

Committee(s) Health and Wellbeing Board	Dated: 24th March 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?	N
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Sandra Husbands, Director of Public Health, City and Hackney	For Decision
Report author: Froeks Kamminga, Chris Lovitt	

Summary

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 such as cleaners, maintenance workers, construction workers and security staff who often work during anti-social hours 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.

This report presents research into the lived experience of routine, manual and service work commissioned by Legal & General in 2022. This research makes recommendations for immediate and longer term changes: daily modifications, management and procurement considerations. The Health and Wellbeing Board is requested to consider how these recommendations could be implemented within the City of London in order to improve health and wellbeing of the hidden and essential workforce whilst reducing health inequalities.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- Note the Hidden Workers report
- Consider endorsing the recommendations of the Hidden Workers report
- Advise on how the recommendations can be promoted further for implementation

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 & wellbeing of their workforce.”
- 1.1. In 2019 Business Healthy, together with the Greater London Assembly and the Lord Mayor’s Office, convened a conference on supporting the health and wellbeing of London’s “hidden” yet essential workforce.
- 1.2. The conference recommended a three-pronged approach:
 - 1.2.1. Raise awareness of the vital role that the “hidden and essential” workforce plays in the functioning of business in the City of London and elsewhere.
 - 1.2.2. Identify and share best practice of where businesses are working to promote the health of all of their workforce including the “hidden and essential” and reduce health inequalities among routine, service, and manual workers.
 - 1.2.3. Ensure that routine, service, and manual workers themselves are aware of free health and wellbeing services available, and that they are accessible including at times convenient to shift workers.
- 1.3. The Covid-19 pandemic proceeded to present those inequalities in an even starker light by showing how many people could not work from home, putting them at greater risk of exposure to Covid-19. The pandemic also highlighted how these were often the people already worse off in terms of their health and wellbeing.
- 1.4. In November 2021 a virtual event was convened by Business Healthy working with the City Mental Health Alliance, and new partners were involved including PwC, Legal & General and the Lord Mayor’s Appeal with Sir Michael Marmot of the UCL Institute of Health Equity and author of Fair Society, Healthy Lives, undertaking the keynote speech.
- 1.5. Following the virtual event a small project team convened by Business Healthy proceeded to take the work forward. This team initially included L&G and PwC as key businesses involved.

2. Current Position

- 2.1. In 2022, agreeing there was a need for better insight and evidence, Legal & General commissioned research into the “hidden” workforce that would combine facts with voice and visibility. The research was delivered by the Tavistock City Wellbeing Centre, in collaboration with the UCL Centre for Health Equity. The result is the report: Working Well: Delivering Better Health Outcomes for Hidden Workers (December 2022)¹.
- 2.2. The report presents lived experiences and recurring themes, including sleep, shift and night working/working hours, travel and transport, caring responsibilities, money and cost of living pressures, and health services.
- 2.3. The report makes a number of suggestions for immediate and longer term changes: daily modifications, management and procurement considerations. They include, among other things, introducing sick pay without a three day delay, guidance on real

¹ https://group.legalandgeneral.com/media/o1w1q1qp/2829476_hidden-workers-report_v9-0-22-final.pdf

Living Wage, death in service benefits, more predictable shift patterns, adequate space for breaks, and privacy for engaging with health services (online or by phone).

