Wellbeing at Work Policy

Lead Directorate and Service:	Corporate Resources - Human Resources, Safety Services.
Effective Date:	December 2014
Contact Officer/Number	Garry Smith / 01482 391110
Approved by:	Cabinet 11th December 2012 – Minute Number 4619

Issued	Review Date	Approval Cabinet	Comments
December 2012	**December 2014**	Cabinet 11 December 2012 Minute 4619	Complete revision of previous policy.
December 2014	**December 2017**		Reviewed with minor grammatical amendments to text. Review period amended to 3 yearly in accordance with HR Policies and Guidance
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Contents

Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the Council except school based employees unless accepted by the respective governing bodies

1. Background

Wellbeing is the holistic approach to a healthy and productive workforce. Protection against physical and mental health problems and engaging those with health issues may contribute to reducing the risk of hardship and social exclusion of employees. The potential wellbeing issues identified by the Health and Safety Executive [HSE] include:

- Developing policies to deal with mental health including stress;
- Managing sickness absence;
- Managing musculoskeletal disorders [MSD's];
- Reducing illness and disease in the workplace;
- Dealing with bullying and harassment.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations are the main legislative requirement when considering wellbeing in the workplace. They require employers to undertake risk assessments which cover significant work related risks. These risks should include employees wellbeing as well as the more obvious health and safety risks.

2. Foreword

In accordance with the Council's Corporate Safety Policy and the Healthy Workforce Strategy the Council is committed to pursuing continual improvements in health, safety and welfare. This policy supports this commitment and forms part of the Council's health and safety management system.

3. Implementation

This policy seeks to achieve the following:

- Affirm the council's commitment to wellbeing;
- Focus on prevention and early intervention to enable staff to continue working;
- Maximise rehabilitation, were appropriate for employees with serious health issues;
- Improve employee recruitment and retention;
- Reduce employee absence;
- Meet legal requirements.

Directorates are responsible for the implementation of this policy and communication of its content as appropriate.

Human Resources are responsible for providing managers with guidance to help implement this policy. The policy is available on the Safety Services Intranet Page and, where employees do not have access to the Council's intranet, via their line manager/headteacher. Other supporting policies and guidance documents are also available on the intranet.

The Council relies on the co-operation of all employees for the successful implementation of this policy.

A review of this policy was undertaken two years after its implementation. Further reviews will be undertaken every three years or where significant changes in legislation or working practices deem this appropriate.

4.   Roles and Responsibilities

4.1   Directors and Heads of Service

Directors and Heads of Service are ultimately responsible and accountable to the Chief Executive for ensuring this policy is issued to their management team.

4.2   Managers and Headteachers

Managers and Headteachers are responsible for achieving the objectives of this policy where relevant to their area of service delivery and are responsible for ensuring that:

- The information contained within this policy is implemented and complied with;
- Wellbeing needs are included in risk assessments and specific needs of individuals are met through the use of the Employee Development Review (EDR);
- Control measures and management systems are introduced to reduce any potential risks to a reasonable level;
- They co-operate and work with Human Resources, Occupational Health and Safety Services to ensure that employees experiencing wellbeing issues are supported in their employment;
- They attend training courses relevant to employee health and cascade relevant information, instruction and training to staff;
- They monitor work loads, job content and employee capabilities (including competency) to minimise the impact of work on employee wellbeing
- They ensure that bullying and harassment is not tolerated in the work area.

4.3   Employees

Employees must ensure that:

- This policy is complied with;
- They raise issues regarding their health and wellbeing with their line manager/head teacher and participate in support programmes;
- They cooperate to enable their manager/headteacher to formulate and implement effective wellbeing management systems;
- Their own health and safety and that of others are not put at risk by their actions.

4.4   Human Resources

Human Resources will:

- Develop and manage employee assistance programmes to support wellbeing such as counselling, physiotherapy and change management strategies based on early intervention;
- Give guidance to managers/headteachers on wellbeing issues;

- Monitor the effectiveness of measures to address wellbeing and collate sickness absence statistics;
- Provide advice and support managers on individual wellbeing issues including return to work guidance, case conferences and requirements of other legislation;
- Through Learning and Development Service deliver appropriate wellbeing training.

4.5 Safety Services

Safety Services will:

- Support managers/head teachers and Human Resources with the completion of risk assessments;
- Assist with the completion of workplace assessments as requested. Typically this will include, room layout, heating and ventilation and display screen equipment;
- Advise managers/head teachers on aids and adaptations which may be required to enable employees to continue working;
- Develop guidance notes as appropriate on work activities and health and safety legislation.

4.6 Occupational Health

Occupational Health will:

- Support employees who are experiencing wellbeing issues;
- Work with managers/head teachers, Human Resources and Safety Services to provide employee assistance programmes including physiotherapy, counselling and case conferences;
- Provide information on general health, illnesses and work related diseases.

