

**REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR – CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE AND
EMPLOYEES****EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLBEING ACTION PLAN****Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek Members agreement to the revised content of the refreshed Employee Health and Well-being Action Plan.

Information

2. Previous reports to Personnel Committee have routinely reported on absence performance quarterly across the Council and considered what actions may be implemented to improve attendance overall. Over time, these have been collated in the Employee Health and Wellbeing Action Plan.
3. The action plan was last considered in October 2019 when the view was expressed that whilst the action plan read well, it was unclear where responsibility lay for the successful completion of the identified actions or what the given timescale was for doing so. The document has therefore been “sharpened up” to address these shortcomings.
4. The plan is attached as an appendix and contains a comprehensive set of actions which will be undertaken in the next six months. It will be added to once the work with the new Public Health Registrar has been scoped when they start their employment at the end of January. This approach will continue to develop work already underway to better understand the context of the health of the Council’s workforce within the general population as reported to November’s Committee in the Quarter 2 Sickness Absence report.
5. A recent presentation to the Council’s extended leadership team regarding the health and well-being offer highlighted the need for further work to promote our existing provision to ensure all employees are aware of the full range of support available to them. This requirement is reflected in the engagement section of the Action Plan.
6. A key focus of activity for early in the New Year is the rolling out of various tools developed by MIND to assist employees and managers undertaken a self-assessment regarding their mental health. The launch of the tool in February is a further support mechanism to assist our workforce identify when they may be experiencing a dip in their mental health and

enable them to access a range of interventions which may prevent the situation escalating into a protracted period of absence. We aim to align the launch with the national Time to Talk initiative.

Other Options Considered

7. The Council seeks to promote a positive approach to health and wellbeing within its workforce and encourages people to take personal responsibility for their own welfare with appropriate support. The attached action plan is an iterative document and we continue to explore and research initiatives to understand what may have a positive impact and to continue to develop our existing offer.

Reasons for Recommendations

8. A healthy workforce is best placed to deliver on the Council's identified priorities as set out in the Council Plan and various departmental strategies. In addition, a comprehensive package of employee benefits, support and assistance demonstrates our commitment to our workforce to meet our aspiration to be an Employer of Choice and can demonstrate how employees are valued. This in turn can have a very positive impact on recruitment and retention in the competitive market for current and future talent.

Statutory and Policy Implications

9. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Data Protection and Information Governance

10. There are no data protection or GDPR issues arising from this report as all the information contained is generic and cannot be attributed to individual employees.

Financial Implications

11. There are no direct financial implications arising from the content of this report. However, there is clearly a cost to absence and turnover so maximising the package of support with the intention of developing a more preventative strategy has a strong business benefit to delivering this.

Human Resources Implications

12. The aim is to develop a range of preventative strategies to enable employees to be well at work and to support people to continue working when they have developed a disability or long term health condition wherever they are able to do so. In cases where employees have experienced a period of absence, the intention is to support the earliest return to work where appropriate and if necessary, to effectively manage absence rather than

allowing situations to drift. Having a healthy workforce enables the Council to maximise performance but also to demonstrate the value placed on the contribution of the workforce. Whilst there are various legal obligations placed on employers to make reasonable adjustments to enable people to remain in work, there are also strong business reasons in terms of attracting and retaining quality employees who value the approach we have adopted as a caring employer.

Public Sector Equality Duty implications

13. The policies and procedures of the Council apply to all directly employed staff whatever their protected characteristic. However, given the content of the action plan, any activity around managing absence and supporting people to remain at work potentially has a greater impact on employees with a declared disability. An equality impact assessment will be completed once the detail of the refreshed action plan has been agreed in consultation with the recognised trade unions and the Disabled Employees Support Network.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 1) Members agree to the content of the attached draft Employee Health and Wellbeing Action Plan and to the continued development of a comprehensive support package for the Council's directly employed workforce.
- 2) Members agree to receive a progress report on the delivery of the Action Plan in May 2020 alongside the Quarter 1 sickness absence report for 2020/21.

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For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (KK 08/01/20)

14. The proposals in this report are within the remit of the Personnel Committee.

Financial Comments (SES 07/01/20)

15. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

HR Comments (JP 07/01/20)

16. The range of initiatives identified in this report will enable the delivery of a wide range of support for employees of the Authority.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All