Employee Well-being Policy

Issued by – Human Resources
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1.   Introduction

The Council has developed this Employee Wellbeing Policy to manage its obligations to maintain the mental health and wellbeing of all staff.

It covers the Council's commitment to employee health, the responsibilities of managers and others for maintaining psychological health, health promotion initiatives, communicating and training on health issues, the range of support available for the maintenance of health, and organisational commitment to handling individual issues.

2.   Objectives

The aim of this policy is to describe the organisation's commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of employees in its broadest, holistic sense, setting out how the organisation fulfils its legal obligations, the responsibilities of different functions and specialists and the range of services available to help employees maintain health and wellbeing. The organisation recognises that wellbeing and performance are linked. Improving employees' ability to cope with the demands of work and to balance work and home life will ultimately lead to improved individual and organisational performance.

3.   The Council's Commitment

There are legal obligations under health and safety legislation to manage risks to the health and safety of employees. In addition to reducing safety risks, this means operating the business in a way that minimises harm to employees' physical and mental health, for example, by ensuring that the demands of jobs are not unacceptable and having policies and procedures in place to support individuals experiencing mental ill health at work.

The Council will put in place measures to prevent and manage risks to employee wellbeing, together with appropriate training and individual support. It will also seek to foster a mentally healthy culture by incorporating these principles in line with manager training and running regular initiatives to raise awareness of mental health issues at work.

4.   Responsibilities

4.1   The Council

The Council has a legal duty of care to employees to ensure health at work, as set out in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. It will ensure that its policies and practices reflect this duty and review the operation of these documents at regular intervals.

4.2   Senior Managers

Senior Managers will demonstrate leadership by active and visible participation in and promotion of wellbeing programmes.

4.2   Line Managers

The Council's Health and Safety Policy requires managers to assess the risks of injury associated with the work they manage, and take steps to eliminate, reduce and control these risks. Risk assessments should be reviewed annually. Guidance on risk assessment can be found in the health and safety pages of the intranet.

Line Managers must also ensure that they take steps to reduce the risks to employee health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring that the right people are recruited to the right jobs and that a good match is obtained between individuals recruited and job descriptions/specification;
- Keeping employees in the team up to date with developments at work and how these might affect their job and workload;
- Ensuring that employees know who to approach with problems concerning their role and how to pursue issues with senior management;
- Making sure jobs are designed fairly and that work is allocated appropriately between teams;
- Ensuring that work stations are regularly assessed to ensure that they are appropriate and fit for purpose.

If line managers are approached by employees with health concerns they should:

- Ensure any information that an employee chooses to share with them is treated in confidence; and
- Seek HR advice on how to support the employee.

Managers must also be familiar with the Council's additional Human Resources Policies.

4.3   Human Resources

Human Resources will continue to develop corporate policies and procedures to protect the health and wellbeing of employees, assist line managers in supporting individuals, and liaise as appropriate with Occupational Health, Remploy and other medical professionals, with the objective of helping employees to maintain good health and wellbeing.

In addition, Human Resources will run Employee Wellbeing events to signpost staff to the services and tools available to support their wellbeing.

4.4   Health & Safety

The Health & Safety team can work with employees to carry out a risk assessment which can be a vital tool in assisting an employee to identify any risks in their role or working environment.

Following the risk assessment, the line manager and the Human Resources team will work together to implement any reasonable adjustments that Health and Safety colleagues recommend to effectively support the employee.

4.5   Occupational Health

Independent Occupational Health professionals provide a confidential and comprehensive service designed to help employees stay in work, or to return to work, after experiencing physical or mental health problems. This will include preparing medical assessments of individuals' fitness for work following referrals from line managers and Human Resources, liaising with Doctors, and working with individuals to help them to retain and successfully engage in employment.

4.6   Remploy

Remploy offers access to a confidential work mental health support service.

This confidential service delivered by Remploy is funded by the Department for Work and Pensions and is available at no charge to any employees with mental health issues which may be affecting their work.

Their specialist advisers provide:

- Tailored work-focused mental health support for nine months;
- Suitable coping strategies;
- A Wellness Action plan (WAP) to keep them in, or return to work;
- Ideas for workplace adjustments to help them fulfil their role;
- Practical advice to support those with a mental health condition.

To access this service employees can speak to a member of the Human Resources team who can refer them directly to a Remploy adviser in the strictest confidence. Alternatively, employees can contact them directly by telephone: **0300 456 8114** or by email: a2wmhss@remploy.co.uk.

