

CITY OF CARDIFF COUNCIL

**EMPLOYEE
HEALTH & WELLBEING
STRATEGY**

2016 - 2019

DRAFT

Employee Health & Wellbeing Strategy

1. Introduction & Overview

- 1.1 Against a backdrop of considerable organisational change (not just in relation to what services we deliver but also how we deliver them) , the Council's Workforce Strategy and Employee Charter set out a general direction of travel in terms of a range of workforce issues so that employees felt engaged with their work, understood the organisation's challenges and priorities, and recognised the importance and value of their contribution and involvement. The Workforce Strategy is aligned to the Corporate Plan and underpinned by the Council's vision, together with its values of Open, Fair and Together.
- 1.2 One of the priorities identified within the Workforce Strategy is employee health and wellbeing, and this has been reiterated by feedback from the Employee Survey for the Council.
- 1.3 We recognise that our employees are key to the delivery of the Council's vision for Cardiff and have a direct impact on a daily basis on our residents' experience of the Council. When our employees are healthy, motivated and have a sense of wellbeing, then the experience and outcomes for our residents improves. As a large number of the Council's workforce are also residents of the City, improving the health and wellbeing of employees will also support improvements in health and wellbeing across the City.
- 1.4 This Employee Health and Wellbeing Strategy provides a broad framework to help improve the health and wellbeing of our employees. We aim to promote and encourage wellbeing at work .Wellbeing produces positive attitudes, engagement, motivation and innovative thinking. Wellbeing is an important factor in building employee engagement and is a key issue for the Council. The Council is committed to continuing to address barriers to wellbeing as well as proactively identifying ways in which it can enhance employee wellbeing. This commitment is supported by elected members, trade unions and senior management teams.
- 1.5 We will do this through planned wellbeing initiatives, employee support mechanisms and joint working with employees, Trade Unions and other groups and networks.
- 1.6 We already have a number of policies, services and initiatives in place to support the development of a positive, healthy and motivated workforce. In line with commitments made within the Employee Charter, it will also provide a safe, secure and positive working environment and manage employees fairly and in accordance with their needs. In return, employees will be responsible for supporting and improving their own health and wellbeing, taking advantage of learning and development and other wellbeing opportunities.

2. What are we aiming for?

- 2.1 The objectives of this Employee Health and Wellbeing Strategy are to:
- Ensure employees recognise the value the organisation places on their health & wellbeing.
 - Support and maintain a safe and healthy working environment
 - Improve the physical and mental wellbeing of our workforce
 - Encourage and support our employees to develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle.
 - Support employees with health conditions to remain in work.
 - Remove barriers that prevent employees with health conditions or impairments from achieving their potential
 - Improve employee morale.
- 2.2 Delivery of these objectives will, in turn, support the provision of improved outcomes for Cardiff residents and an improved customer experience which links to objectives within the Corporate Plan.

3. What do we mean by “health and wellbeing”?

- 3.1 Previously, the link between health and work has been focussed on physical health. There is, however, a proven link between work and the physical and mental health and wellbeing of employees. This strategy takes an integrated approach to physical and mental health, with the actions identified aimed at supporting improved health and wellbeing in general.
- 3.2 This strategy recognises that some employees may have a range of health and wellbeing challenges, both mental and physical. The Council’s approach is about supporting individuals to look after their own health and wellbeing, which, in practice, could be very different for individuals across the workforce.

4. Why is it important?

- 4.1 Health & wellbeing is important because:
- It was identified as a corporate commitment for the organisation following feedback from the 2015 employee survey.
 - The last review of the Attendance and Wellbeing policy included a commitment to further develop the principle of health & wellbeing and to consider the matter holistically.
 - Both the Workforce Strategy and the Employee Charter include this as a key theme needing to be built into to everything we do and how we behave and supports the Councils values.
 - It supports the Corporate Plan priority of “ people in Cardiff are healthy” as many of our employees are also Cardiff residents.
 - It supports employee engagement at a time of significant organisational change and uncertainty.

- It reiterates the importance of the Council's legal duty under the Health & Safety At Work Act "to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all".

5. What are the benefits of implementing a Health and Wellbeing strategy?

5.1 Benefits for the Organisation;

- Supports the achievement of our key business priorities
- Improved attendance at work and a reduction in sickness absence rates (and therefore costs).
- Greater engagement from employees leading to increased productivity.
- Improved retention of employees, reducing the cost of organisational turnover and retaining skilled and experienced employees.
- Improved customer experience.
- Enhanced reputation as a service provider within the local community.

5.2 Benefits to Employees;

- Increased engagement through a feeling of being valued, listened to and treated fairly.
- Opportunity to develop potential with access to learning and development, increasing skills and potential for career progression.
- Employees feel they are more engaged in decisions that affect them and the services that they provide.
- Provides employees with the ability to deal with stress in a more effective manner.
- Access to appropriate support and information to enable employees to have the opportunity to look after their own health and wellbeing.
- Reduced sickness levels thereby reducing costs which helps retain jobs.

5.3 Benefits to our Customers;

- Improved access to services as a result of increased productivity and technological developments.
- Improved customer experience.

6. How will we make this happen?

The principles of the Employee Charter specifically include health & wellbeing and inclusion of such an objective within the PP&DR process from 2016/17 will further consolidate health & wellbeing across the organisation. There are a number of key groups who will work in partnership to deliver the Strategy. An annual Health & Wellbeing action plan will be developed, delivered and communicated throughout the organisation. Key responsibilities are as follows:

Directors /Assistant Director/Chief Officers are responsible for:

- Providing an environment that supports employee engagement, health & wellbeing (as specified in the Employee Charter)
- A safe and healthy environment for all employees at work
- Implementing safe systems of work to safeguard employee health and wellbeing.
- Accountability for their Directorates' health, behaviour and performance.

