

Buses For Better Health

Can individual & group lifestyle medicine interventions improve health and reduce sickness absence rates amongst bus drivers?

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Background



Drivers at Go Southwest are routinely offered individual 15-minute lifestyle medicine consultations at their mandatory DVLA license renewal medicals. "Fit For Work" group clinics were co-designed with managers with the aim to support behaviour change and reduce sickness absence rates.



Individual Lifestyle Medicine Appointment Pilot

- Between December 2023 - January 2024, 44 drivers were offered an individual lifestyle medicine consultation. 43 (98%) attended 1 declined. 35 drivers (81%) completed the initial feedback.
- Between January 2024 and September 2024, a further 65 drivers attended individual lifestyle medicine consultations.
- Between August - September 2024, follow up questionnaires were emailed to all 108 drivers who had attended a lifestyle medicine consultation. 21 drivers (19%) responded.

97% self-reported planning or considering making changes.

76% self-reported having made changes.

84% had maintained behaviour change (up to 9 months after the consultation)

71% were making healthier food choices.

21% were moving more.

"Fit For Work" Group Clinic Pilot

- 11 bus drivers with the highest levels of sickness absence were invited to a "Fit For Work" group clinic.
- 7 drivers attended (64%).
- Groups were in person, lasting up to 2 hours. Discussion focussed on the pillars of lifestyle medicine.
- Drivers who attended had multiple and complex health issues. The most common issues were obesity, depression and musculoskeletal problems. Themes discussed included healthy eating, weight management, pain and causes of driver stress.
- Confidence and activation scores were collected at the start and at the end of the clinic.
- Activation score were collected on all participants. 3 participants did not complete confidence scores at the end of the clinic.

Average confidence scores increased from 6.5 to 8.2 out of 10 (27%)

Average rise in NAPC activation measure of 1 point.

This correlates with **£327** health care cost savings per attendee per year.

Potential total healthcare cost saving **£2289** per year.

NAPC National Academy of Primary Care
1 Activation - National Association of Primary Care [Internet]. [cited 2025 Apr 1]. Available from: <https://napc.co.uk/activation/>

Conclusion

Individual and group lifestyle medicine interventions may be an acceptable and impactful way to improve the health and wellbeing of bus drivers. Further analysis is required to quantify the impact on sickness absence rates. Workplace based lifestyle medicine interventions may reduce NHS healthcare costs.

Further Information

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