

Health and safety for the Small to Medium Enterprise market

The Health and Safety Commission is responsible for health and safety regulation in Great Britain. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and local government are the enforcing authorities who work in support of the Commission.

In the UK, around 28 million working days are lost per year due to work-related ill health, with 7 million of those days lost to injury. This is roughly equivalent to 10% of the UK payroll. A significant portion of these 'lost' days occur in the Small to Medium Enterprise (SME) sector. HSE recognises that the SME sector is difficult to engage, and will often not interact with HSE or Local Authorities due to the fear of enforcement. To help the SME sector better assess advice and support on health and safety, HSE is establishing the Workplace Health Connect (WHC) service. The service is currently in the pilot (Pathfinder) stage.

What is Workplace Health Connect?

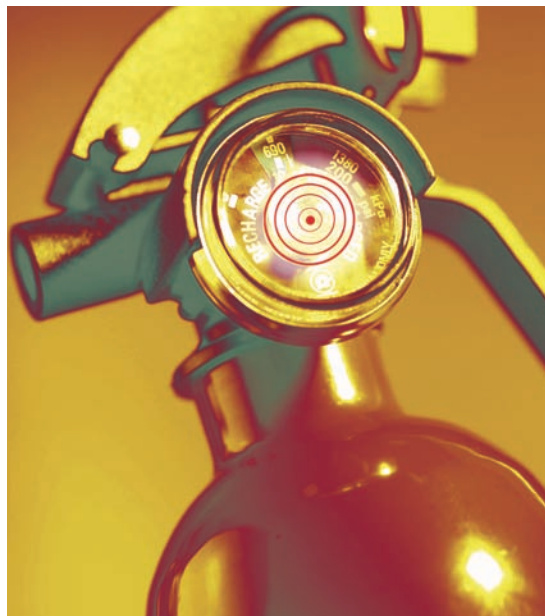
Workplace Health Connect is a government funded service providing confidential, practical and free advice to small businesses on workplace health and safety, management of sickness absence and return to work issues. The service consists of an Adviceline, with a supporting website, and 5 Pathfinder regions (North East, North West, London, Wales and West Midlands) with the capability to provide free workplace visits to 50% of smaller businesses in England and Wales

Who is it for? Workplace Health Connect is targeted at people who manage small businesses in England or Wales, employ between 5 and 250 staff and do not have access to specialist health and safety advice. The service aims to provide employers with rapid access to quality health and safety advice and to help them understand their health and safety responsibilities, resolve problems and to ensure that their business is a safe place to work.

Workers can also call the service for confidential, free advice to assist them and their employers in making their workplace safer and healthier.

Methods Consulting

Methods Consulting is supporting HSE in the development of the Workplace Health Connect service concept, specifically with the operational management and evaluation data collection aspects. Our consultants are supporting the HSE in the development of the service



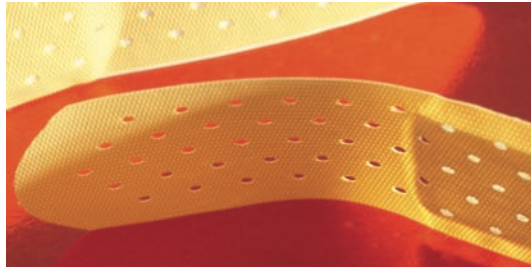
During the Pathfinder stage of the project, which will last two years, the Workplace Health Connect service will:

- handle approximately 30,000 calls to the dedicated Adviceline
- visit approximately 5000 organisations, covering 95,000 staff
- deliver a full outcomes-based evaluation of the service

case study

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requirements and managing the tendering process for the Adviceline and the 5 regional Pathfinder providers. We are also designing, developing, implementing and operating the operational management and data collection systems for the Pathfinders, as well as marketing them to the end user market.



The Workplace Health Connect service aims to:

- significantly increase the level of healthy workplaces within SMEs across England and Wales;
- support employers and workers who do not currently benefit from occupational health, safety and return to work support;
- change employer and worker behaviours;
- provide SMEs with the knowledge and skills to resolve workplace health, safety and return to work challenges; and
- develop strong local partnerships that deliver a consistent service to all customers.

Methods Consulting is providing a fully-serviced, fixed cost, web-based service to operate the operational and knowledge management portals, the email service and the data collection service.

Our procurement and supplier management expertise is driving the financial, contract and performance audits throughout the lifetime of the programme, whilst our business and IS consultancy skills and experience are being utilised to design, deliver and manage the IT and information systems used by the Pathfinder service.

Overall Methods Consulting has provided a strong team of specialist experts to support the HSE across all aspects of the service, bringing in necessary skills as required, and transferring their skills to the HSE staff. The result has been a closely integrated HSE/Methods Consulting team.

Jim Neilson, the HSE Project Manager for Workplace Health Connect, has been keen to stress that "It is always difficult to design, set up and implement a new service, particularly one aimed at smaller businesses. Methods Consulting has played a big part in the success of this project, particularly through their professionalism, flexibility and commitment to partnership working. When a challenge was identified, Methods Consulting was supportive and creative in identifying an appropriate solution."

In the first 11 months the Pathfinder service has handled 5100 customers, including 2520 actual customer visits. The service currently handles between 50 and 60 new customers each week.

Contact us

To learn more about Methods Consulting's capabilities, please contact Howard Moodycliffe on: 020 7240 1121 or howard.moodycliffe@methods.co.uk

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