

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
Health and Wellbeing Board	29 <sup>th</sup> January 2016
<b>Subject:</b> City of London Corporation's Health and Wellbeing Programme: CityWell	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Human Resources	<b>For Information</b>

## Summary

Good physical health and mental wellbeing are vital to a productive and motivated workforce. By adopting a progressive and proactive approach to the wellbeing of our staff, the City can reduce further sickness absence and presenteeism levels. By implementing a wellbeing strategy and investing in the health of our employees, the Corporation will see in return higher levels of engagement and productivity from our staff, and continue to attract and retain the highest calibre of talent. A documented strategy provides the Corporation with the opportunity to build on the achievement of receiving a silver award in the Healthy Workplace Charter in October 2014, and it will enable us to demonstrate excellence in our next application.

## Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report
- Support the wellbeing strategy

## Main Report

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Traditionally health and wellbeing in the workplace has focused on upholding a reactive approach to support employees who have become unwell. However, the City aims to take an increasingly holistic approach and introduce preventative measures to promote health and wellbeing. This is essential, as good physical health and mental wellbeing are vital to a productive and motivated workforce.
- 1.2. As many people spend a significant proportion of their lives in work, we recognise that the employer plays a pivotal role in affecting the health and wellbeing of employees, and therefore the workforce is the ideal environment to promote healthier working practices and positively influence lifestyle choices. By investing in the health of our employees, the Corporation will see in return higher levels of engagement and productivity, and it will continue to attract and retain the highest calibre of talent.
- 1.3. Sickness absence at the City of London is comparatively low in comparison to local authorities across London, however it is our aspiration to continue to reduce

these figures even further to strive for optimum efficiency, whilst also increasing the health and wellbeing of Corporation employees.

- 1.4. In addition to reducing sickness absence, our ambition is to also reduce levels of presenteeism, in which productivity is lost due to employees coming into work whilst being unwell and therefore not performing at their best. As it is a subjective concept, it is difficult to quantify the cost implications of presenteeism.
- 1.5. Furthermore, we live in a society with an ageing population, in which people are living longer and therefore are required to work longer than ever before. This trend is reflected in the employee age demographic at the City of London, in which the most common age bracket are those aged between 50 and 59, closely followed by those between the age of 40 to 49. This has a significant effect on the overall health of the workforce. We have considered these factors within our proposed interventions to ensure that our strategy is relevant and accessible to employees at all ages.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1. The City's Economic Development Office commissioned a report on the 'Best Practice in Promoting Employee Health and Wellbeing' in 2014. The report included a strong forward by Mark Boleat, the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee, which prompted the City's HR department to take part in the Healthy Workplace Charter for the first time. The City received the 'achievement' award. The results highlighted that whilst many basic wellbeing initiatives had already been established, employees would benefit from these being joined up under a multi-component wellbeing programme.
- 2.2. The feedback raised some areas where the City could improve. These were to closely cross-reference the Sickness Absence policy with the Organisational Stress policy, and employees could benefit from my work on anti-stigma. The Corporation has already started work to progress the development of equality and inclusion by establishing 'Staff Diversity Networks'. Each network has a Chief Officer sponsor and the aim of the networks is to provide employees with an inclusive, safe and confidential forum to support each other. The session run on a quarterly basis and groups include:
  - Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) Network
  - Carers Network
  - Disability Network
  - Faith and Spiritual Wellbeing Network
  - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered (LGBT) Network
  - Women's Network
- 2.3. The City has added health and wellbeing to the Human Resources strategy and in recent months everything which is currently on offer to employees has been under review including; policy, management training, healthcare services and leisure facilities.

- 2.4. The Corporation launched the wellbeing survey in April 2015. It was active for the month of April and remained on the staff intranet page for the entire period until it closed.
- 2.5. The employee survey allowed us to gather baseline data, which enabled us to build a picture of the physical health and mental wellbeing of Corporation employees. This knowledge is critical when designing, planning and delivering an effective and meaningful wellbeing programme, which includes appropriate interventions. The data is also important for the future of the strategy in order to ascertain whether our interventions are having meaningful impacts on our employees.
- 2.6. The final response rate for the employee survey was 1394 responses, which is equivalent to 38% of all Corporation staff. Employees were represented in the survey from every department. Please see Appendix 1 for an overview of the survey results.
- 2.7. To evaluate the progress of our interventions, it will be essential to repeat the wellbeing survey on an annual basis. This will enable the City to continue to assess the developing needs of our employees, identify trends of progression and highlight areas which need additional support and attention. It will be most important for the success of the project that our interventions reach all Corporation employees, across all occupations, departments and locations.
- 2.8. Employees in a number of locations also had the opportunity to participate in consultation groups. Employees were engaged in the development process to increase employee buy-in and to create a platform to gather a variety of ideas from differing perspectives. Sessions ran at Guildhall, Tilbury Docks, Epping Forest, Ashted Common, Hampstead Heath and Tower Bridge.

### **3. Corporate & Strategic Implications**

- 3.1. Our aim is to establish a resilient health and wellbeing programme, which continues to develop and adapt to the changing needs of Corporation employees in years to come. We have identified the name 'CityWell' for the programme, the strapline to accompany the strategy will be 'Working Well Together'.
- 3.2. To inform our approach, the Corporation has taken inspiration from the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing', which was developed in 2008 by the New Economics Foundation. This has helped shape our interventions, as the NEF have identified simple steps which individuals can take to enhance their daily lives. The framework will include all the following elements; take Notice, Learn, Be Active, Connect and Give.
- 3.3. The themes and interventions have been divided to cover a three year period. Whilst the themes mentioned below will be run in subsequent years, there will be minor elements from all areas that will run in every year, though the focus will be on the key theme.

