

MAYOR OF LONDON

THE LONDON HEALTHY WORKPLACE CHARTER ACCREDITATION GUIDE

For employers

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	5
CHAPTER 2 THE BUSINESS BENEFITS OF ACCREDITATION WITH THE LONDON HEALTHY WORKPLACE CHARTER	7
CHAPTER 3 THE CHARTER AWARD LEVELS AND STANDARDS	9
CHAPTER 4 THE PROCESS OF APPLICATION, VERIFICATION AND ACCREDITATION	11
CHAPTER 5 FAQs	19
APPENDIX A – VERIFICATION DAY EXAMPLE PROGRAMME	23
APPENDIX B – VERIFICATION DAY FACTSHEET FOR EMPLOYERS	25

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This London Healthy Workplace Charter guidance provides information on the role of local workplace health leads and verifiers. It should be read in conjunction with the London Healthy Workplace Charter self-assessment framework which can be found on the charter webpage: london.gov.uk/healthyworkplace.

Local workplace health leads (and possibly verifiers) will also want to familiarise themselves with the accreditation guidance for employers which includes FAQs (also available on the charter web page).

CHAPTER 2

THE BUSINESS BENEFITS OF ACCREDITATION WITH THE LONDON HEALTHY WORKPLACE CHARTER

The business benefits of having a healthy, fit and committed workforce are now clearly recognised. These include lower absence rates, fewer accidents, improved productivity, staff who are engaged and committed to the organisation and fitter employees as they grow older. Organisations that commit to wellbeing can expect improved business outcomes.

The London Healthy Workplace Charter provides a framework for action to help employers build good practice in health and work in their organisation. The charter supports all types of employers, large and small, from the public, private or voluntary sectors. Using the self-assessment framework your organisation can find out what it is already doing that fits into the ethos of the charter as well as where it might need to improve. The framework reflects best practice and is endorsed nationally by Public Health England.

By using the charter, organisations can benefit from:

- the ability to audit and benchmark against an established and independent set of standards – identifying what the organisation already has in place and what gaps there may be in the health, safety and wellbeing of employees.
- developing strategies and plans – the charter provides a clear structure that organisations can use to develop health, safety and wellbeing strategies and plans.
- recognition - the award helps to strengthen the organisation's brand and reputation and supports sales and marketing activities. Accredited organisations will receive a logo helping them to stand out as employers. Representatives will also be invited to an exclusive awards ceremony at City Hall.

CHAPTER 3

THE CHARTER AWARD LEVELS AND STANDARDS

- **Commitment** is the entry level to the charter and is designed to build and recognise good practice in organisations that have recently started to develop their employee wellbeing programmes. This level is completed online.
- **Achievement** is the intermediate level, building and recognising good practice in organisations that have a more advanced and comprehensive approach to employee wellbeing. These organisations will be able to look back and show progress over time, demonstrating how they have developed and evolved their approach. Senior management must show continuous support to employee wellbeing at this level.
- **Excellence** is the advanced level of the award. It builds and recognises good practice in organisations that are well on the way to embedding fully employee health and wellbeing in their corporate culture and values. For this level of award, organisations should demonstrate comprehensive wellbeing programmes with widespread involvement of employees.

We recommend that organisations applying for a charter award for the first time submit an application at either commitment or achievement level. Those wishing to apply directly at excellence level should speak first to their local borough workplace health lead.

The charter standards:

- Corporate support for wellbeing
- Attendance management
- Health and safety requirements
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Tobacco
- Physical activity
- Healthy eating
- Problematic use of alcohol and other substances

Full details of each standard can be found in the self-assessment framework: london.gov.uk/healthyworkplace.

CHAPTER 4

THE PROCESS OF APPLICATION, VERIFICATION AND ACCREDITATION

Please note: organisations applying for a commitment level award need only complete steps 1-3.

Step 1: Signing up

To register interest in the charter please sign up at london.gov.uk/healthyworkplace or email londonhealthyworkplace@london.gov.uk. Your contact details will be forwarded to your local workplace health lead who will usually be based in your local authority public health team. If you decide to apply for charter accreditation your local lead will advise you on the self-assessment process and its findings. They should also give you guidance as you develop your evidence portfolio and your approach to workplace wellbeing. By signing up you will receive the charter's quarterly newsletter and invitations to workplace health seminars.

