# Derbyshire County Council: Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2025

## *Message from Emma Alexander, Managing Director*

**Welcome to Derbyshire County Council's (DCC) workforce Wellbeing Strategy 2022 – 2025.**

Our employees are our most vital asset and are instrumental in allowing the Council to meet our stated ambition of working together with our partners and communities to be an enterprising council, delivering value for money and enabling local people and places to thrive.

The wellbeing of our employees is therefore far more than just a moral obligation or a statement that is made in a plan. The wellbeing of our people is intrinsic to our Council and People Strategy ensuring we have a healthy, content and resilient workforce. This is essential in ensuring we deliver the absolute best service we can to the people of Derbyshire across the wide variety of services the Council provides. As outlined in the Council's People Strategy we will enable and ensure the wellbeing and safety of our people**.**

**"We will ensure we have safe and enabling environments, which support the wellbeing, motivation and retention of our people. We will integrate wellbeing into our day-to-day activities to promote a positive environment where employees are engaged, energised and supported to perform and achieve to their full potential for the benefit of themselves and the organisation."**

We have a large workforce, spread across a vast geographical area delivering a wide range of roles and services both directly to the public and to support those that do. We are also in the process of changing the way we work as an organisation which focuses on delivering excellent outcomes rather than concentrating on where we deliver services from. This level of diversity means that there isn't a one size fits all solution to ensuring and enabling employee wellbeing. A range of standalone initiatives will not be enough; our approach to workplace wellbeing will be holistic and inclusive, embedded in our culture and will influence how we make decisions. Workplace wellbeing will sit at the heart of everything we do.

We recognise that wellbeing isn't just something you can put in place overnight and that it isn't something that begins at the start of the working day and ends when the working day is finished. We want our employees not just to be happy, safe and well at work but also in their life away from work, the two are not mutually exclusive and one affects the other.

We therefore wish to put in place the right wellbeing support to allow our employees to benefit from making the right choices to enhance their wellbeing in all areas of their lives.

In order to maximise the wellbeing offer to our employees, we commit to working in partnership with our other public sector partners within the Joined Up Care Derbyshire system to develop system wide approaches where possible with fair and equitable access to a range of wellbeing interventions and services.

# What is Wellbeing?

Wellbeing is increasingly talked about not just within the workplace but across the national landscape. But what actually is wellbeing, and what does it mean for employees of Derbyshire County Council?

*Wellbeing is defined in the oxford English Dictionary as* "**the state of being comfortable, healthy, or happy.**"

A government definition states, "**Wellbeing is about feeling good and functioning well and comprises an individual's experience of their life; and a comparison of life circumstances with social norms and values".**

Wellbeing in its widest sense therefore comprises a combination of good physical health, a positive emotional state and a sense of security and contribution. It is not solely about concentrating on sickness absence figures for example but is about developing a culture within the organisation which promotes the physical, mental, moral, and social and financial wellbeing of our employees and where our organisational values, initiatives, standards and practices promote this.

By identifying key factors which could affect wellbeing both in the present and the future and putting in place appropriate actions that are designed to prevent those problems from arising in the first place, we ensure we are addressing wellbeing holistically.

# The National Picture

(from HSE summary Statistics 2020/21)

- In 2020/21 1.7 million workers suffered from work related ill health (new or long standing).

- In 2020/21 stress, depression or anxiety accounted for 50% of all work-related ill health cases. 822 000 workers suffered from work related stress depression or anxiety in this period with 451,000 of these being new cases.

- The average level of employee sickness absence in 2020 was 5.8 days per employee per year, or 1.8% of working time lost with minor illness being the main reason for sickness absence in 2020. This is the lowest rate recorded however factors such as the furlough scheme, social distancing shielding and home working are thought to have had an impact in reducing this figure.

- Only 37% of organisations make efforts to promote financial wellbeing to a large or moderate extent.

