

Committee(s)	Dated:
Establishment Committee	25 April 2018
Subject: Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy	Public
Report of: Director of Human Resources	For Decision
Report author: Justin Tyas, Health Safety and Wellbeing Manager	

Summary

Mental ill-health and stress are associated with many of the leading causes of disease and disability in our society. Promoting and protecting the mental wellbeing of the workforce is important for individuals' physical health, social wellbeing and productivity.

Addressing workplace mental wellbeing can help strengthen the positive, protective factors of employment, reduce risk factors for mental ill-health and improve general health. It can also help promote the employment of people who have experienced mental health problems and support them once they are at work.

The proposed *Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy*, grounded in current best practice, will contribute to outcomes required in our new corporate plan: *people enjoy good health and wellbeing* by providing a framework that will encourage and facilitate working practices and services and help support employee health and wellbeing.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Note the report and approve the Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy attached as Appendix 1.

Main Report

Background

1. Estimates of occupational ill-health from the Labour Force Survey of Great Britain indicate that 1.3 million workers suffering from work-related ill health (new or long-standing) in 2016/17, which were classified as:

- Stress/anxiety/depression (40%)
- Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) (39%)
- Other types of illness (21%)

2. According to the Mental Health Taskforce one in four people will experience some form of mental health issue in any given year. The Chief Medical Officer, (Department of Health) indicates that mental illness is the largest single source of burden of disease in the UK – no other health condition matches mental illness in combined extent of prevalence, persistence and breadth of impact.
3. The *Thriving at Work* report commissioned by the Prime Minister was issued in October 2017, and it sets out ways that businesses and government can make a combined effort of boosting employee mental health.
4. Some of the starkest statistics from this (Thriving at Work) report were:
 - Poor mental health costs employers £42bn a year
 - The annual cost of poor mental health to the British economy is £99bn
5. Such large numbers do not describe the human cost of mental ill-health
6. The report reviewed how investing in supporting mental health issues in the workplace would be beneficial for both businesses and employee productivity. The most important lessons to be learned were that all employers, no matter the size or industry, must try and enforce six '*mental health core standards*', these are:
 - Create a mental health at work plan
 - Build mental health awareness by making information and support accessible
 - Encourage open conversations
 - Provide good working conditions and ensure employees have a healthy work-life balance
 - Promote effective people management, with line managers holding regular conversations about health and well-being with their employees
 - Routinely monitor employee mental health

Current Position

7. Sickness absence reporting (rolling year) to February 2018 at the City of London Corporation indicates that the top three recorded reasons for absence were:
 - Anxiety/stress/depression/other psychiatric illnesses (1st)
 - Cold, Cough, Flu (2nd)
 - All MSD problems -including back and neck problems (3rd)
8. Mental ill-health and MSDs are often skewed towards longer-term absence. A manager will be aware if an employee considers any sickness to be work related or not and will manage sickness accordingly. However, only the type of sickness is recorded for monitoring purposes and so it is not possible to differentiate between absence due to home and/or work factors in the statistics.

9. CityWell is the City Corporation's employee health and wellbeing strategy. The aim has been to establish a resilient health and wellbeing programme which continues to develop and adapt to the changing needs of City Corporation employees over the life of the strategy.
10. The CityWell strategy is a strong employee brand and has helped embed the wellbeing programme at the City Corporation since 2015. CityWell actively supports the *This is Me* campaign, a Lord Mayor's mental health charity. In addition, the Town Clerk signed the *Time to Change Pledge*, committing to take action to end mental health discrimination
11. The corporate Health Safety and Wellbeing Strategy 2018 – 23 has six strategic themes including:
 - **Tackling work-related ill-health:** Developing the wellbeing of our workforce, reducing the stigma around mental ill-health, and providing a safe and healthy working environment
12. The mental health *core standards* are being imbedded within the corporate wellbeing strategy.
13. City Corporation has an *Organisational Stress Policy*. However, it has not been reviewed for some time and may no longer be fit for purpose. The policy is focused on 'stress' rather than a more holistic approach, which is to consider mental health and wellbeing as a continuum; reflecting current thinking and best practice. The policy arrangements are incorporated within the Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy.

Proposals

14. To develop and implement a holistic *Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy* grounded in current best practice. Thus, providing a framework within which the City Corporation encourages and facilitates working practices and services, supporting employee health and wellbeing; minimising wherever possible the detrimental impact of organisational stressors on all staff and their work; and ensuring that staff are appropriately supported.
15. As an employer we aim to create and promote a culture where employees can talk openly about their job and mental health problems and to report difficulties without fear of discrimination. The proposed mental health and wellbeing policy supports this aim.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

16. The above proposal relates to the draft Corporate Plan (2018 - 23), where a corporate outcome within the strategic objectives is health and wellbeing. Specifically, that *people enjoy good health and wellbeing*.
17. The Human Resources Business Plan (2018 – 19) includes the embedding of the new corporate plan and its objectives; contributing to a flourishing society.

Conclusion

18. Everything we do must support delivery of the new Corporate Plan and our top-level objectives include people being healthy and safe at work. The City Corporation signed the 'Time to Change' pledge and committed to act to reduce mental health discrimination. The proposed mental health and wellbeing policy supports these aims.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy (draft 1.3)

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