Step 2: Reviewing your organisation against the London Healthy Workplace Charter self-assessment framework

Once you have decided to apply you need to carry out a review against the [self-assessment framework](#) for your organisation. This will provide you with a situation analysis and will help you to identify the strengths of your current approach and any gaps and areas for development. Your self-assessment will help you to determine which level of award would be the most appropriate to apply for.

The self-assessment framework includes links to a wide range of resources which can help you develop your health and wellbeing policies and processes. You usually get the best results when a representative group of an organisation's employees carries out the self-assessment. As it is a self-assessment, 'honesty' is essential to give you an accurate picture of your organisation's current approach.

If you are based on more than one site, you may assess each site separately or as a whole organisation. This will determine how your organisation applies for the charter. We recommend you discuss your approach with your local borough workplace health lead before making this decision.

Step 3: Applying for and receiving a commitment award

All applications for at commitment level should be submitted online using the editable form found at london.gov.uk/healthyworkplace. You will also need to supply supporting evidence (the self-assessment framework lists possible examples). There are also online case studies of organisations that have been accredited at commitment level to help you think through your application and evidence.

Following your application we will notify you within four weeks of the outcome. If you are successful you will receive a logo for use on your organisation's stationery/ other materials. All applicants will be given feedback, including advice on next steps, regardless of the outcome.

Do keep a copy of your submitted text and accompanying evidence for future preparation towards the next levels of the London Healthy Workplace Charter.

Step 4: Applying for an achievement or excellence award

Applications for achievement and excellence awards are assessed by a team of verifiers. These volunteers who are experts in workplace health and wellbeing. They interview the team representing your organisation at a verification day and make recommendations on the level of your award.

It is important that the assessment process is robust, evidence based, fair, consistent and transparent. Verifiers are independent and impartial. They are guided only by the evidence presented and their engagement with your organisation's representatives during the assessment and verification process.

Verifiers' approach to working with organisations includes:

- celebrating the success of what has been achieved to date
- encouraging organisations to progress further
- providing supportive advice and advocacy
- encouraging the organisation to sustain achievements and to develop further

Completing the verification scorecard (london.gov.uk/healthyworkplace)

To be accredited at achievement or excellence level you will need to complete an application form known as a verification scorecard. Your local workplace health lead will send you a scorecard for the level for which you are applying. This is then signed off by your local borough workplace health lead before submission to the GLA. The scorecard brings together information about the organisation's work from all involved in the application and verification process. The information provided is confidential and will only be seen by the London Healthy Workplace Charter team at the GLA and by the verifiers as part of the verification day. It is made up of three sections:

- Information about your organisation (to be completed by you)
 - Evidence review (to be completed by you, and with comments from your local workplace health lead before submission. More details are below)
 - Verification discussion pages (to be completed by the verifiers on verification day)
-

Evidence review:

To be completed against all eight charter standards:

Box for testimonial about commitment level: for you to briefly describe how your organisation meets the commitment level standards for the charter.

Not/partially/fully met or N/A column: for you to indicate the degree to which your organisation meets the requirements of the standard. Please use 'NM' (not met), 'PM' (partially met), 'FM' (fully met) or 'NA' (not applicable).

Evidence comment column: for you to provide a sentence or two summarising the evidence you will be presenting on verification day to show your organisation meets the standards for achievement or excellence. You must have shown this evidence to your local borough workplace health lead.

Comment column for local borough workplace health lead: to add any comments from his/her perspective about your organisation's evidence.

BENEFITS OF USING A SCORECARD

- It follows good practice in assessment processes – as used in assessment and development centres
- It brings together the input and contributions from all involved in the verification process (the applicant organisation, the borough workplace health lead and the verifiers) into a single verification document in order to create a streamlined and integrated application and verification process
- It supports all involved in the verification process to ensure that they are covering the areas they need to cover, asking questions about the relevant issues and considering the relevant strengths/development areas, thereby ensuring consistency across all organisations being verified
- It ensures that each verifier has a chance to provide their independent opinion and that all these opinions are taken into account in the final assessment of the applicant organisation, thereby assuring rigour in the verification process

Collating your evidence portfolio

As well as completing the verification scorecard you should compile a portfolio of evidence to show all the good things that your organisation is doing to promote and protect staff health and wellbeing. It should be put together in a way that allows those who are reviewing this evidence on verification day to understand it easily.

There are many ways of presenting evidence for verification, for example: examples of relevant policy documents, notes of meetings, posters, flyers, pictures, video clips, presentations, etc. These can be presented electronically, in hard copy form, or both. The self-assessment framework provides useful examples of evidence you might bring.

