



European Construction Sector Observatory

Policy fact sheet

United Kingdom

No Time to Lose

Thematic objectives 2 & 4

February 2020



In a nutshell

Implementing body	Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)
Key features & objectives	Awareness campaign to get work-related carcinogenic exposure issues more widely understood and help businesses take action.
Implementation date	2014 – ongoing
Targeted beneficiaries	Industry-wide employers and employees (including construction and related sectors); industry bodies; policymakers; occupational safety and health professionals; and occupational hygienists and the public.
Targeted sub-sectors	All industry sub-sectors, with special focus on construction, manufacturing, transport and related sectors (e.g. materials, minerals).
Budget (EUR)	Not specified.
Good practice	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Transferability	★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Health and safety in the construction sector is essential. If the proper prevention and mitigation measures are not taken, construction workers face high exposure to harmful materials and dangerous situations in their workplace.

The main health and safety regulations that apply to the UK construction sector are the Construction Design and Management Regulations (2015). They transpose European directives (including the EU Directive 92/57/EEC of 24 June 1992) on the implementation of minimum requirements at temporary and mobile work sites into UK law.

Current regulations tend to focus much more on ‘safety’ than on ‘health’¹. However, health issues such as occupational cancer (workplace-related cancer) result in at least 742,000 deaths worldwide every year², which is over 44 times more deaths than resulting from work accidents³.

In fact, over 50 substances are listed as known or probable causes of occupational cancer, and one in five EU workers are at risk⁴. The total cost of cancer, as a result of previous occupational exposure, is estimated to be between EUR 4 billion and EUR 10 billion per year. That cost includes direct costs (medical treatment, transport, etc.) and indirect costs (productivity losses due to the cessation of work, etc.), and it excludes human costs (which account for over 98% of the estimated total cost)⁵. In the UK, a recent study found that almost 14,000 new cases of cancer originated from work are registered each year and that occupational cancer cause 8,000 deaths a year⁶.

To address the problem, the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health⁷ (IOSH) launched the No Time to Lose (NTTL) campaign in 2014. The campaign aims to raise awareness and provide a better understanding of occupational cancers and help business take action⁸. Prior to the campaign, an IOSH survey revealed that 80% of its members felt that the industry was not doing enough to tackle occupational health issues. This lack of action was partly explained by the lack of awareness education, and the limited resources of the industry. The NTTL campaign focuses on four key issues affecting the construction sector: diesel engine exhaust emissions; solar radiation exposure; respirable crystalline silica dust; and exposure to asbestos. NTTL has produced and distributed a wide range of informative campaign materials and has also commissioned studies on harmful exposure with a view to improve the initiative.

Since 2014, the campaign has been present in 367 events; won the support of 367 organisations from 40 countries; and convinced 130 businesses to commit to managing harmful exposures at work.

1.

General description

Launched in 2014, the No Time to Lose (NTTL) health and safety campaign has three main objectives⁹:

- Raise awareness of significant health issues that workers are facing in the UK and internationally;
- Propose solutions on a UK scale to tackle the problem – a national model that can be transposed internationally;
- Offer free, practical and tailored materials to businesses, to help them deliver effective prevention programmes.

To achieve these objectives, the IOSH developed an Action Plan¹⁰ that details the main activities of the NTTL campaign:

- Commissioning or supporting research on occupational cancer, to find out more about causes, incidence rates and prevention strategies;
- Working with policy-makers globally to promote policies to raise awareness and limit the exposure to carcinogens at work;
- Supporting a multidisciplinary approach across sectors to raise awareness, share knowledge and engage employees in solutions;
- Inviting organisations to commit to introducing policies and practices to manage the risks associated with carcinogens at work;
- Encouraging businesses to design exposure prevention measures, through responsible procurement, design, manufacture and supply;
- Helping employees to better understand the risks and integrate good practice in their work.

To support these activities, IOSH launched the NTTL campaign website (www.notimetolose.org.uk). It provides free access to:

- Information and news on occupational cancer;
- Practical resources such as factsheets, pocket cards, posters, infographics, manuals, etc.;

- Advice from six different experts;
- Information on events; and
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) opportunities.

The website also provides links to research papers (at least one of which was commissioned under the NTTL campaign¹¹), a number of real-life stories on occupational cancer, and good practice case studies. Information on how to support the campaign is also published. The IOSH has created a YouTube playlist containing all NTTL campaign videos¹².

Beyond supporting the campaign, the NTTL website provides companies with the possibility to make a pledge to tackle harmful cancerogenic exposure at work.

Once companies make such a pledge, the IOSH encourages companies to follow a six-point action plan that will enable them to:

1. Assess the risks;
2. Develop and deliver a prevention strategy;
3. Brief managers;
4. Engage employees;
5. Demand the same standards of their supply chain;
6. Report on their progress.

The number of pledges made by businesses is a key indicator for quantifying NTTL impact.

