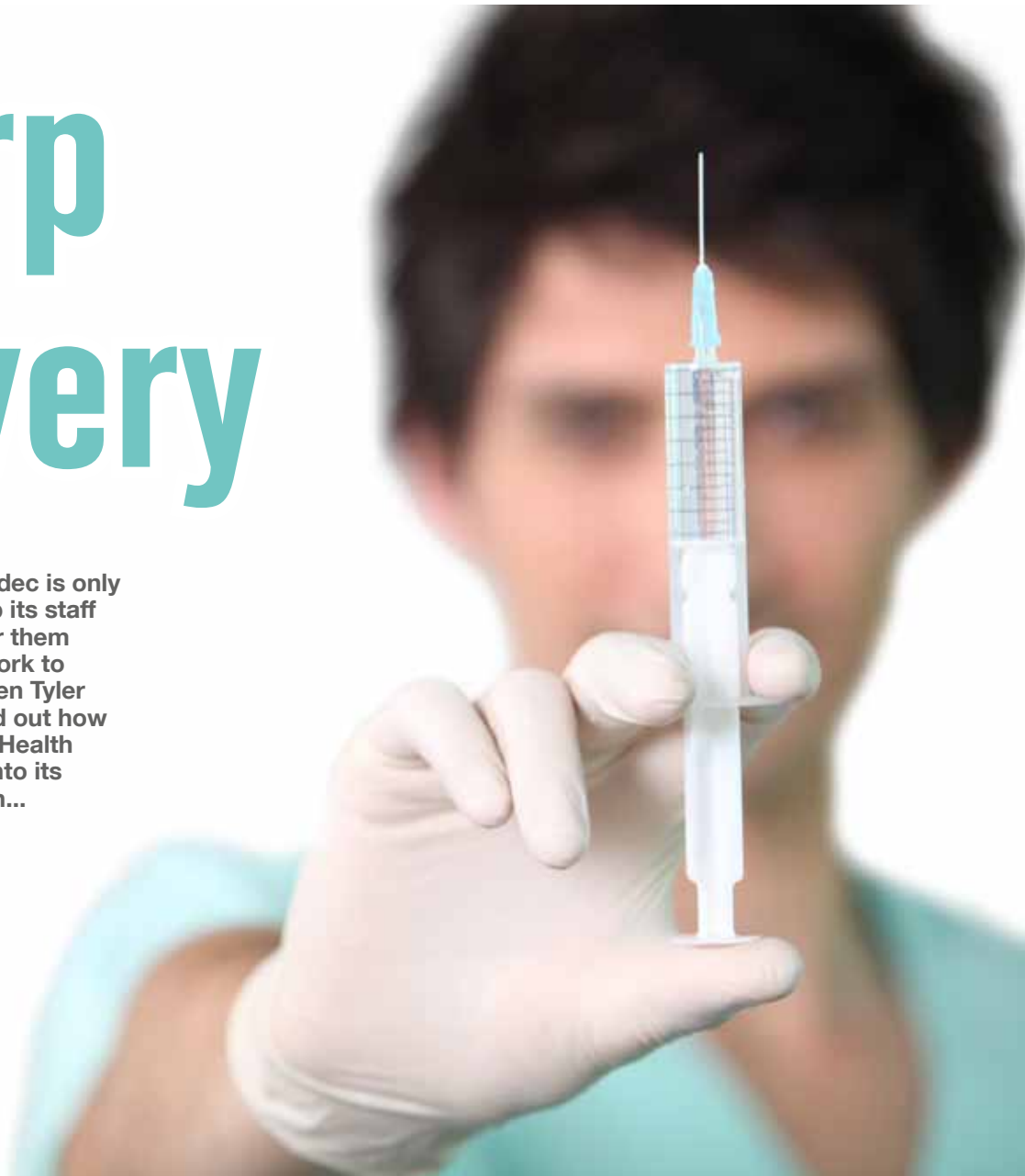


Sharp delivery

As one of the world's leading biotechnology firms, Biogen Idec is only too aware of the need to keep its staff healthy and happy in order for them to carry out their important work to the best of their ability. Stephen Tyler caught up with the firm to find out how a partnership with Corporate Health has injected added impetus into its Occupational Health provision...



FOR progressive businesses everywhere, the importance of protecting employees' health cannot be underestimated.

Whether through gym benefits or providing nutritious options in a staff canteen, companies have cottoned on to the idea that a healthy worker is likely to be more happy, productive and loyal than an unhealthy counterpart.

That fact is one taken very seriously by biotechnology firm Biogen Idec.