- Musculoskeletal (MSK) conditions were responsible for 28% of new and long-standing cases of Ill health, 470,000 workers of which 162,000 were new cases.

- Over 84% of respondents to the 2021 CIPD Health and Wellbeing at Work  survey have observed 'presenteeism' in their organisation, over the past 12 months, and 70% have observed some form of "leaveism".

# The Derbyshire Picture

As part of our recent employee surveys in July 2020 and December 2020, we have asked colleagues how they are feeling with this question being repeated in the survey which is currently live. Our surveys indicate that as of July 2020, the significant majority of those who responded were feeling positive or very positive about their mental health. This figure had decreased slightly in the December 2020 survey but still remains a significant majority of respondents.

**The latest picture within our workforce shows that between April 2021 and January 2022** Emotional Wellbeing issues are most common reason for sickness absence during this period. This is followed by Other Musculo, Skeletal Disorders and Back and Neck problems with Covid-19 also remaining prevalent.

In terms of Accidents/ Incidents in 2020/2021, the main causes of reportable accidents were Slips trips and falls and Manual Handling.

# Our Strategy

This strategy sets out our high-level approach to ensuring the wellbeing of our employees and how this is intrinsic to the delivery of our Council Plan and People Strategy. It identifies the key wellbeing pillars that we will focus on and sets out our vision in relation to delivering a wellbeing culture within the Council. It is the steering document for delivering practical results that meet our aims and objectives.

# Our Vision

We will ensure we have safe and enabling environments, which support the wellbeing, motivation and retention of our people. We will integrate wellbeing into our day-to-day activities to promote a positive environment where employees are engaged, energised and supported to perform and achieve to their full potential for the benefit of themselves and the organisation. We will create a resilient workforce maximising our service delivery for the residents of Derbyshire.

# Implementing the Strategy

To be meaningful this strategy will reflect the key wellbeing issues currently facing the Council but also anticipate future areas of wellbeing concern. It will become an integral part of our culture where employee wellbeing is actively promoted to realise the benefits to our employees and thus the organisation and our service users. Whilst the strategy outlines our key areas of focus and our overall ambitions it will shape our overall offer to employees. It will be reviewed annually by the Wellbeing Challenge Group to make sure that it is still current and valid and that outcomes implemented to deliver the aims of the strategy are effective.

We will engage with wider stakeholders such as Trade Unions through the Wellbeing Workstream, employee network groups and other public sector organisations through the Wellbeing Systems group.

In order for our approach to be successful, this strategy assumes that everyone within the organisation will take personal responsibility for their own wellbeing and a collaborative responsibility for colleagues to embed a wellbeing culture within the organisation.

# Our Wellbeing Aims

**Aligned to our People Strategy, we will:**

- Create a safe and healthy work environment which fosters a culture of positive wellbeing, whereby the wellbeing of our people is seen as integral to everything we do.

- Improve general wellbeing for our diverse workforce and ensure that wellbeing is seen as everyone's responsibility across DCC.

- Embed wellbeing as a central part of our strategic priorities for our leaders and councillors across all functions within DCC and ensure that all are aware of our statutory obligations.

- Recognise the role wellbeing plays in the bigger picture including improving productivity, ways of working and talent attraction, development and retention, and in becoming an employer of choice.

- Provide impactful wellbeing support based on the needs of our people, using a collaborative approach.

# Wellbeing Pillars

Wellbeing is a state which is supported by a number of different areas which although separate are not mutually exclusive. As these areas support wellbeing they are referred to as the pillars of wellbeing. We have grouped these into 5 areas outlined below with an indication of the types of interventions which may be employed in each area.

## *Physical Wellbeing*

- Support people to take care of themselves and make positive steps around health in areas such as sleep, nutrition, physical activity, smoking, alcohol, and drinking enough water.
- Create an environment where people feel empowered and are educated about their physical wellbeing.
- Establish programmes for specific clinical conditions/areas of need.
- Improve our working environment and ways of working to ensure the health and safety of our employees when delivering their roles.
- Actively promote a safety culture where managers and employees take personal responsibility for their own and colleagues health and safety.