Developed in collaboration with industry experts, the NTTL campaign and support materials provide expert advice on four key topics, i.e. the top causes of cancer at work in the UK:

- Asbestos (3,909 deaths);
- Diesel engine exhaust emissions (652 deaths);
- Respirable crystalline silica (789 deaths);
- Solar radiation exposure at work (60 deaths and 1,740 new cases per year).

As the construction industry accounts for many of these cases¹³, construction companies tested the

campaign materials and provided feedback on the NTTL campaign resources throughout its implementation phases. The campaign was delivered in four phases, one for each of the four key topics addressed. A similar participative approach was taken in each phase, from campaign branding to stakeholder targeting and reach, through to stakeholder feedback and campaign improvement.

The campaign is also active on social media. The NTTL Twitter account (<https://twitter.com/NTTL/>) was created in September 2014 and it regularly uploads and shares news and other information on occupational cancer from a wide range of sources.

Another part of the communication campaign involves the participation of NTTL Ambassadors and IOSH representatives in 253 national and international events, in which they have shared information with 18,000 delegates.

International collaboration and campaign reach are also key NTTL/IOSH objectives. The aim is to use the UK campaign as a platform to develop an international campaign. Collaboration with international partners is an important part of that strategy that will enable NTTL to extend its reach worldwide.

2.

Achieved or expected results

The achievements of the No Time to Lose (NTTL) campaign are regularly presented on the NTTL website in the form of infographics. Figure 1 presents an infographic on the main NTTL results achieved over the five years since its launch.

NTTL has achieved significant international reach, winning the support of over 360 industry organisations in 40 countries. Each supporting organisation has highlighted the issues to their employees, contractors and clients. 130 companies have taken their support a stage further by pledging to manage harmful exposures at work, for the benefit of more than 500,000 employees. NTTL has also reached over 18,000 delegates at more than 250 events, with the support of IOSH members and NTTL Ambassadors and supporters¹⁴.

Figure 1: Infographic on No Time to Lose 5 years achievements



Source: No Time to Lose¹⁵

Table 1 presents the cumulative results of the NTTL campaign in more detail and on an annual basis since 2015. The data shows that the campaign's achievements have been growing steadily year on year across most indicators.

The number of supporting organisations grew rapidly in the first two years, after which the growth rate slowed to a steady 30% annual increase. There

has been a similar trend in the number of businesses pledging action.

Communication activities and achievements have followed an opposite trend, starting relatively slowly and ramping up significantly each year. This is to be expected, as the campaign's activities, content and partnerships continue to grow and multiply. It is also a clear sign that the campaign is gaining traction and having an impact. In the last year, in particular, NTTL event-based promotion activities have been scaled up significantly. NTTL website traffic has also doubled. The number of social media posts generated has quadrupled over the last two years, and by January 2020, the NTTL Twitter account had achieved 37,777 tweets and 2,495 followers.

Table 1: No Time to Lose achievements

Indicators	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Organisations supporting the campaign	110	170	221	290	367
Business pledges to manage harmful exposures at work	60	92	103	115	130
Events in which the campaign has been presented	50	109	150	170	253
Delegates reached during events (000's)	3	-	10.4	13	18
Campaign packs distributed (000's)	9	12	15.5	20	23
Website visitors (000's)	40	73	123	>120	148
Resources downloaded (000's)	25	56	72	95	118
Film views (000's)	12	21.8	28	38	52
People reached by media coverage (millions)	50	58	66	67	83
Social media impressions generated (millions)	0.6	1.8	2	6	8

Source: IOSH / No Time to Lose¹⁶

In March 2016, several companies signed an agreement to tackle exposure to respirable crystalline silica in the workplace. In November 2017, the IOSH published a report¹⁷ on their progress. Over a period of 18 months, the companies had shared examples of good practice they had implemented, as well as information on health surveillance initiatives. In addition, over 70% of the participants were actively reviewing contractor risk assessments to identify any potential silica dust exposure and ensure there were appropriate control/prevention mechanisms in place¹⁸.

International collaboration has been a major success factor that helped increase the impact of the NTTL campaign. The IOSH is collaborating with other European organisations, such as the Centre for Safety and Health at Work – FBCZR (Bulgaria) and the Society of Safety Engineers Ljubljana (Slovenia).

The purpose is to disseminate NTTL materials and create awareness in those countries. As a result of

this collaboration, a number of free NTTL campaign materials have been translated into Bulgarian¹⁹ and Slovenian²⁰ and conferences on occupational cancer have been organised in both countries.

Collaboration in Bulgaria has also gone a step further with the establishment of a Continuing Professional Development system, which is designed to increase the knowledge and competence of Bulgarian OSH professionals²¹.

The IOSH is also collaborating with other international partners. OSH partner organisations in Australia, Canada and Malaysia, for example, launched NTTL campaigns in their own countries during the second half of 2019. More roll-outs are planned around the world in 2020²². To support international campaign activities, selected NTTL campaign materials have been translated into other languages, including Albanian, Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Macedonian, Montenegrin, Serbian and Urdu²³.

3.

Perspectives and lessons learned

The NTTL campaign is proving to be successful because it is based on a consensus-led approach involving industry experts and stakeholders and provides practical solutions for organisations and their employees.