Where you have evidence of participation rates, evaluation of activities or hard and soft benefits to the organisation, please include these.

You might want to consider setting out your evidence portfolio in line with the eight charter standards.

You might develop a hard copy portfolio within a file or files, divided on a charter standard basis to bring to the verification day. If you are creating an electronic portfolio then you might create a folder for each of the standards into which evidence for that standard can be placed.

If you are applying to the charter for the first time at achievement level then you will need to bring additional evidence to support the commitment standard. Please clearly distinguish the different levels in your portfolio. Use of file dividers is fine, so that all the evidence on for example corporate support is in one place but separated for each level of award. You can use a similar structure for electronic folders.

If you negotiate with your workplace health lead to apply to the charter for the first time at excellence level you'll need to bring evidence for all three charter levels to the verification day, separated out as above.

THINKING ABOUT HEALTH INEQUALITIES IN YOUR ORGANISATION

The Mayor has statutory duties to promote improvement in Londoners' health and a reduction in health inequalities. This is done through the Mayor's Health Inequalities Strategy and other strategies and policies including the London Healthy Workplace Charter.

Evidence shows that people in lower paid jobs are more likely to experience poor working conditions. In addition, lack of control and reward at work has been shown to be more common amongst this group and has a critical impact on a variety of stress-related disorders. The requirements of the charter will enable improvements for all employees in the working environment. It is useful to consider lower paid workers in particular when thinking how you take forward the charter requirements and present your evidence.

Step 5: Applying for verification

When your evidence portfolio is complete, you should invite your local borough workplace health lead to review it. Once they have confirmed that the evidence is appropriate and sufficient for the charter level you are seeking they will 'sign off' the portfolio and confirm your participation in the verification process.

Step 6: The verification process

Your organisation will be invited to a verification day at City Hall to present your evidence and receive constructive feedback from a group of independently trained experts in employment and health (the verification panel). The verification day is not an audit – we know that organisations seeking a charter award are doing so voluntarily. As a consequence every aspect of the verification process is supportive, constructive and developmental in nature. In order to gain the maximum benefit from the verification day we suggest that at least two (but not more than four) people from your organisation come and take part. Each one of them should be able to describe what your organisation has done in order to meet the charter standards.

The verification panel

A series of 'stations' are created – one for each organisation taking part in the verification day. The station is an area where the organisation can display its health and wellbeing activities. This can be in hard copy form – files, posters, leaflets, pictures of activities, – or electronically, using a laptop(s) to display policies, photos, videos, the intranet site. The representatives of each organisation will remain at their station, and will be visited by the members of the verification panel for detailed discussions on their work.

For more details on verification day please see Appendices A and B.

Step 7: Finding out about your award

You will receive notification of the outcome of the verification process within three working days. You will also receive feedback from the verifiers highlighting the strengths of your approach and any suggested areas for further development, especially those that will lead you to the next level of attainment.

Step 8: Moving forward

The London Healthy Workplace Charter is developmental in nature, with each phase of the process designed to help organisations develop their approach to wellbeing at work.

If your organisation has received an achievement award and wants to progress to excellence you should use the feedback from the verification process as a developmental 'to do list'. Once these issues have been addressed and are firmly in place you can apply for verification at the next level. Normally it would take between six and 12 months for these new developments to become embedded in your organisation's culture. Once your local borough workplace health lead has signed off the evidence to this effect you can apply for verification.

CHAPTER 5

FAQS

Q. How much time does it take to complete a charter application?

A. The time commitment required will vary according to the size of your organisation and the level of accreditation for which you are applying. It will also vary according to how easy it is to access evidence, for example staff surveys, evaluations, measurable outcomes. You should allow a time period of at least two to three months to gather your evidence.

Q. How much does it cost to apply for the charter?

A. The charter is currently free of charge, as is the support provided by your local borough workplace health lead. Please be mindful that verifiers give their time voluntarily to support organisations and that verification days cost money to run. Therefore please let the organisers know as soon as possible if you can't make it.

Q. How do we engage senior management support?

A. Corporate support for wellbeing is one of the charter's key themes. Making the business case within an organisation for workplace health can include using statistics from National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) business case calculators for physical activity, mental

wellbeing and stopping smoking, sickness absence and presenteeism. You might use OH referrals including counselling, cost of disputes/attrition, evidence from wellbeing at work interventions, results of staff surveys, data from employee engagement and change management forums, HSE management standards, health at work research, data and evaluations from training programmes.

