

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – 29TH MARCH 2022

Report of the Strategic Director Environment and Corporate Services

Part A

ITEM 6 HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY AND CHARTER

Purpose of Report

Personnel Committee to consider the proposed Health and Wellbeing Policy and Health and Wellbeing Charter.

Recommendation

That Personnel Committee approve the Health and Wellbeing Policy and Health and Wellbeing Charter as suitable for implementation.

Reason

The Council has a Health and Wellbeing at Work Group who meet quarterly to discuss and develop a range of health and wellbeing initiatives across the Council. The group identified a need to develop a Health and Wellbeing Policy and a Health and Wellbeing Charter to support its employees.

Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

The proposed Health and Wellbeing Policy and Health and Wellbeing Charter makes clear the health and wellbeing objectives for the council relating to its employees. It is a further measure to support the initiatives and policies that the Council currently has in place to support health and wellbeing.

The Health and Wellbeing Policy and Charter were discussed at SLT on 13th October 2021 and JMTUM on 20th January 2022.

Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions

It is recommended that the Health and Wellbeing Policy and Health and Wellbeing Charter be published on the intranet, subject to agreement at Personnel Committee.

Financial Implications

There are no immediate financial implications arising from this decision.

Risk Management

There are no specific risks associated with this decision.

Background Papers: none

Appendices: Appendix A – Health and Wellbeing Policy
 Appendix B – Health and Wellbeing Charter

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Part B

1. The Council has a Health and Wellbeing at Work Group who meet to discuss and develop a range of health and wellbeing initiatives across the Council.
2. To support the work of that group, one of the actions arising from the action plan was to develop a Health and Wellbeing Policy and a Health and Wellbeing Charter.
3. The Council seeks to foster a positive health and wellbeing culture across the organisation and has implemented a Health and Wellbeing at Work Action Plan to support this aim.
4. The Health and Wellbeing Policy has been developed to support the health and wellbeing of all employees. It covers the Council's commitment to employee health, the responsibilities of managers and others for maintaining psychological health, health promotion, communicating on health issues and the range of support available to help employees maintain health and wellbeing.
5. This support includes having measures in place to prevent and manage risks to employee wellbeing such as having policies and procedures in place to support health and wellbeing and running regular initiatives to raise awareness of health issues.
6. The objectives of the Health and Wellbeing Policy, Workplace Health Action Plan and Charter are summarised as follows:
 - Build and maintain a workplace environment and culture that positively supports health and wellbeing.
 - To increase employee knowledge and awareness of health and wellbeing issues and healthy lifestyle behaviours.
 - To facilitate employee's active participation in a range of initiatives that support all aspects of health and wellbeing.
7. At the Joint Trade Union Management Meeting (JMTUM) on 20th January 2022 the trade unions asked for additional time to comment on the Health and Wellbeing Policy and Charter. As a result some minor amendments were made to both documents, prior to being submitted to Personnel Committee.

Health and Wellbeing Policy

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Purpose

The Health and Wellbeing Policy has been developed to support the health and wellbeing of all employees. It covers our commitment to employee health, the responsibilities of managers and others for maintaining psychological health, health promotion, communicating on health issues and the range of support available to help employees maintain health and wellbeing. This includes having measures in place to prevent and manage risks to employee wellbeing such as having policies and procedures in place to support health and wellbeing and running regular initiatives to raise awareness of health issues.

The Council has legal obligations under health and safety legislation to manage risks to the health and safety of employees. In addition to reducing safety risks, as outlined above, we will seek to foster a positive health and wellbeing culture across the organisation.

Scope

The policy applies to all employees of Charnwood Borough Council.

Objectives

The objectives of the Health and Wellbeing Policy, Workplace Health Action Plan and Charter are summarised as follows:

- Build and maintain a workplace environment and culture that positively supports health and wellbeing.
- To increase employee knowledge and awareness of health and wellbeing issues and healthy lifestyle behaviours.
- To facilitate employee's active participation in a range of initiatives that support all aspects of health and wellbeing.

Roles and Responsibilities

To achieve the health and wellbeing objectives outlined within the Health and Wellbeing Policy, Workplace Health Action Plan and Health and Wellbeing Charter, the following roles and responsibilities have been identified:

Organisation

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

The organisation will also develop and encourage a positive environment and culture to support health and wellbeing.

Line managers

Line managers will put in place measures to manage their staff in a manner which is not detrimental to mental health and which, at its best, can positively promote mental health and wellbeing. Managers should ensure that employees understand their role within the team and receive the necessary information and support from managers and team members to do their job. Managers must also familiarise themselves with the organisation's policies relating to health and wellbeing.

In particular, line managers must ensure that they take steps to support employee's health and wellbeing by:

- Ensuring that employees are aware of initiatives that might support their health and wellbeing.
- Ensuring that they, as managers, continue to support and keep up to date with health and wellbeing initiatives.
- Actively supporting the implementation of this policy and charter, including its purpose and objectives.

Employees

Employees have a responsibility for managing their own health and wellbeing in the workplace and should inform the organisation if they believe work or the work environment poses a risk to their health. Employees are strongly encouraged to raise personal physical and mental health difficulties that they are facing with their line manager as early as possible.

