

Resources and Improvement Scrutiny Committee

17th September 2020

Report of the Director Organisation Development and Policy

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Update

1. Purpose

To update the Resources and Improvement Scrutiny Committee on developments relating to the Wellbeing Strategy and its associated action plan.

2. Introduction

The Council's Wellbeing Strategy and accompanying action plan were approved in early 2019. Since then a number of the interventions within the plan have been achieved, such as the development of the Mental Health Policy and mental health first aider network. Whilst the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted hugely on the Council's capacity to fully progress some of the identified actions, employee wellbeing has and continues to be crucial throughout our response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Council has implemented a wellbeing system for employees which consists of five levels of support, ranging from general support through to more specific and specialist individual support. The introduction of a smartphone app 'Thrive' enables employees to download the app providing access to mental health support as well as signposting employees to other support which is available. Furthermore, the Council has introduced an Employee Assistance Programme, commissioned initially 6 months, providing support for employees and family members within the same household, available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week.

It has therefore been timely to review the wellbeing action plan in light of the implications arising for the workforce as a result of COVID-19 to ensure a holistic approach to health, safety and wellbeing and practical steps that can be taken to achieve improvements.

3. Aims

The purpose of the original action plan was to meet the broad aims of the Wellbeing Strategy namely:

- bring together all initiatives currently in place within the council that support and maximise the health, safety and wellbeing of employees
- ensure a safe working environment and culture of wellbeing
- clarify the roles and responsibilities for safety and wellbeing
- identify areas for development and enable improvement
- identify the measures by which we will assess whether our workplace wellbeing support and interventions have been successful and are targeted effectively

This has now been reviewed and redefined to deliver the aims of the strategy within three core areas which complement each other and enable improved clarity and more clearly defined targets:

- Systems
- Resources/People
- Data

Our focus is on not only on statutory compliance but also on ensuring a healthy and robust workforce, when considering the wellbeing of our employees.

This approach is further underpinned by the Council's moral, legal, economic and social responsibility and aims to demonstrate that the Council values all employees aligned to becoming an Employer of Choice. We aim to have an engaged, safe and healthy workforce delivering first class services for the people of Derbyshire.

4. Priorities

4.1. Short Term Focus

Our short term focus is based on three key themes:

1. Reviewing what we are currently doing.
2. Reviewing internal structures to support our wellbeing performance going forward.
3. Establishing appropriate systems to support the delivery of health, safety and wellbeing across the Council.

Reviewing our current performance is vital to provide a starting point from which our revised wellbeing journey will commence. It is important that we not only understand our current performance but that it is contextualised by comparing our performance with similar organisations both in the public and private sector. The development of appropriate and real time recording of data is a key part of the strategy, to ensure this can be analysed and fully understood to inform our decision making and actions.

In order to further develop a health, safety and wellbeing culture within our organisation, it is key that internal structures support, develop and challenge health, safety and wellbeing performance. This means not only reshaping the health, safety and wellbeing function but ensuring that all leaders within the organisation not only continue to champion health, safety and wellbeing performance, but drive improvement in required areas.

The establishment of a health, safety and wellbeing challenge group will oversee the delivery of the actions and ensure health, safety and wellbeing performance is considered at a senior management level. It will establish future wellbeing delivery targets and monitor departmental management performance. Existing wellbeing working groups will be reviewed and realigned to the delivery of key parts of the strategy and action plan. The Council continues to ensure that all employees fully understand their responsibilities in relation to health, safety and wellbeing.

The redefined approach will support sustainable health, safety and wellbeing performance ensuring that the Council has in place easy to understand and practical health, safety and wellbeing guidance which is consistent across all departments. This one council approach will continue to ensure that all employees fully understand their responsibilities in relation to health, safety and wellbeing.

4.2. Medium Term Focus

Our medium term focus will develop and build upon the immediate actions undertaken to ensure sustainable change in all three key areas: people, data and systems.

We will further develop manager and employee awareness and understanding of the benefits of positive health safety and wellbeing. Secondly, we will look to refine and improve the data

we collect to drive targeted work initially identified to develop longer term proactive and preventative interventions.

Finally, we will focus on developing appropriate systems to support our ability to fully embed practices and accountability to drive continuous improvements in our employee health, safety and wellbeing.

4.3. Long Term Focus

Our long term focus is to embed within the organisation future behavioural change that will lead to the development of a positive and sustained health safety and wellbeing culture. The long term data targets will be determined by the findings of the initial review of performance.

4.4. Sickness Absence Management

To provide improved clarity and focus, separate sickness absence related actions have been defined, which are intrinsically linked to the overall action plan, and will focus on delivering outcomes against the same key themes (systems, data and people).

The Council has a target of 10.0 days average days lost per appointment, underpinned by the following departmental targets:

- CCP 8.5 days
- ASCH 13.0 days
- CS 7.0 days
- ETE 9.3 days

At end March 2020, the Council's average days lost due to sickness was 10.40 days. In comparison to the prior year, average days lost due to sickness has increased from 9.87 at March 2019. The Council has since seen a decrease in average days lost due to sickness to 10.0 days at June 2020. Ongoing monthly analysis is in place to outline and review sickness absence trends.

The sickness absence delivery plan will complement the overall wellbeing action plan ensuring improved data accuracy and clear definition of the roles and responsibilities of line managers when managing sickness absence. The introduction of a Sickness Absence Delivery Group, aligned to the Wellbeing Challenge Group will enable focused interventions at pace. Departmental specific interventions will be determined to further enhance the delivery plan.

5. Continual Review

Our revised approach will be formally reviewed on an annual basis (with the first review at end March 2021) and progress will be reported internally quarterly through CMT and Cabinet/CMT aligned to the defined sickness absence delivery plan.

6. Officer Recommendations

It is recommended that Resources and Improvement Scrutiny Committee:

- Note the revised focus of the Wellbeing Strategy and its associated action plan.

Emma Crapper

Director Organisation Development and Policy