

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Health and Wellbeing Board	30th September 2014
Subject: City of London Corporation Workplace Health & Wellbeing Strategy	Public
Report of: Director of Human Resources	For information
<p>Summary</p> <p>Workplace health has been highlighted as a national priority by Public Health England. City of London's Corporate HR Department is developing a strategy on workplace health and wellbeing. This aims to improve practice within the corporation as an employer and synergise with Health and Wellbeing Board's City-wide and national activities.</p> <p>The work by the Health and Wellbeing Board has driven the agenda forward locally. It is important that the City of London Corporation reviews and improves its own workplace health policies and practice for its own staff to demonstrate best practice. Failure to do this may impact not only on the health and wellbeing of the workforce but also on the City's ability to lead and influence other organisations.</p> <p>Recommendation</p> <p>The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • note this report and its content • support the establishment of a Workplace Health and Wellbeing Strategy • note that the City of London Corporation is undertaking the London Healthy Workplace Charter with a view to being awarded Silver Standard in October 2014. 	

Main Report

Background

1. Improving the health of adults of working age is a national public health priority. Workplace health is an essential component of the UK government strategy to tackle health inequalities and increase healthy life expectancy ⁽ⁱ⁾.
2. Working age ill-health is estimated to cost the UK economy over £100 billion a year. Those most at risk of high work sickness absence rates are routine and manual workers. This high risk group represents a large health inequality ⁽ⁱⁱ⁾. In 2011, a total of 131 million days were lost because of sickness absence in the UK ⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾.

3. The City of London Corporation has committed to supporting and promoting the City as the world leader in international finance and business services. The City of London Corporation, has set out its intent to establish the City as the world's foremost 'healthy workplace setting' for the circa 360,000 people who commute into the City on a daily basis.
4. Benefits include:
 - Improved employee physical health and mental wellbeing
 - Improved workplace productivity and output
 - Better staff retention and recruitment
 - Reduced sickness absenteeism and costs

Current position

5. Workplace health has been highlighted as a national priority by Public Health England. The Director of Public Health is part way through a work stream on workplace health. A three-tiered approach has been identified:
 - Improving workplace health within the City of London Corporation
 - Improving healthy working practices amongst businesses in the Square Mile
 - Establishing the City of London as a leader in workplace health, nationally and beyond
6. Corporate HR has set employee wellbeing as a key part of their 2014-2017 HR Strategy. The broad project objectives have been identified as:
 - Reduce sickness absence further and facilitate successful returns to work
 - Develop positive strategies for mental wellbeing at work
 - Improve motivation, performance and working relationships
 - Support managers to understand and manage wellbeing at work
 - Improve culture and awareness about wellbeing at work

Improving workplace health within the City of London Corporation

7. In 2013/14, the City of London Corporation had an average of 3000 full time equivalent (FTE) employees. There were 19,749 sick days attributed to these staff in the year ending 31 March 2014. Sickness absence cost the City of London was £1.5 million in the same period. This is a favourable comparison to other authorities, as the City falls in the top 50% of all the London boroughs, and the top 25% for inner London.
8. The Corporation has prioritised for some time reducing both long and short-term sickness absence, and there are already a number of specific initiatives in

place to support staff and address underlying issues in departments with the highest rates.

9. An initial review has shown that many initiatives are carried out which improve wellbeing for City of London employees. However, these are not effectively communicated to our staff and managers. Effective sign posting and engagement needs to take place and this will be established through a holistic Workplace Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
10. Stress related absence is particularly common in the public and non-profit sectors. Those most at risk of high work sickness absence rates are those in routine and manual work. Our statistics show that this is not the case for us as an employer. In the recent Human Capital Metrics Survey^{iv} 2013/2014 which surveys all London Boroughs, the percentage of sickness absence due to stress, depression or fatigue was 11.39% at the City of London. This placed us in the top 25% of all London boroughs, (the average across all London boroughs was approximately 17.5 %.).
11. The City of London Corporation has initially prioritised its needs from the data provided by the Human Capital Metrics Survey. The areas identified included;
 - back issues and other musculoskeletal disorders
 - the need to support manual workers
 - staff with long term health conditions
 - those in demanding roles who may be more prone to succumb to sickness absence and
 - Display Screen Equipment (DSE) use is a key area of concern due to the lack of physical activity experienced by most DSE users during the majority of their working day.
12. There is good evidence to suggest that innovative and focussed workplace interventions could help reduce the rate of sickness absence across the Corporation further, given that a large proportion of the causes of sickness absences are attributable to minor ailments such as upper respiratory tract infections, musculo-skeletal problems and pain. It may also be the case that developing targeted workplace interventions to address lifestyle related factors, will help to improve the coping mechanisms of staff and help them manage other underlying wellbeing causes of sickness absence e.g. stress and anxiety.

