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**Mental Health Policy & Manager's Guidance**

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**Reason for this Report**

1. To provide the Committee with a pre-decision scrutiny opportunity, examining the Council's new draft Mental Health Policy and the Manager's Guide prior to consideration by the Cabinet and adoption by the Council.

**Context**

2. Within its Terms of Reference, this Committee has responsibility for scrutiny of the implementation of the Council's policies, including its human resources policies.
3. The previous Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee highlighted the importance of managers understanding mental health. Members re-enforced the importance of maintaining and monitoring Council-wide staff morale, and the importance of management effectiveness at identifying mental health issues in their staff.
4. Mental health conditions are widespread, with one in four adults in the UK experiencing at least one diagnosable mental health condition in any one year. The Council, as a part of its Employee Health and Wellbeing Strategy, is committed to promoting and maintaining the mental health and wellbeing of all employees through workplace practices, and encourages employees to take responsibility for their own mental health and wellbeing.

5. Mental health conditions can present in many ways and as an employer, the Council has a duty of care to employees, which includes ensuring that managers have the necessary skills and knowledge to identify the early signs of mental ill health and be proactive in supporting their staff.
6. From a business perspective, the proactive management of employees' mental and physical health can produce a range of benefits, including the reduction of sickness absence, greater staff engagement and productivity, and reduced staff turnover, recruitment and costs.

### **The Policy and Guidance**

7. The policy and guidance is a positive step towards making Cardiff a better place to work. Attached at **Appendix 1** is the draft Mental Health Policy, and at **Appendix 2** the Mental Health Manager's Guide that includes appendices on Support Contact details and an Employee Wellness Action Plan form.
8. The policy and guidance applies to all employees of the Council, irrespective of status and/or grade, except those employed directly by schools. The policy and guidance will be commended to school governing bodies.
9. The introduction of the policy and guidance will support the Council's application for the Corporate Health Standard Silver Award and is in line with the Time to Change Wales (TTCW) pledge.
10. The policy and guidance will assist the Council in:
  - Building and maintaining a workplace environment and culture that supports mental health and wellbeing and prevents discrimination.
  - Increasing employee knowledge and awareness of mental health and wellbeing issues and behaviours.
  - Reducing the stigma around depression and anxiety in the workplace, and all forms of mental health illness.
  - Facilitating employees' active participation in a range of initiatives/activities that support mental health and wellbeing.

11. The introduction of the policy and its guidance has been discussed with the Senior Managers Forum, Employee Ambassadors Forum, the Employee Networks, the Corporate Health Group and the Time to Change Wales sub group. The new policy will need to be communicated to employees and managers, and mental health training is proposed via the Cardiff Academy. The Trades Unions have been consulted and have warmly supported the policy and its guidance.
  
12. The Chair of the Committee has invited all Trades Unions to contribute to scrutiny of the Council's Mental Health Policy. The statement attached at **Appendix 3** has been received from UNISON.

### **Previous Scrutiny**

13. In June 2016, the previous Committee scrutinised the Council's new Employee Health & Well-being Strategy. The Committee welcomed the Strategy, and the many staff support mechanisms the Council had put in place, commending it as a good way forward for the Council in supporting staff further. The Committee particularly commended the Council's heralding of Time to Change Wales in recognising mental health. Members considered it was important that to retain a serious perspective on the benefits of such a strategy, and passed on constructive comments and observations for Cabinet consideration the new Committee may wish to reflect on.
  
14. Members strongly endorsed the importance of managers understanding mental health, the importance of maintaining and monitoring Council wide staff morale, and resolved in future to consider whether managers are improving in their ability to identify stress, particularly their ability to identify mental health issues in their staff.

## **Scope of the Scrutiny**

15. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance, Councillor Chris Weaver, Corporate Director Resources, Christine Salter, Chief Human Resources Officer, Philip Lenz and HR People Partner, Anita Batten will attend Committee to outline the policy and answer Members questions.
16. The Policy has been subject to Works Council and Trades Union consultation and representatives of the Trades Union have been invited to inform the scrutiny.

## **Legal Implications**

17. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

## **Financial Implications**

18. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage in relation to any of the work programme. However, financial

implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any financial implications arising from those recommendations.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee is recommended to consider the draft Mental Health Policy and Managers Guide;

- how effectively it supports Managers in identifying mental health issues amongst their staff;
- how effectively it addresses the need to maintain staff morale;
- whether it wishes to relay any comments and observations for consideration when the Policy and Guidance are considered by the Cabinet.

**DAVINA FIORE**

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14 September 2017