

Committee(s) Health and Social Care Scrutiny	Dated: 4 October 2023
Subject: The health and wellbeing of the City's hidden and essential workers	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	2) <i>People enjoy good health and wellbeing.</i> 3) <i>People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential.</i> 5) <i>Businesses are trusted and socially and environmentally responsible</i>
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	Not at this stage
If so, how much?	To be determined
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Report of the Director of Public Health (City and Hackney)	For Decision (on a resolution)
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Summary

The hidden workforce are those essential staff in routine, manual and service occupations who often work during anti-social hours and without whom businesses could not function. Published reports have confirmed that shift workers often have significantly worse health and wellbeing with increased health inequalities.

Reports, presentations and updates have been undertaken to the Health and Wellbeing Board and other bodies within the Corporation over the last six months to raise awareness on the issue of health inequalities for people who are employed in the hidden workforce, and present recommendations for change.

The Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee is presented with an update of these actions in our efforts to reduce health inequalities for those who work in routine, manual and service occupations.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note and, as appropriate comment, on the steps taken or planned by the City of London Corporation and the Health and Wellbeing Board to reduce health inequalities for people in the hidden yet essential workforce

Main Report

1. Background

- 1.1. Business Healthy is an innovative partnership hosted and run by the City of London Corporation which aims to “bring together businesses in the City to ignite a positive change in the health and wellbeing of their workforce.”
- 1.2. Since 2019 Business Healthy has been working to better understand the health and wellbeing needs of the so called “hidden workforce”. The hidden workforce are those essential support staff in routine, manual and service occupations such as cleaners, maintenance workers, construction workers and security staff who often work during anti-social hours (including night shifts) and without whom businesses could not function. Published reports have highlighted that shift workers often have significantly worse health and wellbeing with increased health inequalities.
- 1.3. A report was presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board In March 2023 with a number of recommendations for consideration by the Board. This presented a summary of the research report¹ commissioned by Legal & General, a key business member of the ‘Hidden Workers’ project team convened by Business Healthy, into the lived experience of a number of essential workers.
- 1.4. The Health and Wellbeing board considered a number of management and procurement recommendations to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for hidden and essential workers, often contracted via third party contracts. These included improved access to sick pay, death in service benefits, shift work and access to online healthcare.
- 1.5. The Board endorsed the report and recommendations and requested members of the board to consider how to improve the health and wellbeing outcomes of the hidden and essential workforce and provide updates on progress to subsequent board members.
- 1.6. The following actions were requested for officers to take and summary of progress is here:
 - 1.6.1. A meeting took place with the Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, who welcomed the report’s synergy with the City of London’s equality objectives in terms of the London Living Wage and social mobility. The Director agreed to attend the Health and Wellbeing Board when it receives the next iteration of this report. Further engagement will now be deferred until a new Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is in post.
 - 1.6.2. A presentation of the report and its recommendations was made to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), chaired by the Town Clerk and Chief Executive, on 23 May. The following actions were taken from this meeting:
 - 1.6.2.1. The Chief Operating Officer to conduct a health check on the Procurement Code and to feed the ‘hidden workers’ suggestions into the ongoing review of pay and reward.

¹ https://group.legalandgeneral.com/media/o1wfq1qp/2829476_hidden-workers-report_v9-0-22-final.pdf