Health and Wellbeing Group

The Health and Wellbeing Group will conduct regular Workplace Health Needs Assessment Surveys and analyse the results to implement, review, develop and promote the Workplace Health Action Plan with a focus on:

- Physical activity
- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Workplace Health and Culture
- Healthy Eating and Weight Management
- Sleep
- Smoking/Alcohol

Occupational Health

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

If employees believe that their work, or some aspect of it, is putting their wellbeing at risk they should, in the first instance, speak to their line manager or the HR department. The discussion should cover workload and other aspects of job demands and raise issues such as identified training needs. A referral to the occupational health team will be made by Human Resources if this is considered appropriate after an employee's initial discussion with their manager.

Mental Health First Aiders

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 offering support in a crisis, Mental Health First Aiders are valuable in providing early intervention help for someone who may be developing a mental health issue.

AMICA – Employee Counselling and Psychological Support Service

The provider of an external confidential employee assistance service, AMICA, is available to employees through its 24-hour helpline. Referrals may be made for face-to-face counselling for employees.

- www.amica-counselling.uk
- 0116 2544388

Trade Unions

- Employees who are members of a recognised Trade Union (UNISON, GMB and Unite) can raise health and safety issues through their union. The unions will provide independent advice and support to their members regarding workplace health, wellbeing and safety matters.

Health Promotion Initiatives

The organisation will develop and run a range of health promotion initiatives designed to raise awareness of health and lifestyle issues affecting mental health and wellbeing.

The initiatives will include:

- Management development/awareness training
- Employee development/awareness training
- Surveys/assessments/reviews
- EIA's to consider impacts on health and wellbeing when reviewing/implementing policies and procedures
- Workplace health challenges and national campaigns
- Employees will also be encouraged to establish clubs and groups designed to foster wellbeing, for example lunchtime walking or fitness sessions.

The initiatives will cover:

- Mental health and wellbeing
- Stress management and resilience
- Health and lifestyle behaviours, with voluntary screening
- Physical activity and fitness
- Specific topics, such as menopause support and awareness.

These will be evaluated to determine their effectiveness.

Training, Appraisal 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.

Managers and employees are encouraged to participate in communication/feedback exercises, including stress audits and 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 organisation-wide methods. The organisation will ensure that structures exist to give employees regular feedback on their performance, and for them to raise concerns.

Employees will also be encouraged to establish clubs and groups designed to foster wellbeing, for example lunchtime walking or fitness sessions.

Appraisal

In accordance with the Council's Appraisal process, clear objectives/ targets/ deadlines and performance standards should be agreed with all employees including those who are agile workers. It is important that the health and wellbeing of an employee is considered as part of the appraisal process.

Policies Related to Health and Wellbeing

This Council has a range of policies and procedures that link to Health and Wellbeing. The Health and Wellbeing Policy and Charter should be read in conjunction with other related policies and procedures, including those outlined below:

- Agile Working Policy and Guidance – contributes to the Council's performance as well as supporting employees to achieve a positive work-life balance
- Attendance Management Policy and Guidance – covers all aspects of attendance management including links to the Managers Guidance on Mental Health and a toolkit of associated documents. In addition, it covers other areas of support such as AMICA, occupational health, risk assessments and reasonable adjustments.
- Dignity and Behaviour in the Workplace - promotes an environment where employees can work without fear of being intimidated, harassed or bullied. It provides a procedure for employees to raise concerns in this regard.
- Domestic Abuse Policy - recognises that domestic abuse can have an enormous effect on an employee's health and wellbeing which in turn can affect performance, attendance and overall mental health. It is designed to offer a means of support and guidance for anyone in this position.
- Equalities Policies Statement – Outlines the Council's commitment to equality in all of its activities.
- Learning and Development Guidance and Policies – are designed to support the induction process and all aspects of learning and development.
- Menopause Guidance - supports the Council in achieving an environment where staff can openly and comfortably engage in discussions about menopause, and the impact this can have on an individual.
- Managers Guidance and Toolkit or Mental Health and Supporting Employees - demonstrates the Councils commitment to developing a culture and work environment when employees feel able to be open about their experiences of mental health. It also links to documents such as a HSE Stress Risk Assessment and a Wellness support plan which

helps managers and employees communicate about positive and negative aspects of work and support.

- Trans Equality Policy – sets out the Council's commitment to fully supporting trans employees and to create a positive culture and environment.

Health and Wellbeing Charter

As part of our commitment to employee health and wellbeing, the Health and Wellbeing Charter will sit alongside the Health and Wellbeing Policy. The Charter will outline commitments from the Workplace Health Action Plan, giving equal focus to physical and mental health. Our health and wellbeing commitments are:

- To produce, implement and communicate a Workplace Health Action Plan outlining our aims to support health and wellbeing within the Council.
- To encourage physical activity and health awareness through a range of initiatives to increase awareness of the options available to support employees.
- To support employees' mental health and wellbeing and raise awareness by providing effective resources including support services, training and targeted sessions and promote relevant initiatives and key national campaigns.
- To organise events and provide relevant support relating to health and wellbeing as identified in the Workplace Health Action Plan.
- To provide employees with good working conditions and environment, including making reasonable adjustments to improve working conditions of staff that require additional support.
- To encourage open dialogue about health and wellbeing among employees and managers.
- To enable the recognised trade unions to provide advice and support to their members as requested.
- To routinely monitor employee health and wellbeing, the Health and Wellbeing Group will meet to review actions and initiatives relating to health and wellbeing.
- To ensure that health and wellbeing features on SLT, CLT and team meeting agendas.