Headquartered in the United States but with sizeable operations around the globe, including in Britain, the firm goes to great lengths to keep its people in tip-top condition.

In the UK, the delivery of this caring approach is helped by a link-up with Occupational Health specialists Corporate Health.

The partnership allows Biogen Idec to offer everything from flu jabs to health workshops, keeping employees fit and healthy now and in the future.

The value of Corporate Health's industry-leading services and knowledge, which have been developed over a proud history spanning almost 70 years, are particularly appreciated by Biogen Idec HR Associate Susie Boutal.

She said: "Employee wellness is very central to what we do – we are a health company and it's important to keep our employees healthy, happy and informed.

"We started working with Corporate Health because they are a charitable

organisation. They are very responsive and reliable and I think they understand us as a client. They know what we want to achieve and appreciate that health and wellness are very important to us.

"The arrangement makes us feel that we are doing everything that we can to support our employees."

With around 200 UK-based staff and a further seven in Ireland under her remit, Susie works very closely with Corporate Health to deliver a comprehensive >>

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biogen idec

Occupational Health package.

As with a growing number of other businesses, Biogen Idec makes particular use of the Slough organisation's expertise in manager referrals.

If a member of staff is off work through illness, Susie calls on Corporate Health to carry out an assessment to gauge how best to manage their return, including suggesting any adjustments to their role or working conditions.

Corporate Health also helps make life more comfortable for Biogen Idec's office-based employees by completing workstation assessments and protects the workforce by providing flu vaccinations.

The proactive approach to Occupational Health is further evident in Corporate Health's delivery of on-site wellness clinics and a host of informative workshops.

Covering everything from managing stress to back and heart health, the workshops empower Biogen Idec's staff to keep themselves in fine fettle.

PARTICIPANTS' PRAISE

Speaking after attending a session on managing pressure and building resilience, one employee was full of praise for the services. They said: "Personally I am privileged to have this resource available and for the opportunity and support which Corporate Health provide.

"Their service is professional, customised and very informative. As busy professionals we sometimes neglect to source the required information or make time to maintain our health and wellbeing."

A colleague praised the training's impact, continuing: "Jane provided the training in a clear and informative way, encouraging discussion that led to a clearer understanding and altered thinking of the processes and

tools provided. Another brilliant and invaluable session!"

Positive feedback has also been provided in abundance for Corporate Health's check-ups, with Biogen Idec staff favouring the "non-judgmental advice" which allowed them to gain a better understanding of how to positively affect their wellbeing.

Another employee added: "It was a lovely and easy service and it was nice to get a quick check and make sure I was on the right track without any hassle.

"The lady was very pleasant and offered a few information leaflets. I think this should be a regular service and more people should take advantage of it as your health is key to a good work/life balance."

Biogen Idec's staff are ultimately best-placed to judge the effectiveness of Corporate Health's services and Susie believes the validation she receives from the shop floor is representative of the high esteem in which Corporate Health is held.

She said: "I am happy with what they deliver and I think our staff feel privileged to have the different resources available to them.

"Their feedback has been very positive and suggests that they have found Corporate Health's services to be professional, informative and accessible."

BUILDING RESILIENCE

Jane Drapkin, who delivers stress management and resilience training sessions for Corporate Health, believed participants were already benefiting personally and professionally from their new-found coping techniques.

She explained: "Using techniques to reduce and prevent stress means that the person can think more clearly and deal more effectively with whatever the situation is. This can

lead to them feeling more confident and worrying less, hence increasing their energy levels and performance and promoting their wellbeing.

"Line managers take away increased awareness and knowledge of how to detect stress in their teams and how to support their staff to prevent and reduce stress.

"In particular, it gives them more options other than just taking on the work of a team member who is feeling stressed and gives them the confidence and language with which to discuss stress with their team."

COMMERCIAL QUALITY

With employees seeing direct benefits from the professional Occupational Health provision, Susie is pleased with the arrangement from a more strategic level.

Corporate Health has a mission to provide clear, impartial advice focused on its clients' business objectives and the HR Associate was quick to endorse the OH provider's commercial focus.

"From my point of view, it is very useful that they are very business-orientated in that they understand what we do and know how things work," she said. "Things like being willing to come on site are a huge advantage for our people. They also keep us aware of the different services they offer, which is helpful.

"They are good at keeping in touch and planning ahead, so I know, for example, that flu jabs are set up two months in advance.

"That kind of proactivity is good from my perspective as I know that they are always thinking about the next step on our behalf." ■

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