

Campaigning to raise awareness of workplace exposure to carcinogens' No Time to Lose campaign

Database information

Country: United Kingdom.

Available language: English.

No particular **sector** is covered in this case study.

No particular **tasks** are covered in this case study.

Worker groups covered (vulnerable groups): all workers (no specific worker groups).

The **purpose of this example of good practice** is to raise awareness and to help prevent exposure to carcinogens in the workplace.

The **target groups** of the campaign are businesses, employers, workers, organisations, government, occupational safety and health professionals, occupational hygienists and the general public.

1 Initiator/organisations involved

The No Time to Lose (NTTL) campaign was initiated by the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) and is backed by more than 220 organisations, businesses, academic institutions, professional bodies and cancer charities worldwide.

IOSH was founded in 1945 and is a registered charity with international NGO status; it has more than 44,000 members in 120 countries. IOSH supports its members by offering them resources, guidance, events and training

2 Description of the case

2.1 Introduction/background

Occupational cancer is a problem that needs to be tackled. It is caused by exposure to a cancer-causing agent — 'a carcinogen' — while at work.

Some cancers are diagnosed up to 10 years after the sufferer has been exposed to a carcinogen at work; others can take more than 35 years to develop. The International Labour Organization (ILO) has stated that occupational cancer is by far the largest cause of workplace deaths. The latest global data released by the ILO at the World Congress on Safety and Health at Work in Singapore in September 2017 indicate that some 742,000 fatal work-related cancers occur every year.

According to EU CAREX (carcinogen exposure database), 1 in 5 workers in the EU are affected by occupational carcinogens, or 23 % of those employed are exposed to carcinogens at work.

A study commissioned by the UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in 2012 found that almost 14,000 new cases of cancer caused by work are registered every year and around 8,000 deaths a year are caused by occupational cancer in Britain. It is the fifth biggest cause of avoidable cancers in the UK.

Asbestos is one of the most significant occupational carcinogens, causing over 107,000 deaths globally. It is estimated that 10 million people across the world will have died as a result of asbestos exposure before it is fully controlled. However, there are many other carcinogenic exposures that cause cancer

and claim lives (IOSH, 2017a). The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) lists over 50 substances that are known or probable causes of workplace cancer, and over 100 other possible carcinogens.

2.2 Aims

In 2014, IOSH launched the NTTL campaign to make carcinogenic exposure issues more widely understood and help businesses take action.

The campaign is working to:

- raise awareness of a significant health issue facing workers globally;
- offer free materials to businesses to help them deliver effective prevention programmes;
- encourage organisations to support the campaign and sign the pledge, outlining what they will undertake to manage carcinogenic exposures.

2.3 What was done and how?

Before launching NTTL, IOSH conducted market research to identify the issues around managing carcinogenic exposures at work.

- IOSH surveyed its membership to gauge the knowledge and understanding of occupational cancer; the results revealed that 80 % felt industry was not doing enough to tackle occupational health issues. The barriers included lack of awareness and education, and poor resources.
- IOSH also hosted a workshop with industry experts to share early campaign ideas, which in turn helped IOSH to decide on a phased approach to the campaign, and to set priorities to target the most relevant exposures: diesel engine exhaust emissions, solar radiation, silica dust and asbestos. The participants also helped determine the type of materials IOSH needed to develop to help businesses take action to prevent occupational cancer. This included resource packs containing factsheets for managers, leaflets and pocket cards for workers, posters, real-life stories, toolbox talks and infographics.
- IOSH tested the materials with members from target sectors (e.g. construction) and used the feedback to modify the resources, continuing to test as they were redeveloped.
- During the workshop, the idea of developing a pledge to secure commitment from businesses to managing carcinogens at work was also discussed. Participants agreed with this approach and encouraged high-profile businesses to sign up to it ahead of the campaign launch, resulting in a 'founder pledge signatories' group.
- To measure the success of the campaign, an engagement indicators dashboard was set up. The dashboard is updated monthly and provides a snapshot of how the campaign is performing.

In November 2014, IOSH launched the NTTL campaign and a free resource pack on managing **diesel engine exhaust emissions**. This was the **first phase of the campaign**.

The **second phase of the campaign** focused on cancer contracted from **solar radiation** exposure at work.

- This phase was launched in April 2015 at an event in partnership with pledge signatory Royal Mail Group, which had developed a 'sun safety' strategy to protect workers from sun exposure.
- At the event, IOSH launched commissioned research by Imperial College London, which found that solar radiation kills 60 workers a year in Britain, with 1,500 new cases of non-melanoma skin cancer and 240 new cases of malignant melanoma linked to solar radiation exposure through work annually. During the event, a free resource pack on managing solar radiation exposure was also launched.

