

World Obesity comments on the WHO policy brief: Promoting and creating enabling environment for healthy behaviours among workers.

About World Obesity

The World Obesity Federation is a not-for-profit organisation representing professional members of the scientific, medical and research communities from over 50 regional and national obesity associations. Through our membership we create a global community of organisations dedicated to solving the problems of obesity. World Obesity is official recognized as a nongovernmental organisation by the World Health Organization. For more information visit www.worldobesity.org

General comments

We welcome this policy brief focused on workplace health, recognising the large amount of time people spend in their working environment. In particular, we urge sectors and industries which have a tendency for an unhealthy culture to take appropriate steps to shift the behaviour norms of the workforce, whether it be due to poor diets, high amounts of sedentary behaviour or highly stressful work ethics.

Incentives which promote healthy eating, active transport and active recreation are particularly important, not just for preventing NCDs themselves but for reducing risk factors such as obesity and diabetes. These incentives can take a number of forms, from healthy food options, to the provision of on-site showers, bike purchase schemes or discounted public transport.

Workplace policies focused on nutrition promotion, for instance ensuring healthy options are available in canteens and vending machines, and that the nutritional information for all food is made available, are of particular importance.

Beyond workplace health, we wish to emphasise the opportunity that exists for businesses which attract a large number of people from the community to make a contribution to efforts to tackle NCDs, in line with measures taken for the workforce. This includes, for example, gyms and fitness centres, conference and meeting venues, entertainment venues and sports stadiums. These businesses have access to a large number of people and can work to make healthier choices easier. One such example is 'healthy stadia' which targets football stadiums around Europe to promote.