Mental Health

13. Whilst the City of London Corporation compares favourably with other London Boroughs, mental health is one area we feel there is room for improvement and this will form a strand of the overall strategy. This will build on some pilot work carried out last year within Department of Community and Children Services.

14. Recent research published by MIND (the mental health charity) suggests 1 in 6 workers is currently suffering from a mental health problem such as anxiety, depression or stress (✓). Mind also found:
- One in five (19 per cent) of workers take a day off sick because of stress, but 90 per cent of those people cited a different reason for their absence.
 - One in ten (9 per cent) resigned from a job due to stress and one in four (25 per cent) have considered resigning due to work pressure.
 - One in five (19 per cent) felt they couldn't tell their boss if they were overly stressed.
 - Of the 22 per cent who have a diagnosed mental health problem, fewer than half (10 per cent) had actually told their boss about their diagnosis.
 - Over half of managers (56 per cent) said they would like to do more to improve staff mental wellbeing but they needed more training and/ or guidance; 46 per cent said they would like to do more but it is not a priority in their organisation.

The way forward

15. The City of London was a pilot area for the London Healthy Workplace Charter. The London Healthy Workplace Charter is an accredited scheme for employers to demonstrate their commitment to workplace health, and the City of London Corporation has provided support and assistance to City businesses looking to gain this Charter
16. The City of London Corporation is now developing a Workplace Health and Wellbeing Strategy for its employees and is undertaking the London Healthy Workplace Charter itself, to further demonstrate its credibility and commitment to promoting workplace health.
17. Extensive work has already been undertaken and we are looking to submit an application for achievement of the charter, the silver standard, in October 2014. A milestone has been set initially within the strategy to achieve the gold "excellence" standard during 2015.
18. The Workplace Health and Wellbeing Strategy will include develop the following activities:
- a review of HR policies and other initiatives that impact on the wellbeing of staff informed by staff feedback and consultation with interested parties.
 - Wellbeing is also about the employer offer, job satisfaction, staff retention and identifying levels of presenteeism. The project will seek to review these areas with a view to supporting and maintaining the City Corporation as an employer of choice.

- Carrying out a staff survey to inform our needs as an organisation will ensure any resulting workplace health intervention programme focusses our actions and addresses the key issues identified within the City of London Corporation.
 - Analysis of statistical data which will also help to inform the strategy and identify trends and gaps in provision.
19. A strategy working group has been set up to include Occupational Health including the City of London Police, DCCS Public Health Team and other HR colleagues (with agreed terms of reference).
 20. It is proposed the Director of Human Resources and Director of Community and Children's Services champion this group. The officers of the City of London Corporation will oversee the processes and strategy implementation, and ensure that all the relevant partners and departments are involved.
 21. Consideration needs to be given to this high profile piece of work as it sets benchmarks which must be quantified and explored. This piece of work benchmarks us with large international employers and clarity must be gained on what is commensurate and proportionate for us to achieve given our profile and our own needs.

Establishing the City of London as a leader in workplace health, nationally and beyond

22. Beyond the City of London Corporation's internal efforts, work is continuing:
 - To start a dialogue about how to shift workplace health from a "health and safety" focus to holistic wellbeing, including tackling stress and mental health in modern workplaces
 - To improve awareness of the link between healthy workplaces and improved business productivity
 - To establish the City of London as a leader in taking forward the workplace health agenda

Conclusions

22. By achieving the London Healthy Workplace Charter and putting in place a Workplace Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the Corporation itself, we are ensuring that the Corporation remains a credible voice for businesses and partners in the Square Mile and beyond.
23. The City is influential and respected in its wider role and remit both within the City and nationally in the field of health and wellbeing. As an employer, whilst there are a wide range of staff benefits, HR policies and other initiatives we have identified a need to bring these together under the banner of workplace health and wellbeing so that they are accessible to all and kept under regular

view and update review. Data analysis and regular reporting will enable us to monitor direction of travel and prioritise resources accordingly.

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ⁱ. DH 2011, Healthy Lives Healthy People a Public Health Strategy www.phe.co.uk

ⁱⁱ. Dame Carol Black and David Frost CBE (2011) Health at work – an independent review of sickness absence. 2011, <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm82/8205/8205.pdf>.

ⁱⁱⁱ. Office for National Statistics 2013, Sickness Absence in the Labour Market, April 2012, http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_265016.pdf

^{iv} Human Capital Metrics Survey 2013/14 – The statistics provided are comparable averages however it must be noted that the City do not have some of the more stress related areas such as education which will undoubtedly impact on the outcome of the results

^v. Mind (2013) Work is the Biggest Cause of Stress in Peoples Lives. http://www.mind.org.uk/news/show/8566_work_is_biggest_cause_of_stress_in_peoples_lives