The **third phase of the campaign** aimed to raise awareness of **respirable crystalline silica** and was launched in March 2016.

- Before this phase was launched, IOSH hosted a silica dust virtual focus group, which gathered professionals from the construction, rail, public services and mineral product sectors to identify the main barriers to effective silica exposure control. The focus group highlighted that there was a lack of understanding of this carcinogen across industry sectors.
- To help raise awareness of silica dust throughout industry, IOSH hosted a round-table discussion, as a result of which the initiative 'Tackling respirable crystalline silica together: a cross-industry commitment' was launched. A free resource pack on managing silica dust was also launched at the event.

The **fourth phase of the campaign** will focus on raising awareness of issues relating to **asbestos** exposure at work. This phase will be launched in April 2018.

In addition to the resource packs, IOSH developed a website, www.notimetolose.org.uk. On the website, there is a resource library, which includes free resources to help businesses tackle occupational cancer; initiatives such as '**Ask the expert**', which provides a service for anyone who has a question about work-related cancers or managing carcinogenic exposures; 'Real life stories', with people who have been affected by work-related carcinogenic exposures telling their stories; and the '**News and events**' section, which provides news on the NTTL campaign and details on campaign events. NTTL also has its own Twitter feed, @_NTTL.

IOSH has developed many free resources that can be accessed from the website www.notimetolose.org.uk. Films, a campaign flyer, a concise occupational cancer booklet, infographics and calls to action have been developed and can be accessed from the website. Some resources are also available in Slovenian and Bulgarian. Resources include good practice case studies about initiatives and resources that organisations have developed to improve their management of occupational health.

2.4 What was achieved?

Since the campaign was launched, over 220 organisations have begun supporting the campaign and have raised awareness of work-related cancer, and more than 100 leading businesses have signed up to the campaign pledge to tackle occupational cancer, reaching half a million employees worldwide (IOSH, 2017b). Figure 1 highlights some of the achievements.

Figure 1: campaign achievements by 02/2018.



2.5 Problems faced

The high demand for printed copies of campaign materials led to IOSH developing print-ready PDFs for businesses to print their own materials.

2.6 Success factors and challenges

A thorough scoping phase

IOSH surveyed its membership, shared campaign ideas with its audiences and tested its materials on various target groups.

Working in partnership

One of the success factors for IOSH's NTTL campaign has been working in partnership with campaign supporters worldwide. IOSH has collaborated with leading organisations, such as MTR Corporation Ltd in Hong Kong (Figure 2), the Society of Safety Engineers Ljubljana in Slovenia and the Center for Safety and Health at Work in Bulgaria to adapt and translate the NTTL resources to reach employees in various countries (Figure 3). More than 100 leading businesses and 220 organisations worldwide have given their support to IOSH's No Time to Lose campaign.

Figure 2: NTTL poster translated into Chinese.



Figure 3: NTTL poster translated into Bulgarian.



The campaign has been presented at over 150 events, reaching 10,000 delegates.

Focus on main carcinogens

The campaign focuses on the carcinogens that cause the most number of deaths and registrations, including asbestos, silica dust, diesel engine exhaust emissions and solar radiation.

Free resources and practical support

The campaign provides free, practical and original materials to businesses and gives practical support to help them deliver effective prevention programmes.

Continuous evaluation of the campaign — feedback loop

IOSH used feedback to modify resources, and retested them as they were redeveloped. A set of indicators was designed that helps measure the campaign's success and keep track of its impact. This could be used as an example by those wishing to measure the success of similar initiatives.

The NTTL campaign also raised awareness of silica dust through its initiative 'Tackling respirable crystalline silica: a cross-industry commitment'. As part of the commitment, IOSH surveyed 36 pledge signatories to see what actions had been taken to tackle silica dust, with the majority of respondents saying that IOSH's campaign resources had proved useful.

The survey also revealed that a number of participants are eliminating the risk by removing or substituting silica-containing materials and considering mechanisms for controlling dust at source. Over

70 % are also actively reviewing contractors' risk assessments for potential silica dust exposure and controls.

2.7 Transferability

The campaign can be adapted internationally. Actions are transferable to other countries and sectors. NTTL is an international campaign to raise awareness of occupational cancers. IOSH supports the hosting of events relating to NTTL and occupational cancer, for example by providing occupational health experts to speak at IOSH branch or group events, as well as at campaign supporter or pledge signatory events.

2.8 Further information

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3 References and resources

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