There is growing international consensus on the need to act urgently to tackle the danger of workplace carcinogens. The IOSH and its partners have focused the NTTL awareness raising campaign on four topics. i.e. the top causes of occupational cancer, each of which is responsible for a high number of deaths annually. There is a dedicated NTTL campaign on each of those topics. This approach enabled the IOSH and its partners to communicate targeted information, advice and suggest solutions to organisations.

By providing free campaign materials, the NTTL is able to maximise its global reach.

The NTTL materials and solutions are free of charge and can be easily accessed by any organisation. The purpose is to help spread the campaign messages to a worldwide audience. It is also a particularly effective way of reaching smaller businesses, which tend to have limited resources and knowledge on the danger of workplace carcinogens. This is even more important as most accidents occur within small business type of structure.

The NTTL initiative has generated an unprecedented level of engagement worldwide on occupational cancer.

To date, the NTTL campaign reach has extended to over 40 countries around the world, and the number of participating countries is continuing to grow. Over 360 organisations are now supporting the campaign and 130 have formally pledged to manage harmful exposures in their working environments. As a result, the NTTL is directly benefiting to approximately half a million employees worldwide. Further outreach through national and international events, and a range of

media channels (including social media) is also increasing year on year.

Education is the most effective way to influence companies' behaviour and culture in a way that contributes to healthier and safer workplaces for the employees.

Changes in behaviour and culture are not easy. Getting the message across, in terms of awareness raising, risk assessments and action planning, is best achieved through education. In addition, according to the Director of Safety, Health, Environmental and Quality Leadership at Norse Commercial Services Ltd²⁴, the seeds of change are best sown with the support of key people in an organisation. It is therefore vital to get the buy-in of those in leadership positions. Once empowered, the leadership can effectively initiate change from within their organisation.

NTTL features relevant campaign design, practical campaign materials, consensus building and collaborative approach, all of which are vital components for an effective global outreach strategy. They contribute to building credibility and attracting other entities to join the initiative.

The NTTL initiative has received international recognition as an excellent initiative. According to the Secretary General of the International Social Security Association (ISSA)²⁵, one of its main success factors is that it establishes and communicates a clear set of specific actions that are critical to tackling occupational cancer.

According to the IOSH's own analysis²⁶, the credibility they have gained through the campaign has motivated other organisations to work with IOSH. The same effect applies to other partner organisations involved in the initiative. Improved credibility and influence are not only beneficial for the awareness campaign itself, but also for future campaigns and network activities.

4.

Conclusion and recommendations

The No Time to Lose (NTTL) campaign has achieved a significant global reach since 2014, and it is continuing to scale up.

Public awareness of occupational cancer is relatively low, compared with other forms of the disease. The link between a harmful working environment and the risk of developing a cancer, which may take many years to manifest itself, is not always obvious to employers or employees. The broad and growing reach of the NTTL campaign is therefore a crucial initiative, which is informing and empowering employers to create healthier and safer workplaces for their employees and reduce their risk of developing cancer.

By working with the industry and adopting an educational approach, the NTTL has managed to build strong partnerships around the world and is positively engaging with, and influencing, a large and growing number of employers. Free of charge NTTL materials provide open access to all organisations (including small and medium size enterprises) and make it easier to spread the message.

The NTTL campaign is also communicating practical information, highlighting a set of specific actions that organisations can take to assess and manage health risks in their workplace.

Although it is difficult to measure the extent to which the NTTL is helping to lower the risk of occupational cancer, the campaign clearly helped the industry get a better awareness and understanding of the danger of workplace carcinogens.

Looking forward, two recommendations are suggested to help improve the NTTL impact:

- It would be relevant to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation system, to better understand the extent to which the NTTL awareness campaign translates into a lower risk

of developing occupational cancer. In doing so, useful insights and lessons could be drawn and integrated in future campaigns, with a view to generate even more impacts. Such monitoring and evaluation system could be applied worldwide to additionally generate comparable data across countries;

- Based on the success of the current campaign, the IOSH and its partners could consider widening the scope of NTTL to cover other causes of occupational cancer. Such process could be gradual, to allow for sufficient time to design and develop practical and tailored materials, as initially done for the four topics.

Overall, the NTTL campaign is rated as a '5-star good practice measure' on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high).

This score is based on the fact that the campaign has successfully achieved global scale since its launch in 2014. It has been successful in raising broad international awareness of occupational cancer, reaching half a million people to date. It provides clear and practical information and solutions for employers. Its success is also confirmed by the number of international organisations that have joined forces with the IOSH to deliver NTTL campaigns in their own countries.

The NTTL campaign is rated as a '5-star transferable measure' on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high).

This scoring is validated by the involvement of supporting organisations from 40 countries and the fact that NTTL campaigns are already being rolled out by NTTL partners in many different locations worldwide. In addition, the IOSH and its partners have translated specific NTTL materials into a number of other languages to support international campaigns and audiences.

Endnotes

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