



SESSION

Tuesday

E 1.30 pm and E 2.30 pm

Melanie Sturman

Melanie has been working as a Moving and Handling Advisor since 1998 and now works as a Back Care Advisor for Norfolk County Council (Adult Social Services). Melanie originally trained as a Registered Nurse and has worked in the acute, community and private sectors. Melanie graduated from Loughborough University in 2008, with an MSc in Back Care Management. Melanie assisted with the evidence for HOP5 and has recently published a joint paper with Charles Hancock, Loughborough University, on falls management.



Enabling individuals to remain in work: an ergonomic and rehabilitative approach

Abstract

Musculoskeletal disorders are the most common form of occupational illness in Great Britain with an average of 11.6 million days lost. Back pain is the most common MSD and accounts for 45% of all musculoskeletal disorders. During the last 10 years the Health and Safety Executive have found there is a small decline in the number of days lost through musculoskeletal disorders.

Traditionally Back Care Advisors have been involved with the implementation of policies, risk assessments, work ergonomics, problem solving and training. Albeit these strategies allow compliance with statutory legislation but they rarely focus on sickness management and enabling people to return to work.

Norfolk County Council employs a holistic approach in managing musculoskeletal disorders through early musculoskeletal rehabilitation, education, exercise and well-being. The Back Care Advisor supports Occupational Health and managers with facilitating employees return to their substantive post or appropriate redeployment. The Advisor has implemented a work exposure risk tool which has improved communication with occupational health, rehabilitation staff and GP's. The Advisor has also taken a proactive role in work place assessments and modified phased programmes and is currently working with a private rehabilitation practice in managing chronic musculoskeletal disorders.

This project has successfully reduced the number of days lost due to musculoskeletal disorders and enabled employees to remain at work through appropriately managed and resourced phased return programmes.