#### **Year 1 – Take Notice and Learn**

- 3.4. The first year will prioritise raising awareness of mental health in the workplace, through an internal promotion campaign, partnering with a mental health charity

and signing the 'Time to Change' pledge and the Government's Public Health Responsibility Deals.

- 3.5. Since consulting with our employees we have gained a greater understanding that managers can significantly affect the way our employees feel about the work they do. As a result, we have reviewed our management training, as we appreciate the importance of approachable and communicative managers. We will establish new courses which incorporate wellbeing into their focusing our attention on addressing mental ill health and workplace stigma and discrimination.
- 3.6. We will encourage our employees to take notice of their own physical and mental health as well as the wellbeing of those around them. As part of our proactive and preventative approach, we will seek to introduce a 'Know Your Numbers' campaign where we will encourage staff to be aware of their key health metrics: blood pressure, cholesterol and Body Mass Index. Annual health assessments for at-risk employees could also be added to our benefits range to ensure employees feel more empowered to improve both their physical health and mental wellbeing, and balance these with their job demands.
- 3.7. We will increase the amount of seminars and learning opportunities around recognising the signs of mental ill health and wellbeing topics such as; nutrition, sleep quality and mindfulness. Our Staff Diversity Networks will also continue to work on tackling stigma and discrimination in the workplace.
- 3.8. We will also ensure that our employees are informed about the services available to them and we will promote services such as the Employee Assistance Programme. We will signpost what is included in the service and how it can be accessed.

### **Year 2 – Be Active**

- 3.9. The second year of the programme will draw attention to physical activity and exercise. We will use nudge behaviours to encourage employees to make more use of the stairs by introducing an evidence-based initiative, 'StepJockey'. This will incentivise those who predominately take the lift to choose to take the stairs as an alternative.
- 3.10. In addition, we will promote our in-house gym, studio and other outdoor benefits, such as the open spaces in the City through internal communication channels. We hope to increase the amount and variety of fitness classes in the studio and signpost staff who do not work at Guildhall to the close proximity of the services available.
- 3.11. We will also undertake a comprehensive review of the food options available to employees in the staff restaurant. We hope to provide a wider variety of healthy options at a competitive price to encourage staff to choose the healthy alternatives.

### **Year 3 – Connect and Give**

- 3.12. The third year of the programme will focus on the importance of volunteering and sharing skills throughout the organisation. We will promote the benefits of

volunteering and available opportunities through internal communication channels. Corporately the City already does a lot of work by way of volunteering, and therefore we have decided to put this theme towards the end of the strategy and work with the Corporate Responsibility team to deliver wellbeing interventions surrounding this theme.

### **Management Information**

- 3.13. To evaluate the progress of our interventions we must be able to track performance. Our baseline data comes from our wellbeing survey, which will be repeated on an annual basis. This will enable the City to continue to assess the developing needs of our employees, identify trends of progression, harness anonymous data from health assessments and 'Know Your Numbers' campaigns. We will also be able to measure engagement and highlight areas which need additional support and attention. In addition, departmental dashboards have been established with information extrapolated from the employee survey. A screenshot of the front page of the dashboard can be seen in Appendix 2.

### **Communication and Branding**

- 3.14. It is essential to the success of the project that our interventions reach all Corporation staff across all occupations, departments and locations. The branding is expected to permeate the entire strategy. Our ambition is to create a brand which falls in line with the corporation's overall strategic plan. Establishing a brand is vital to the success of this project for the following reasons:

- It promotes recognition. If our branding is consistent and easy to recognise it can ensure individuals feel confident about our message and feel comfortable using the services we provide. As a result, signposting has been a significant reason why employees have not been aware of many of our current wellbeing arrangements
- It provides motivation and direction for our employees. A clear brand strategy provides the clarity that our employees will need to be successful in reaching their wellbeing goals
- It generates referrals. A strong brand is critical to generating referrals, which creates an ideal environment for signposting
- It creates an emotional connection. A good brand connects with people at an emotional level; they feel good when they encounter it. Accessing this positive emotional experience will help our employees engage with our policies and interventions, thereby enabling us to be effective. It is our aim that by doing this we will bring visibility to the topic areas and interventions, which will motivate employees to be active participants in the corporate offer

## **4. Implications**

- 4.1. Corporate Human Resources within the Town Clerks department leads on matters relating to health and wellbeing for the Corporation. This includes the responsibility for effective management information in monitoring sickness absence. In addition, it is tasked with the promotion of health and wellbeing

throughout the City's departments, taking into consideration the wide variety of occupations in a number of locations and environments.

## **5. Conclusion**

5.1 Our aim is to establish a resilient health and wellbeing programme, which continues to develop and adapt to the changing needs of Corporation staff in years to come. The programme has been shaped by the data collected from the wellbeing survey and the employee consultation groups. To evaluate the progress of our interventions, it will be essential to repeat the wellbeing survey on an annual basis. This will enable the City to continue to assess the developing needs of our employees, identifying trends and progressions and highlighting areas which need additional support and attention. It is most important for the success of the project that our interventions reach all Corporation staff, across all occupations, departments and locations.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Wellbeing Results, Headline Figures
- Appendix 2 – Screenshot of Wellbeing Dashboard

### **Contact:**

Oliver Sanandres | [oliver.sanandres@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:oliver.sanandres@cityoflondon.gov.uk) | 0207 332 3307

Rebecca Abrahams | [rebecca.abrahams@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:rebecca.abrahams@cityoflondon.gov.uk) | 0207 332 3439