benefits to the workplace including improved concentration, reduced sickness absence and greater productivity.

Irene Bonnar, Occupational Health Services Manager for NHS Borders said "NHS Borders wants its staff to lead healthy lifestyles. We believe that if we can help our staff to do that, the service will benefit from a healthier, happier workforce and better patient care."

Judith Little, Physiotherapist (NHS Borders), continued "Workout at Work Day was a fun way for staff to become more physically active and feel the benefits during the working day. Hopefully it will help to encourage our staff to maintain a more active lifestyle."

As well as providing information for staff on both campaigns, NHS Borders have also organised a number of opportunities for staff to find out more about their health including a toolbox talk for Estate Workers on cancer in men, the opportunity for a lifestyle health check, pre-work and lunchtime walks, a lunchtime hiphop class and an end of day circuit class.

NHS Borders also recently launched a Cycle to Work scheme, which included in its aims the benefit of helping employees become fitter and healthier. Already 77 members of staff have signed up to the scheme.

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Notes for Editors:

- Further information on Blue September is available from [www.blueseptember.org.uk](http://www.blueseptember.org.uk)
- Further information on Workout at Work Day is available from [www.csp.org.uk/news-events/events/workout-work-day](http://www.csp.org.uk/news-events/events/workout-work-day)
- NHS Borders currently holds the national Healthy Working Lives Silver Award for promoting health, safety and wellbeing to its staff.

**For further information, contact Public Involvement & Communications NHS Borders on 01896 825589**