

THE TOP THREE WORKPLACE WELLBEING WINNERS

Irish Life Assurance, Helsinn Birex and MCI took the top honours at this year's FDI National Workplace Wellbeing Awards – one of the many activities that took place across the country to mark the third National Workplace Wellbeing Day at the end of March.

The awards scheme, which forms part of the National Workplace Wellbeing Day programme now in its third year, is an initiative of Food Drink Ireland (FDI).

Irish Life Assurance was named Ireland's best large employer, Helsinn Birex Pharmaceuticals took the honours in the medium-sized category, while the best small company award went to MCI (formerly Ovation Group).

A recent study by FDI Health Strategy showed that only one quarter of Ireland's workforce takes the recommended level of exercise, with most employees believing that a healthier diet and more exercise in the workplace are likely to provide greater energy and wellbeing.

Dermot Doherty, Manager of FDI Health Strategy, said there was strong competition for the awards across all categories, highlighting a growing interest in employee wellbeing among organisations of all sizes and sectors.

"We hope that these award-winning companies will inspire an even greater number of employers to do more in this area by adopting a collaborative approach to employee wellbeing."

PROMOTING HEALTHIER CHOICES

Alan Quinlan, Principal at Mercer Health and Wellness (award sponsors) said that the majority of employers focus their HR policies, benefit spend and management time on the small employee population of ill and long-term disabled people.

"Meanwhile, those living with health risks – as opposed



The three winning companies (l-r) Joan Rock, Irish Life Assurance (large employer winner); Andrew Hayes, Helsinn Birex Pharmaceuticals (medium-sized employer winner); and Nicole Quinn, MCI (small employer winner) at the FDI National Workplace Wellbeing Day Awards 2017. (Pic: Naoise Culhane)

to problems – often go unsupported. As a result, they're in danger of crossing the wellness barrier into ill health," he added.

"This can be prevented by engaging people through smart health initiatives, education, benefits and incentives, and creating a supportive working environment and culture that promotes healthier choices. Organisations that get this right actually make savings on benefits and reduce the costs associated with managing workplace health."

Hundreds of employers across the public and private sectors again supported the initiative, which aims to improve employee health by promoting better nutrition and exercise in the workplace. They organised activities including health checks, exercise and fitness classes, nutrition talks and cookery demonstrations.