Q. How do we find evidence across all sections required?

A. For a larger organisation different departments will have data on each of the specific standards. You should therefore set up a working group made up of representatives of the appropriate areas of work, for example HR, OH, H&S (and public health if a local authority) to take ownership of the charter application and to support the process of gathering evidence.

For a smaller organisation evidence may be consolidated in a few key documents, such as a staff handbook and induction material. How the organisation communicates with its employees might also differ, for example greater use of noticeboards or staff meetings. Photographs and other types of media are as valid as formal documents.

Q. What happens if my organisation is considered borderline between verification levels at a verification day?

A. If the verifiers agree you're a borderline case they can request additional evidence. The central programme may then interview you. The length of this meeting depends on how much outstanding evidence there is.

Q. What if I am not happy with the decision following verification day?

A. If you are not happy with the decision at verification day you can appeal stating your reasons and emailing londonhealthyworkplace@london.gov.uk. The central programme team will try to resolve the issue in the first instance in collaboration with the local borough workplace health lead.

If the problem cannot be satisfactorily resolved an external verifier will be approached to offer independent advice.

Q. How long does charter accreditation last?

A. Accreditation will last for five years, after which organisations will need to reapply. In order to maintain the London Healthy Workplace Charter award, the organisation must prove they have at least maintained the levels they achieved.

APPENDIX A

VERIFICATION DAY EXAMPLE PROGRAMME

Venue: Greater London Authority, City Hall, the Queen's Walk, London SE1 2AA

9:30	Organisations set up tables with evidence
10:00	Plenary: welcome and overview of the day
10:10	Organisations present a brief description of themselves to the verifiers and the other organisations (maximum five minutes per organisation) Verifiers introduce themselves to the organisations
10:30	Verification session one Verifiers will spend up to 90 minutes with each organisation
12:00-13:00	Lunch and shared learning for organisations
13:00-14:00	Verification session two Verifiers will spend up to 60 minutes with each organisation
14:00-14:30	Employers pack up and complete evaluation form.

APPENDIX B

VERIFICATION DAY FACTSHEET FOR EMPLOYERS

Location

The day will take place at City Hall. Please give yourself five to ten minutes to get through security on the day.

london.gov.uk/city-hall/location-map

Please arrive by 9:30am to set up your organisation 'station'.

Purpose of the day

The verification day gives each organisation a chance to present evidence and get constructive feedback from a group of independently trained experts in health and employment. It is also an opportunity to compare your own wellbeing processes with those of other organisations.

What will be provided?

Each organisation will have their own table to display materials on and set up their laptops. Wall space can be used for posters, photographs, etc. There are also plenty of mains sockets for laptops and internet access/Wi-Fi will be provided.

There will be lunch and refreshments.

What do you need to bring?

- Your portfolio of evidence, in electronic or hard copy form, or a mix of both. Please refer to the London Healthy Workplace Charter verification scorecard. The verifiers will direct their questions according to the accreditation level you are seeking. It might be useful to have evidence of the preceding levels to hand to support a fuller response.
- Two to four representatives from your organisation who are aware of what the organisation has done to develop health at work. It is recommended that one person can act as the voice of the employee. That means being able to describe how the different policies and procedures are understood by staff and make a difference to the culture of the organisation.
- A laptop (if you are using electronic evidence)

Planning your organisation's introduction

This provides the context and setting for the health and wellbeing initiatives and activities that you will discuss later in the day.

Introductions should last for a **maximum of five minutes** and can be based on the organisation introductory form completed as part of the verification scorecard. You will not be asked to repeat this exercise during the day.

In your introduction, you may wish to cover things like: the size of your organisation, the number of employees, whether it is based on one site or on multi sites, a brief description of its core business (if not obvious), any other information that assists in describing the organisation's area of work and perhaps the key factor that led to the introduction of your health and wellbeing programme.

The introduction can be provided in any format you like, for example, via a poster, a short film/video, a description by one or more of your representatives or any other format that is suitable. We will provide a laptop for presentations. Whatever you use must be clearly audible and visible to a fairly large group of people.

What will happen at the two verification sessions?

Verifiers will interview your organisation's representatives at your 'station'. This is an opportunity to present evidence and get constructive feedback from independent employment and health experts. Two interviews will take place. Verifiers will operate in pairs, asking questions based on the charter level you are seeking and their particular areas of interest and expertise. They will be briefed on your organisation before the session and will want to know how your evidence fits into your wider organisational context and how successful and sustainable your initiatives are.

Please note not all evidence will be looked at on the day as this has already been verified by your London workplace health lead.