5. Arrangements

5.1 Approach

The council will use the management standards devised by the HSE as a basis for handling wellbeing issues. This is by consideration of the following:

Demands

- Employees are given adequate and achievable demands in relation to their agreed hours of work;
- Employees skills and abilities are matched to the demands of their job both at the initial recruitment stage and reviewed subsequently at employee development review;
- Jobs are designed to be within the capabilities of a range of employees;
- Employees concerns about their work environment are considered.

Controls

- Employees where possible within service demands have control over their pace of work;
- Employees are encouraged to use their skills and initiative whilst undertaking their work;
- The Council will encourage and support employees in developing their skills;

- Within service demands employees are consulted over their working patterns.

Support

- The Council has developed policies and procedures which are available to adequately support employees. These can be readily accessed via the intranet or via line managers for employees without intranet access;
- Systems should be developed and be in place for managers to respond locally to any individual concerns;
- Employees should receive regular and constructive feedback from managers;
- Employees are given the information on what support is available and how and when to access it.

Relationships

- The Council promotes positive behaviours at work to avoid conflict and ensure fairness;
- To prevent or resolve unacceptable behaviour there are agreed policies and procedures which are available to all staff;
- Systems are in place for employees to report unacceptable behaviour and for management staff to deal with this behaviour.

Role

- Employees are provided with information which enables them to understand their role and responsibilities;
- Employees are able to raise concerns about any uncertainties or conflicts they may have regarding their role and responsibilities;
- Within the Council the different requirements of a role are assessed to determine competency.

Change

- Employees will be provided with information to enable then to understand the reasons for proposed changes;
- Management will ensure adequate consultation on changes and give employees the opportunity to influence proposals;
- Employees will be made aware of the probable impact of any changes in their jobs. They will also be given training to support any changes in their jobs;
- Employees are made aware of timetables for changes and have access to support during the changes.

Employees are all individuals and flexibility of the Council's management tools allows for individual and workplace needs to be assessed on this basis. Personal or work problems can impact on the wellbeing of an individual employee and cannot easily be separated out.

5.2   **First Point of Contact**

Line managers are essential first points of contact as they may recognise a change in an individual that they themselves may not have realised. They are then in a position to take the appropriate action. Factors which may affect an individual may be categorised as:

Work

- Nature of the work;
- Hours worked;
- Definition of the role;
- Physical or mental capability;
- Unrealistic challenges and deadlines;
- Perceived bullying or harassment;
- Concerns regarding changes in the workplace.

Personal

- Difficult relationships;
- Family or personal health issues;
- Bereavement or financial concerns.

5.3   **Policies and Guidance Documents**

To undertake this management task, managers must be aware of the following supporting policies/guidance on:

- Attendance management – The Attendance at Work Policy and Procedure, and guidance notes for managers are available via the Human Resources Intranet Site. The aim of the policy is to give clear guidance for employees and managers on attendance management;
- Musculoskeletal disorders (MSD) - This package of guidance documents, available via the Safety Services Intranet Site, looks at the physical effects on employees from physical work and/or interaction with equipment;
- Bullying and harassment – The Bullying and Harassment Policy is available via the Human Resources Intranet Site. The council is quite specific in that bullying of any kind is not acceptable behaviour.

Whilst specific policies do not exist for managing mental health, illness and disease, the council is committed to reducing this in improving the wellbeing of staff. Further detailed below:

Mental Health

There are a wide range of mental health conditions. Within the workplace these are usually manifested in the form of stress, anxiety or depression. If effectively managed then employees can undertake normal day to day life which includes the ability to perform in their working environment. Mental health conditions are not always reported as people may feel there is a stigma attached. The Council endeavours to support its employees as necessary. Mental health conditions, wherever possible, will be handled the same as physical, in terms of personalised risk assessment/plan approach.

Illness and Disease Reduction

Occupational Health can offer advice on conditions that are most commonly faced by employees in the execution of their work. Managers/headteachers must seek advice where they are unclear as to how a condition should be managed in the workplace. This can be over the telephone, via e-mail or by meeting face to face. Where there are wider implications then a case conference with Human Resources and Occupational Health may be useful.

Where managers/headteachers are unsure as to whether a referral is appropriate they must contact the Occupational Health Unit for guidance. If a fit note has been received the unit can offer guidance, particularly where the note makes specific recommendations. Managers/headteachers are asked to seek guidance/make a referral to the unit as appropriate.

Where the illness/disease may have been caused by work then Safety Services must be contacted to assist with investigation, risk assessment and control measure implementation.

Some conditions must be reported under the Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR), further information can be found in the Accident/Incident Reporting Guidance Document. Stress is not reportable under RIDDOR, even if there is a fit note indicating work as a contributory factor. Individual referrals should still be made to Human Resources/Occupational Health as appropriate.