Further details can be found on their website:

https://www.remploy.co.uk/employers/mental-health-and-wellbeing/workplace-mental-health-support-service-employers

4.7   Employees

Employees must take responsibility for managing their own wellbeing, by adopting good health behaviours (*for example, in relation to diet, alcohol consumption and smoking*) and informing the Council if they believe work or the work environment poses a risk to their health. Any health-related

information disclosed by an employee during discussions with managers, Human Resources or the Occupational Health service, is treated in confidence.

4.8   Unison Representatives

The Council works very closely with Unison colleagues to consult on work practices, Human Resources policies and work design which could impact on employee wellbeing.

4.9   Employee Assistance Programme

To help support our employees the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is a free support service available to employees and their families. It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and is accessible by telephone, email and online.

This service is delivered by Workplace Options, an independent provider of employee support services. Their staff are specialists in fields such as well-being, family matters, relationship issues, debt management, consumer rights, and much more.

The EAP can provide practical information, fact sheets and packs, webinars, resource information on support services in the local area and even short-term face to face or telephonic counselling. Family or couples counselling may also be available.

To access this confidential service, employees or their family members can contact the service directly by telephone: **0800 243 458**. Further information and access to a wide range of resources can be found at **www.workplaceoptions.com**. Go to the Member Login in page.

User name is **"tendring**"

Password is "**employee".**

5.   Health Promotion Initiatives

The authority currently works in partnership with a number of 3rd parties to provide employees with a range of wellbeing resources, including but not limited to:

- Provide (*a 'Community Interest Company' with a focus on health*);
- Health in Mind (*provides access to a wide range of talking therapy treatments for adults with common mental health problems in and around Colchester and Tendring*);
- Tendring's Leisure Services (*corporate gym membership*);
- Flu vaccination provision;
- NHS Supporting Mental Health application (https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/);
- Regional Employers/Vine colleagues (seeking best practice for managing employee wellbeing).

The Authority also has a number of trained Livewell Champions amongst the workforce whose role is to raise awareness of positive wellbeing.

5.1   Mental Health First Aiders

The Authority has a number of trained Mental Health First Aider's amongst its workforce.

The role of a Mental Health First Aider in the workplace is to be a point of contact for an employee who is experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress. This interaction could range from having an initial conversation through to supporting the person to get appropriate help. As well as in a crisis, Mental Health First Aiders are valuable in providing early intervention help for someone who may be developing a mental health issue.

- Mental Health First Aiders are trained to:
- Spot the early signs and symptoms of mental ill health;
- Start a supportive conversation with a colleague who may be experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress;
- Listen to the person non-judgementally;
- Assess the risk of suicide or self-harm;
- Encourage the person to access appropriate professional support or self-help;
- Strategies. This might include encouraging access to internal support systems such as:
    - The Employee Assistance Programme or Remploy;
    - Escalate to the appropriate emergency services, if necessary.

A list of the Authority's Mental Health First Aiders can be found in the global address list.

5.2   Suicide Prevention

The Authority is committed to raising awareness of Suicide Prevention amongst the workforce. Selected staff, including the Senior Managers Forum have received Suicide Awareness and Response Training and a number of the Mental Health First Aider's have also completed Suicide First Aid Training. Mental Health Awareness and Suicide Awareness Training is available to all staff, along with range of supporting resources, such as the Mental Health & Well-being Toolkit.

6.   Training and Communications

Line managers and employees will regularly discuss individual training needs to ensure that employees have the necessary skills to adapt to ever-changing job demands. An examination of training needs will be particularly important prior to, and during, periods of organisational change.

Managers and employees are encouraged to participate in communication/feedback exercises, including staff surveys.

All employees are expected to be aware of the importance of effective communication and to use the media most appropriate to the message, for example team meetings, one-to-one meetings, electronic communications and Council-wide methods. The Council will ensure that structures exist to

give employees regular feedback on their performance, and for them to raise concerns.

The Council will consider special communication media during periods of organisational change.

7. Relationship with other Policies

This Employee Wellbeing Policy should be read in conjunction with other policies and procedures covering attendance and health, including policies on special leave, flexible working, the management of short and long-term absence, conflict resolution & grievance, equal opportunities and staff training and development. Please refer to the Human Resources policies available on the Council's Intranet for further advice and guidance.

8. Law relating to this document

Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
Data Protection Act 2018
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (SI 1999/3242)
General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679 EU)