## *Emotional Wellbeing (neurodiversity, mental health)*

- Create a culture of open discussion and mutual trust around stress and mental health.
- Support individuals to better manage their psychological wellbeing and develop personal resilience.
- Provide better access to support, advice and signposting.

- Recognise the challenges faced by neurodiverse employees and actively promote a culture where neurodiverse employees are supported

## *Financial Wellbeing*

- Support individuals to become more aware of their finances.
- Reduce financial stress by helping people to better manage their finances and become more financially secure. This will include areas such as managing debt, budgeting, saving, pensions, investments and living within our means.
- Promote employment practices that avoid low pay, insecure contracts, unfair pay gaps and ensure job security while meeting organisational requirements.
- Ensure reward and benefits policies allow opportunities to support employees at all stages of their lives.

## *Moral/Social wellbeing (belonging purpose and values)*

- Improve the relationships we have with each other across the organisation.
- Build healthy, collaborative, nurturing and supportive relationships, which includes good leadership, to foster a genuine One Council approach and sense of belonging within the Council.
- Encourage community engagement to improve a sense of belonging and create strong links within the people of Derbyshire.
- Champion and promote inclusion, supporting the Council's Equality and Diversity Strategy.
- Adopt working practices that promote work/life and family balance and encourage environmental protection.

## *Digital wellbeing*

- Aligned to the Council's Digital Strategy we will ensure we are using Digital Workspace in a healthy way. When we're looking after our digital health it means we feel in control of the Digital Workspace in our lives, and it helps us do our jobs. But we don't feel overwhelmed by it and we can switch off from work outside of work hours.

- We will create a workplace culture where technology and software is there to improve how we work, places work-life balance at the heart of it (especially when working from home where it's harder to switch off) and ensures that everyone has the digital tools they need to do their jobs.
- We will make sure that employees have been properly trained on the technology they need to use to work every day. With hybrid working, the boundary between home and work can become blurred. We will put in place appropriate guidance and systems to promote good wellbeing practices.
- There are also ways the Digital Workspace can help with wellbeing, whether that's mindfulness apps or online exercise classes. We will investigate how the Digital Workspace can be utilised to support employee wellbeing.

## What Will We Do?

We will focus our wellbeing offer based on the above 5 pillars of wellbeing and within each of these areas we will consider the following 3 elements: Data, Systems and People. We will put in place an action plan with outcomes focussed within these areas using data to inform and drive what we do, to focus our approaches on the right areas and demonstrate the value of wellbeing to the organisation and individuals.

We will adopt systems to support the organisation and its employees to deliver health safety and wellbeing throughout the Council.

We will put people at the heart of the strategy, giving leaders and managers the skills and confidence to understand the links between wellbeing and effective service delivery.

We will ensure our employees have a clear understanding of their roles and the expectations of them and that they fully understand the wellbeing offer and the benefits of wellbeing not only at work but in their day to day lives. We will deliver a wellbeing culture throughout the Council.

We will ensure that we have a holistic approach to all our Wellbeing interventions that ensure we have in place proactive, active, and reactive solutions:

- Proactive interventions are those which are preventative in nature. They are designed to promote wellbeing amongst staff not currently experiencing any adverse wellbeing situations.

- Active interventions are those designed to help manage identified wellbeing issues before they become debilitating for staff and promote recovery/transition to a state of positive wellbeing.

- Reactive wellbeing measures are those that are put in place to manage an acute wellbeing situation, prevent it from becoming worse and aid employees to begin to recover to a position where active interventions to promote recovery can be utilised.

We aim to be an organisation which focusses heavily on proactive and active measures and where needed we will support through responsive measures.

## Key Areas for Deliverable Actions

- Stress and mental health

- Demographics and associated links e.g.

