

Platform for Health and Wellbeing pilot study: provision of weight management support via the workplace



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1 – Introduction

The role of the workplace as an opportunity for improving health has been highlighted in recent reports¹. The East Midlands Platform for Health and Wellbeing is a network of private, public and voluntary sector organisations working to improve health and reduce obesity. Member organisations commit to undertake actions to improve health and wellbeing of employees, individuals and/or communities. As part of Slimming World's commitment, this pilot assessed the merits of providing weight management support via the workplace at two large regional employers.

2 – Methods

278 British Gas and Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust employees were offered 12 weeks' support at either a bespoke workplace group or established community-based Slimming World group. Weight change was recorded weekly. Dietary and physical activity behaviours, along with aspects of psychological health were assessed by questionnaire pre and post-programme.

3 – Results

121 employees (meeting inclusion criteria) joined a workplace-based group and 114 a community-based group.

Weight and attendance: Mean joining BMI was 32.4kg/m². 138 (59%) participants completed the programme (attended within final 4 weeks).

	Pre-intervention	Post-intervention	p-value
BMI	32.4 kg/m ²	31.1 kg/m ²	P<0.001
Weight	87.4 (± 17.8)kg	84.1 (± 17.8)kg	P<0.001
% Weight change	–	-3.9%	P<0.001

Behaviour changes: Participants who completed both questionnaires (n=87), reported positive changes in dietary and physical activity behaviours (all p<.001) (figure 1), and psychological health (mental wellbeing, self-worth and self-esteem, all p<0.05).

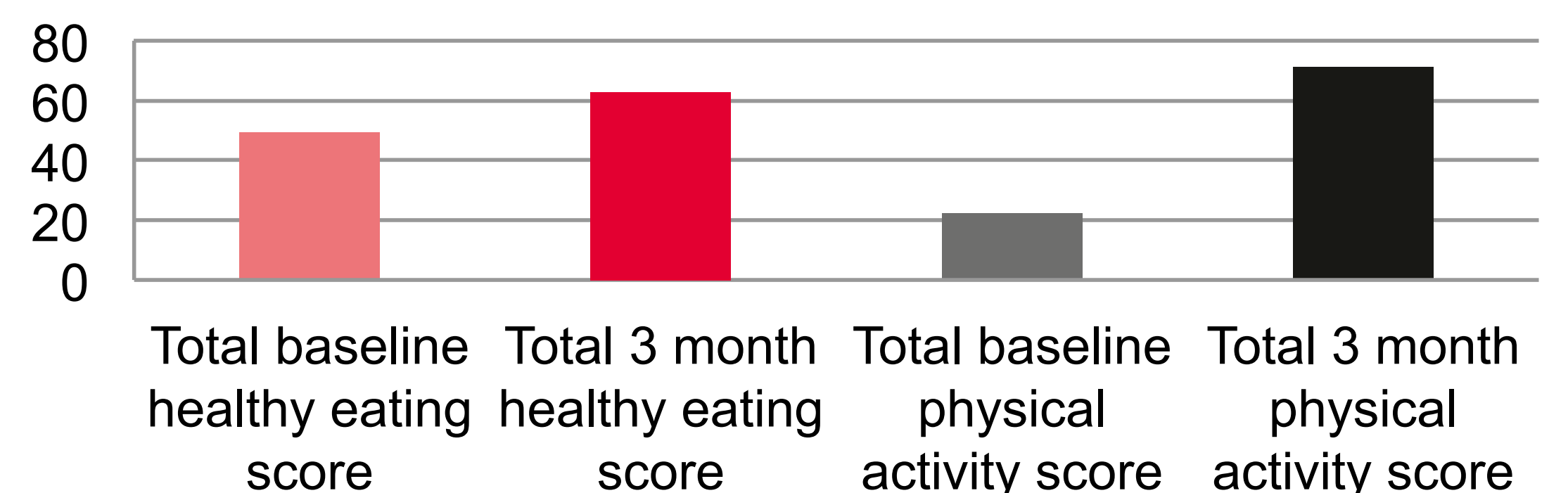
There were no significant differences between worksite and community intervention groups for any outcomes.

4 – Conclusion

Providing weight management support via the workplace significantly reduced weight of participants (-3.9%). Completer analysis also revealed positive changes in healthy eating habits and activity levels, and also importantly psychological health, which may impact on working life. The Slimming World programme works effectively within both the work setting and via community-based provision when employees are recruited via the workplace.

Reference: ¹ Measuring Up: The Medical Professional Prescription for the Nations Obesity Crisis, available from www.aomrc.org.uk

Total healthy eating and physical activity score pre and post-intervention



Responses to questions on diet (eating take-away/junk food, eating unhealthy snacks, eating the recommended 5-a-day fruit and vegetables, cooking meals from scratch and eating a large variety of foods) were combined to give a total healthy eating score. Responses to physical activity questions (watching TV, avoidance of strenuous or moderate activity, going out for walks a lot and walking during everyday activities) were combined to give a total physical activity score.