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## *HEALTH ISSUES THAT AFFECT HEALTH AND WELLBEING*

The purpose of this assignment was to identify the health issues which affect the health and well-being of a defined working population and discuss if and how health needs are being met by national, regional and local policy. The Health Development Agency (Cavanagh and Chadwick, 2005) framework for assessing the health needs of a community was used to guide the process and Stewart's (1982) Model was used to aid a systematic approach to the analysis. For the purpose of this health needs assessment, depth and breadth are limited by wordage and consequently the focus will be on the priority health and social issues for the defined community and will only tackle the first three steps of the framework (Cavanagh and Chadwick, 2005) and will highlight two priority health needs. It will conclude by discussing one of these issue found in the "community" with recommendations for a possible beneficial public health intervention.

From this analysis two health needs have been identified in the "community"; obesity and mental ill-health although there are many others that could arguably be priorities such as "binge drinking". The work place is considered an appropriate setting for health promotion on both of these issues (DOH 2004a DOH 2004b, DOH 2008) and Beattie's Model (1993) would guide the practitioner in their approach to this. Although no figures are available for my particular workplace, stress leading to mental ill-health is one of the highest reasons for sickness absence in health care services (HSE, 2008) and therefore there is a compelling need for targeted evidence based action such as:-

- a) Create and implement policies that support a healthy work life balance e.g. "Improving Working Lives" an NHS Trust Policy currently in place.
- b) Provide early intervention and appropriate rehabilitation following sickness absence supported by a robust Sickness Absence Policy (HSE, 2008)
- c) Follow evidence based recommendations on the management of Depression and Anxiety (NICE 2004, NICE 2004a)
- d) Raise awareness and reduce stigma on mental health issues
- e) Carry out research to add to the limited body of evidence on effective health promotion interventions in the workplace.

Evidence suggests work can be good for health, reversing the harmful effects of long-term unemployment and prolonged sickness absence therefore improving the health of the working aged population is critical in order to secure better economic growth and increased social justice (Black, 2008).