- Aging workforce

- Menopause

- Muscular skeletal

- The Healthy lifestyle weight management, smoking cessation, exercise, relaxation, mindfulness

- Flexible working/Modern Ways of Working

- Working conditions e.g. facilities, violence and aggression

- Work life balance

- Resilience

- Collaboration/consultation

- Visibility of HSW messaging – safety culture
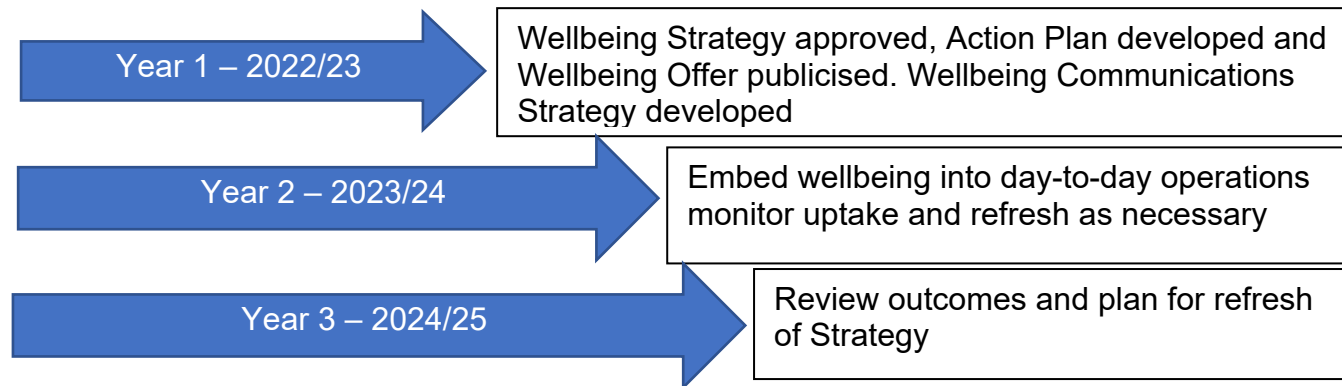
- Workforce Engagement

- Communication

- Attraction

- Financial resilience and support

- Leadership and People Development

- Psychological health

# Our Action Plan

The supporting Action Plan detailing specific wellbeing interventions will be developed for each of the 5 wellbeing pillars during the first year of the Strategy and will be implemented up to 2025. Once developed it will be reviewed and refreshed as required based on the data collected and any identified needs of the workforce.

We will develop a communications strategy that continues to promote the wellbeing offer and regularly monitor the uptake of this offer.

*The timeline for the implementation of the strategy is as follows:*

Year 1 – 2022/23 → Wellbeing Strategy approved, Action Plan developed and Wellbeing Offer publicised. Wellbeing Communications Strategy developed

Year 2 – 2023/24 → Embed wellbeing into day-to-day operations monitor uptake and refresh as necessary

Year 3 – 2024/25 → Review outcomes and plan for refresh of Strategy

# What Success looks like

Success can be determined in many ways, some of which are straightforward and obvious to measure, some of which are more difficult to quantify but are equally important in the overall development of a wellbeing culture and healthier workforce.

We will instigate a range of wellbeing metrics to ascertain the success of our wellbeing programme. We will focus not only on reactive measures such as incident and sickness rates, access to occupational health services, exit questionnaire outcomes and employee survey responses but will also incorporate proactive outcomes, such as recruitment and retention rates, and take up of wellbeing offers.

Some wellbeing benefits are more difficult to quantify such as increased productivity, better morale, and changed behaviours. We will however attempt to determine these as part of our measure of success.

Ultimately success for us will be safe and enabling environments, which support the wellbeing, motivation and retention of our people. Wellbeing will be integrated into our day to day activities to promote a positive environment where employees are engaged, energised and supported to perform and achieve to their full potential for the benefit of themselves and the organisation