Managers are responsible for:

- Promoting an environment that encourages employee engagement , health & wellbeing and flexible working(as specified in the Employee Charter).
- Engaging with employees to promote and improve health and wellbeing.
- Risk assessing work related stress and implementing necessary control measures to prevent harmful stress and consider the necessary support mechanisms at work.
- Supporting employees through a changing and challenging economic climate – enhancing coping capacity and developing a more flexible / agile work environment.
- Recognising work related stress amongst employees and offering necessary support and putting in place control measures.
- Creating a culture that where problems arise, they are quickly identified and solutions considered.
- Monitoring workload and working hours in relation to health and wellbeing.
- Implementing effective early intervention mechanisms relating to employee absence from work.

Employees are responsible for:

- Participating in the Council's employee engagement, health & wellbeing and flexible working agendas.
- Managing their own health and wellbeing to enable them to participate fully at work.
- Engaging with management to work together to enhance employee wellbeing.
- Reporting stress and ill health to management as early as possible.
- Sharing ideas for promoting health and wellbeing in workplace.
- Taking breaks, rest periods and annual leave in accordance with legislative and policy requirements.

7. How we will measure the impact of what we are doing?

We will measure the effectiveness of the Strategy through:

- Levels and rates of sickness absence including work related stress.
- Turnover levels.
- Numbers and outcomes of Resolution policy cases.
- Response to the introduction of any new wellbeing initiatives.
- Response to health & wellbeing question in Employee survey.
- Reviewing data including sickness absence, stress related absence, support services referrals etc.
- Feedback from various sources: network forums, Intranet site activity.

8. What support and information is already in place for employees?

A. Policies , Procedures and Codes of Practice

- Attendance & Wellbeing(including Special Leave)
- Stress Policy and Risk Assessment
- Alcohol & Substance Misuse
- Smoking Control Policy
- Range of flexible working policies/procedures
- Reasonable Adjustments policy
- Resolution policy (replacing bullying & harassment and grievance policies)
- Salary sacrifice: Nursery vouchers, Purchasing Additional Annual Leave
- Dealing with Violence at Work Policy
- Domestic Abuse , Violence Against Women and Sexual Violence Policy

B. Services and Advice –

- **Occupational Health Services**
- Employee Counselling Services;
- Employee Assistance Scheme (EAP)-Care First
- Free eyesight tests for regular IT Users
- Meeting/support forums e.g. Ambassador/Cardiff Manager Forums, Employee Equality Networks
- Access to Physiotherapy services (through OHS)
- Mental Health Referral Partnership (through OHS)
- Mediation Services
- Trade Union Membership
- Signposting to external organisations e.g. Dewis Cymru directory, MIND, RNIB.

C. Other Support

- Health Campaigns
- Lunchtime workout sessions
- Active Cards
- Access to Training Courses e.g. Stress Control, Risk Assessing for Stress
- 1 to 1 Health & Wellbeing sessions
- Prayer and Reflection Room

- Cycle racks/showers in County Hall
- Credit Union
- Guided Walks info
- Range of E learning modules
- Annual Rail Card

9. What will we do next?

Overall

- Use the Corporate Health Standard as the framework to improve employee health & wellbeing, promote good sustainable practice and target key preventable ill health issues, (link to Corporate Health Standard Action Plan Activities)
- Achieve the Corporate Health Standard (bronze level for 2016)
- Encourage a network of health & wellbeing groups across the Council

Accessibility

- Ensure that information is widely available in an accessible format to all employees on health & wellbeing matters, initiatives, updates and services
- Improve the accessibility of health & wellbeing activities for all employees

Health promotion

- Promote the benefits of a physically active life
- Facilitate a number of health improvement activities
- Promote national and local health campaigns

Mental Wellbeing

- Support the Time to Change Wales initiative to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination, (link with TTCW Action Plan activities).
- Provide training to help managers/colleagues to spot signs and offer support to those with mental health/drug/alcohol related issues.
- Continue to promote availability of support and information services through Employee Counselling Service and Employee Assistance Programme.
- Raise awareness of Council's commitment to statutory obligations under Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015.

Communications & Engagement

- Hold events to raise awareness of health & wellbeing to employees.
- Develop a communication plan to maintain on going awareness of health & wellbeing issues.
- Use existing forums to share information across the Council and seek feedback.
- Hold a series of health & wellbeing focus groups with employees (including front line employees / hard to reach groups) to inform priorities for the 2017/18.action plan.
- Use the Health & Wellbeing Project Group to oversee implementation, review and modification.

These actions will be collated into an action plan which will be monitored regularly, reviewed annually and revised priorities identified as necessary.

10. Equality

10.1 The Employee Health and Wellbeing Strategy recognises that employees thrive in an environment where they are accepted and supported. To achieve this, it is important that strategy initiatives should be responsive to the specific requirements of protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion & belief, sex, sexual orientation and Welsh Language. Improving support for employees that have an impairment or disability will be a particular focus for the strategy and the positive impact on these employees will be one of the key indicators of its success.

11. Conclusion

11.1 Adoption and implementation of an Employee Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the Council is a significant step forward in meeting one of the key goals set out in the Council's Workforce Strategy and supports the principles of the Employee Charter. It provides a framework and an impetus to support the continued development of the organisation as an employer of choice and confirms that Cardiff is planning to be best placed to meet future challenges through maximising the potential of its workforce.