

Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards 2023–2025

CASE STUDY



Comprehensive programme to support the health of employees working in digital environments

ORGANISATION/COMPANY

Service Facility for the Ministry of the Interior

COUNTRY

Czechia

SECTOR

Government services

TASKS

Computer-based work for managing, coordinating and monitoring police department operations and performance

Introduction to the case study

The Service Facility for the Ministry of the Interior, specifically its specialised methodology group, has proposed the VISIO project. In cooperation with experts in optometry and healthcare, the project includes neurovisual training, stress management techniques, nutritional counselling, and physical exercises.

Employees of the National Operations Centre of the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic work long hours with computers and ensure continuous operations. As a result, they are prone to visual problems, stress, and musculoskeletal disorders. For this reason, the pilot project was launched specifically for the staff of this centre.

Background

The Service Facility for the Ministry of the Interior is a state contributory organisation. The specialised methodology group was set up to carry out methodological lecturing and training activities in the field of health, fitness and mental resilience for employees of the Ministry of the Interior, the fire brigade, the police and other security forces.

The National Operations Centre is the top-level department of the President of the Police. It provides operational management and coordination of the performance of police departments.

Problems identified

National Operations Centre staff, who work 24-hour rotating shifts and spend long hours at computers, are facing prolonged exposure to eyestrain and stress risk factors. This results in frequent vision problems, headaches, musculoskeletal disorders and loss of concentration, leading to an overall increase in work-related stress. In addition, they experience sleep problems and disturbed circadian rhythms, which have a negative impact on their overall wellbeing and performance.

Aims

The objective is to design and test a comprehensive programme to support the health of employees working in digital environments. Priority is given to neuro-visual training, prevention of musculoskeletal disorders, stress management and sleep optimisation.

What was done and how?

The Home Office Service Establishment, in collaboration with experts, has developed the VISIO project to promote the health of employees in the challenging conditions of digital work. VISIO is designed primarily for employees who spend long hours at computers and are exposed to increased visual stress.

The VISIO project is implemented in cooperation with:

- experts from DYNAOPTIC, specialising in sports and dynamic optometry, vision testing and training;

- experts from the Petr Havlíček Centre, specialising in analyses of body composition, metabolic rate and the autonomic nervous system;
- supervisors from the State Medical Institute and the Health Insurance Company of the Ministry of the Interior.

As part of the VISIO project, a comprehensive pilot programme was implemented at the National Operations Centre from October 2023 to July 2024 to improve the health status of employees working 24-hour rotating shifts. A group of 25 selected individuals participated in regular visual training, physical exercise, one-on-one consultations with nutritionists and physiotherapists, and training on ergonomics and healthy lifestyles. A control group was formed consisting of five individuals who did not take part in the programme.

The active participants engaged in the following activities, while input and output measurements were recorded for evaluation purposes.

Neuro-visual training:

- use of the EYEBAB VT platform, a dynamic online portal for vision therapy and physical and mental training through apps and exercises;
- viewing of instructional video for eye training;
- provision of relaxation glasses with molecular hydrogen.

Mental training and stress reduction:

- participation in individual coaching sessions focused on optimising stress management;
- use of the MUSE and MAX PULSE devices to measure biological and neurobiological signals to assess the level of stress on the body and the level of relaxation and concentration;
- practice of relaxation techniques and management of unwanted thoughts;
- application of sleep optimisation techniques.

Nutrition and movement:

- education on healthy eating and drinking;
- measurement of body composition and heart rate variability;
- development of individual exercise programme aimed at strengthening the musculoskeletal system and reducing stress.

Physiotherapy:

- provision of individual therapy for participants with musculoskeletal issues;
- recommendation of exercises and other procedures.

During the project, photo and video documentation was carried out to create extensive support material. The project results were presented in May 2024, followed by the widespread distribution of educational and training materials, including promotional videos, training video sequences and e-books.

What was achieved?

Thanks to the project, significant improvements have been seen in the following areas:

- **improved vision:** measurements showed better visual capabilities;
- **stress reduction:** brain activity measurements documented significantly lower stress levels;
- **improved recovery:** monitoring confirmed better sleep quality and overall physical recovery;
- **pain relief:** assessments demonstrated reduced muscle tension and improved joint mobility;
- **prevention of future problems:** evaluations indicated lower risk of further health problems and occupational diseases due to lifestyle changes and good ergonomics.

Comparing the results of input and output measurements before and after training, the group that exercised regularly showed significant improvement, while the control group tended to remain the same or worse.

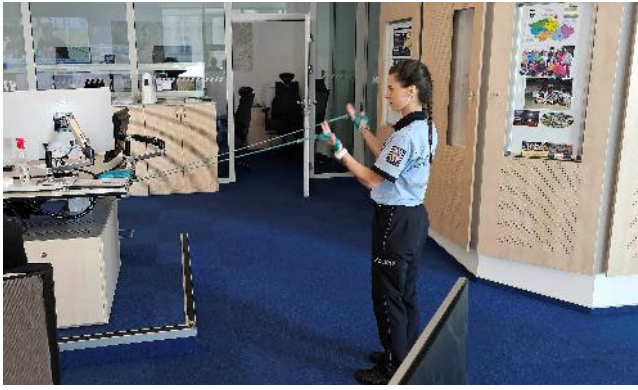


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Success factors

- In 2023 and 2024, about 1,000 employees of the Ministry of Interior and members of the security forces in Czechia were trained in the VISIO project.
- The Minister of the Interior supports the gradual implementation of the project within the Ministry of the Interior.
- The VISIO project training materials are also part of a mobile application for members of the security forces (POHOV) and on the Police of the Czech Republic's internal workspace.

A positive factor is the implementation of the VISIO methodology in the EU Strategy Group of Operation Centres.



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Key features of good practice example

- The VISIO programme presents a holistic approach that promotes the health of workers working prolonged periods with computers and covers relief from eyestrain and musculoskeletal problems, stress management, proper nutrition and sleep hygiene.
- The VISIO programme has the potential to be used in various forms by more than 100,000 employees working at the Ministry of the Interior and in the security forces.
- The VISIO programme was developed in cooperation with healthcare experts and uses modern digital technologies that are free and accessible to all employees.

Further information

Further information can be found at:

www.optimazsmv.cz

Transferability

The VISIO programme could easily be adopted by other government ministries in the EU. As a whole or in part, the programme would also be suited for companies where workers are exposed to risks of eyestrain, stress, sleep deprivation and musculoskeletal problems from prolonged work at computers.

Costs and benefits

Costs

The direct costs of the project included the development of educational materials, training and expert consultations. The benefits include reduced sickness absence, increased work performance and improved overall employee wellbeing, which in the long term exceed the initial investment.

Benefits

Employees benefit from access to free advice and training materials on how to look after their health and wellbeing.

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