5.4 Tools

Effective wellbeing of employees will be assisted by the use of effective communication. The Council operates an open door policy to all employees to discuss wellbeing issues with their manager at any time. Should an employee be reluctant to speak to their manager, arrangements can be made to speak to an alternative officer/manager or external service provider where appropriate. Additional to this, formal communication channels include:

- Team briefings – agendas to include team, directorate and authority wide updates;
- Supervision – person centred update to include workload and any issues the employee wishes to raise;
- Grapevine (corporate communication tool with items of interest available across all functions);
- Directorate diagonal slice – an opportunity for individuals to meet with the director.

Employee Engagement Strategy

Includes:

- An annual workforce survey which is anonymous and asks a wide range of questions which address the majority of the HSE management standards as well as other pertinent issues faced by the council. The results are used to monitor employee satisfaction;
- Suggestion schemes – again can be anonymous and encourage employees to contribute towards efficiencies and factors affecting their employment.

Employee Development Reviews

- These are conducted every six months or no less than twelve months in certain services (due to the occupation, location and number of hours worked) by managers with their staff. They provide the opportunity for the manager and employee to have a two way discussion. The review identifies a summary of the employee's performance during the review period. It also focuses on operational and related development objectives, future plans, considering the aims and aspirations for the Council and the employee, identification of training needs and a review of training undertaken over the EDR period. Wellbeing issues are also considered and a summary of any agreed actions recorded on the EDR form. The HSE Management Standards have been incorporated into the EDR guidance for managers as per paragraph 5.1.

Competency Based Recruitment

- Job Outlines and Person Specifications accompany all vacancy notifications. These allow individuals to determine if a role is suitable for them and their career aspirations;
- Skill testing also forms part of the recruitment management process to identify candidate strengths and weaknesses so effective matching is achieved;
- Qualification checks – many roles demand a specified qualification, certificates and licences are checked prior to a job offer being made;
- The council has a competency framework which is used to recruit to identified roles.

Team Dynamics

- Service and performance plans are developed from localised team agendas and targets. Performance is monitored to identify work pressure and the affects this has on other teams within the department.
- Investors in People – The council is committed to and has embedded the principles and processes within the standard empowering staff in their daily work.
- Commitments to training – During the EDR process, training requirements are identified for each individual member of the team. The council has a comprehensive training package available, as well as the opportunity for individuals to request formal nationally recognised work related qualifications. Support is offered through financial assistance and time off to attend training according to the requirements of the training and the business needs.
- Flexible working patterns/family friendly policies – working patterns are initially determined at the appointments process, but they maybe varied in accordance with the suite of policies available.

To support the proactive wellbeing tools, a reactive package is also in place, as set out in paragraphs 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6.

Training

The Council currently offers the following training courses.

- Well being awareness – primarily aimed at employees being able to identify stress its causes and triggers and the solutions that can be used for themselves and others.

- Managing Wellbeing in the Workplace – This course is aimed at all levels of manager's with responsibility for managing a team. The course explores practical skills and strategies to manage wellbeing in the workplace in order to maximise performance and reduce sickness absence.

These courses can be requested through the employee development review and are booked through the relevant training co-ordinator. In addition the Managing Wellbeing in the Workplace Course is available through the Leadership Pathways Programme.

Wellbeing at Work Assessment Process using the Employee Development Review (EDR)

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────────┐
│ Wellbeing Assessment carried out at April EDR │ ───→ │ Manager to set time and  │
│ (Should an employee develop wellbeing issues  │      │ date with employee       │
│ outside of this process, it must be dealt     │      └──────────────────────────┘
│ with by the manager.)                         │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    │
                    ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Manager conducts review and addresses         │
│ wellbeing issues with the employee, recorded  │
│ on the Wellbeing Individual Assessment Form    │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    │
                    ▼
         ┌──────────────────────┐
         │ Issues raised by      │
         │ employee?             │
         └──────────────────────┘
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- **Yes**
- **Take in to consideration reasonable adjustments, HR policies, etc.**
- **No**

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┌──────────────────────┐
│ Can the issue be      │
│ resolved by the       │
│ manager?              │
└──────────────────────┘
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- **No**
- **Yes**

Seek assistance from HR if necessary.

Refer to Head of Service for resolution. If departmental issue, raise at DMT.

Head of Service to discuss considerations with the manager

Have the issues been resolved?

Manager to sign off the Wellbeing Individual Assessment Form and forward a copy to employee.

Health and Safety Steering Groups to regularly monitor wellbeing issues raised by relevant departmental management teams

- **No**
- **Yes**

Refer to Director if issues cannot be resolved by the Head of Service and Manager.

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Further to agreement by the employee, Manager to sign off the Wellbeing Individual Assessment Form and forward copy to employee