- 1.6.2.2. The City Surveyors to review the Facilities Management contract to look at quick wins; e.g. the provision of microwaves and break spaces.
- 1.6.2.3. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive asked for further suggestions to be brought to the SLT Meeting.
- 1.6.3. A meeting was held with the Chief Operating Officer (COO) who confirmed that 15% of the weighting on contractual awards criteria is on responsible procurement, including the London Living Wage. The COO further advised of the complexities in casual staffing structures and that the potential cost and impact implications of the various recommendations would need to be analysed. Therefore, the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) might need to take a formal Resolution to the relevant Committee(s) in terms of the next steps.
- 1.6.4. A presentation was made to the City and Hackney Place Based Delivery Group to follow up on the Health and Wellbeing Board recommendation that members of the Board, including anchor institutions such as NHS partners, should review their own procurement and workplace policies. The Delivery Group recommended this to be discussed at the Place Based Partnership Board for wider engagement.
- 1.6.5. Engagement was also initiated with the Responsible Procurement Manager (Operations) to assess the existing guidance on ethical procurement, and undertake a review of existing contracts, especially within the Integrated Facilities Management Contract, to scan whether any of the existing suppliers are applying immediate sick pay, and/or any of the other suggested recommendations from the research report.

2. Current Position

- 2.1. Following a verbal update at the June Board Meeting, Members of the Health and Wellbeing Board requested that they would receive a more comprehensive report at the September Board meeting, at which time consideration could be given to the Resolution that was suggested by the COO. A paper has been prepared for this meeting, including the following draft resolutions:
 - 2.1.1. The Corporation to note the potentially detrimental impact that low paid shift work can have on the health and wellbeing of staff including those from the hidden and essential workforce.
 - 2.1.2. For the Corporation to continue to support studies which seek to identify potential actions that can address health inequalities in the essential and hidden workforce.
 - 2.1.3. For the Corporation to note the recommendations for sick pay and death in service eligibility, without a qualifying period, for workers and to request that further work is undertaken to assess the likely cost and benefits and human resources implications of implementation.

- 2.2. Nationally, momentum around the issue of ‘Safe Sick Pay²’ is building, including politically.
- 2.3. On 17 October 2023 the All-Party Parliamentary Health Group will host a roundtable discussion in partnership with the centre for progressive change, on Statutory Sick Pay. The roundtable will bring together MPs, Peers, health experts and economists to discuss the potential benefits of sick pay reform. It notes there is growing support for these reforms across the major parties, business, health officials and trade unions.
- 2.4. In addition, work within the “Hidden workers” project team continues and one of the key business partners, L&G, in collaboration with PwC, is planning a symposium in London and Leeds on 8 November to focus on and promote Safe Sick Pay. Part of this event will be a VIP breakfast meeting to which City of London Corporation representation has been requested.

3. Recommendations for discussion

- 3.1. Note and, as appropriate comment, on the steps taken or planned by the City of London Corporation and the Health and Wellbeing Board to reduce health inequalities for people in the hidden yet essential workforce.

4. Corporate & Strategic Implications

- *Strategic implications*

Following through on recommendations in the Hidden Workers report will contribute to the following strategic priorities:

Contribute to a flourishing society

People enjoy good health and wellbeing.

People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential.

Support a thriving economy

Businesses are trusted and socially and environmentally responsible.

- *Financial implications*

The financial implications and cost/ benefits of adopting the recommendations for sick pay and death in service benefits without a qualifying period would need to be determined if the resolutions were accepted.

- *Resource implications*

Determining the costs benefit, human resources and wider implications of adopting the recommendations would need further work to determine the likely resource implications.

² See for more information on Safe Sick Pay: [SSP campaign](#)

- *Legal implications*

None directly. Indirectly, following through on recommendations may lead to review of contracting and procurement policies, especially for outsourced services.
- *Risk implications*

None
- *Equalities implications*

The HWB is specifically tasked with promoting good health and wellbeing for its local population and for tackling health inequalities. Active follow up to the recommendations of the Hidden Workers report will contribute to addressing health inequalities among people working in routine, manual and service roles. Further work on the intersectionality of poorer health outcomes amongst the hidden and essential workforce with many of the workers being from ethnic minorities is needed.
- *Climate implications*

No specific implications but environmental issues are part of the wider determinants of health.
- *Security implications*

None

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. The Scrutiny Committee is requested to note and, as appropriate comment, on the steps taken or planned by the City of London Corporation and the Health and Wellbeing Board to reduce health inequalities for people in the hidden yet essential workforce

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