- 2.4. These recommendations align closely with the objectives as laid out in the City of London's Social Mobility Strategy², which promotes the real Living Wage campaign, equal opportunities for professional progression for people from all socio-economic backgrounds, and for businesses to be trusted organisations.
- 2.5. In moving this agenda forward, it is important to progress in tandem with, for example, the initiatives of the Living Wage Foundation³ and to build on work already undertaken by the UCL Health Equity Institute⁴.
- 2.6. Addressing health inequalities among hidden workers can be done in a variety of ways. Financial investment will be at the core of some. Equally important are 'business culture' considerations. For example, taking paid time off to go for cancer screening should be a normal and accepted practice that is protected in law. This is not the case in every workplace. The research report highlights that many people do not feel comfortable taking time off for such appointments, for fear of being seen as lacking commitment to their job.
- 2.7. A key area for initiating change is within procurement contracts, especially related to facilities management, such as cleaning and security. By stipulating a set of minimum requirements in procurement contracts, for example on Living Wage, no shifts in excess of 12 hours, and statutory sick pay, an organisation or company can ensure the services they procure will not exacerbate health and wellbeing inequalities, but rather allow outsourced workers a better income, better opportunities for work-life balance and improved health outcomes.
- 2.8. Within this, it is equally important to guard against 'wellbeing-washing'. For example, contractually granting outsourced staff access to a company gym may only be a tick-box exercise for the company in question that does not benefit those workers. They may not have the time and energy to access a company gym after their shift, and keeping in mind company culture, they may not feel comfortable accessing that gym.
- 2.9. Other areas to consider are professional mobility and training. People in routine, manual and service jobs may not have many options for career progression and in the research some report feeling stuck. As the research report also notes, managers often like to keep well performing and reliable staff in their posts. Yet it is through training and study that people would be able to progress into other workstreams with better rewards, both financially and other.
- 2.10. Addressing inequalities in health and wellbeing outcomes by providing better outsourcing contract terms, procurement policies and workplace improvements -both practical and cultural- is not only effective, it is also in line with Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) standards that most businesses try to aspire or adhere to. The City of London has a good reputation in this regard⁵ and the City of London Corporation may wish to consider taking a leading role in ensuring that fair pay, conditions and contracts became the guiding factor in outsourcing which will also improve health and wellbeing
- 2.11. Lastly, the research did not engage deeply on ethnic disparities in health inequalities within the hidden and essential workforce. During the Covid-19 pandemic these

² City of London Social Mobility Strategy

<https://democracy.cityoflondon.gov.uk/documents/s124692/Social%20Mobility%20Strategy%202018-28%20Potential%20today%20success%20tomorro.pdf>

³ <https://www.livingwage.org.uk/>

⁴ <https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/the-business-of-health-equity-the-marmot-review-for-industry>

⁵ <https://news.cityoflondon.gov.uk/london-named-a-world-leader-in-environmental-social-and-governance-by-global-institutional-investors/>

disparities became more apparent. Further work should be considered as to how the commitment to tackling racism can be integrated into this work to improve the health and wellbeing of the hidden and essential workstream.

3. Recommendations for discussion

- 3.1. With the Hidden Workers report as a guide, there are several ways for the City of London Health and Wellbeing Board to respond. This report suggests the following approaches:
 - 3.1.1. Explore further opportunities to present and promote the report within the City of London business community and encourage businesses within the Square Mile to follow up on the recommendations within the report;
 - 3.1.2. Request the report's recommendations be considered by HWB board member organisations e.g City of London Corporation, City of London Police, NHS Trusts, Primary Care, Voluntary sector both within the City and across North East London;
 - 3.1.3. Initiate discussions with SMEs via the City of London SME Engagement Group on the real Living Wage and other contracting issues.
 - 3.1.4. Explore the intersectionality of poorer health and wellbeing of the hidden and essential workforce with ethnic disparities in health inequalities
 - 3.1.5. Consider how the proposed City of London Health and Wellbeing strategy on the economic determinants of health can highlight the need for a focus on the hidden and essential workforce.
 - 3.1.6. Guided by this report, as well as the Marmot Review for Industry and the work of the UCL Health Equity Institute, continue to work with Legal & General, PwC and other stakeholders to explore further ways of reducing health inequalities among 'hidden workers' by participating in the project team and/or task-and-finish groups taking on specific tasks (e.g. toolkit for business development), specific sectors (e.g. financial services), or specific topics (e.g. racial equality). This can be done by Business Healthy with further involvement from members and staff within the City of London.

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*

None directly. Following through on recommendations may lead to review of contracting and procurement policies, especially for outsourced services, which may have financial implications.

- *Resource implications*

None

- *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. Business Healthy has facilitated a longstanding engagement with partners on inequalities in health and wellbeing among the 'hidden workforce'. Out of this engagement, research was commissioned by Legal & General to provide better insight into the lived experiences of people working in manual, routine and service roles.
- 5.2. The research report provides a number of practical recommendations for immediate and longer term change: daily modifications, management considerations and procurement considerations. This paper to the Health and Wellbeing Board provides five proposals to follow up on the research report: a) Promote the research report and actively follow up within the business community of the City of London, b) The City of London Corporation is requested reviews its own contracting and procurement policies in line with recommendation from the research report; c) Working with the SME Engagement Team on the Living Wage; d) Engage with private and public sector anchor institutions in NEL and the City of London on responsible procurement; e) Ensure ethnic disparities in health inequalities within the hidden workforce are considered in any work going forward; and f) Business Healthy and the City of London Corporation remain actively involved in the work around the hidden workforce and health inequalities.

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