

Workplace Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2019

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Workplace Wellbeing Strategy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The West Suffolk councils have a shared set of priorities, including the commitment to developing resilient families and communities that are healthy and active. Further, it is recognised that the workplace plays a key role in promoting the nation's health and well-being¹.
- 1.2 The Councils' Workforce Strategy, also, contains key objectives in regard to employee well-being:
- 'We will actively promote and manage wellbeing including effective and active employee engagement, and to
 - Build resilience and energy among our staff and partners to enable change and deliver our priorities.
- 1.3 West Suffolk councils recognise that the wellbeing of our employees is a key driver for success. This strategy sets out the councils' objectives for employee wellbeing, the structures in place to support the strategy now and for the future and how the councils will measure the outcomes.

2. What is Wellbeing

- 2.1 CIPD report that wellbeing in the workplace can be defined as 'creating an environment to promote a state of contentment, which allows an employee to flourish and achieve their full potential for the benefit of themselves and their organisation'. Research shows that highly engaged individuals, with high levels of well-being, are the most productive and happiest employees².
- 2.2 We, as an employer, and as an organisation, focus on delivery for our community in the widest sense and have a responsibility to promote and support the wellbeing of our employees. 70% of our employees live in the West Suffolk area, and are key to our links with our communities. The wellbeing of our employees should be at the heart of what we do to champion better work and working lives, which will benefit individuals, businesses, economies and society.
- 2.3 Wellbeing is far wider than dealing with and supporting sickness – it represents a culture which places physical, mental and social health high on the organisation's agenda. Well employees are both physically and mentally able and willing to contribute in the workplace and are more likely to be better engaged and informed. Improving the wellbeing of staff will, in turn, improve the wellbeing of their families and the wider communities we serve and more broadly the country as a whole. It is a fact, that well people require less support and resources from the health services and benefits agencies.
- 2.4 It is, also, clear that when our staff feel well and have job satisfaction and job enrichment, the experience of our customers will be affected. The areas of health and

¹ Dame Carol Black 'Working for a healthier tomorrow'

² Towers Watson

wellbeing are strongly interlinked and we need to promote a culture which is shared by our staff.

- 2.5 Health and wellbeing is not just about one-off initiatives. It is about aspiring to position employee wellbeing as a continuous thread within what we do as an organisation. Dame Carole Black's review of Britain's working age population "Working for a healthier tomorrow" firmly positions the workplace as playing a key role in promoting the nation's health and wellbeing and supports a holistic approach to health and wellbeing at work.
- 2.6 We are participating in the framework of the Suffolk Workplace Wellbeing Charter to enable us to evaluate what we currently do and what we need to consider, in order to be proactive and engage in enhancing the health and wellbeing of our staff. This can be achieved through wider wellbeing initiatives, joint working with our staff and managers and working with local partners, in order to identify and address areas for improvement.
- 2.7 We already have a number of key policies³ in place, which underpin this Strategy in supporting health and wellbeing.
- 2.8 We are continually providing training, guidance and support to managers to ensure they develop the skills set they need in order to support their employees in improving their health and wellbeing. We provide information to raise awareness and promote the correlation between positive emotional and mental health wellbeing and exercise.
- 2.9 The population of West Suffolk in 2014 was 174,885 with an ageing population; 20% being over 65. 83.6% of Forest Heath residents and 83% of St Edmundsbury residents consider themselves to be in good or very good health compared with 81.2% for England as a whole.

3. Aims of the Strategy

- To create a safe and healthy working environment.
- Improve general wellbeing and make workplace wellbeing everyone's responsibility, in turn improving wellbeing within our communities.
- Encourage and support employees to develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- Provide education and information and promote wellbeing awareness to managers and staff.
- Achieve and maintain the Suffolk Workplace Wellbeing Charter.
- Be an employer of choice adding value to recruitment and retention.

4. What does a healthy workforce look like?

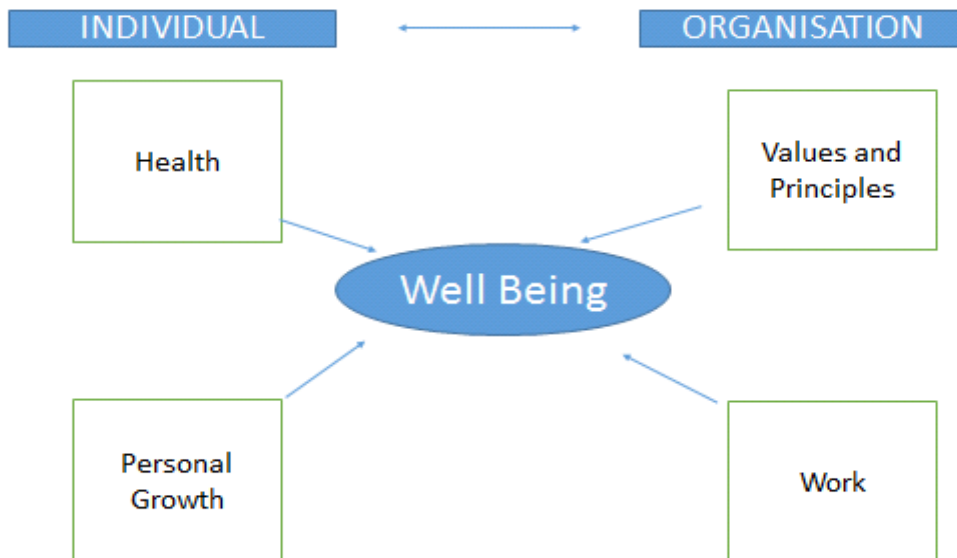
- 4.1 The list is endless but a healthy workforce would be a healthier, happier workforce; motivated staff with increased morale and engagement; employee retention and reduction in turnover; reduction in absenteeism; good employee relations and informed managers and staff.

³ Workforce Strategy, Managing Absence and Ill-health, Working with Cancer and Critical Illness, Health and Safety, Double Tick, Mindful Employer etc

5. What does a healthy workplace look like?

- 5.1 Being an employer and partner of choice: an environment where health risks are identified and managed; a place where work is designed taking into account peoples’ needs; an environment which actively supports health and wellbeing; a culture that creates conditions for innovation, creativity and appropriate attitude to risk, an organisation which trains managers to play a key role in supporting and taking responsibility for the wellbeing of their staff.
- 5.2 Health and wellbeing are not just medical issues. The nature and type of jobs that employees do are vitally important in terms of job satisfaction, and in relation to personal motivation, reward and control. The role and skill set of the manager is key. Good line management can have a very positive effect on health, wellbeing and improved performance. It is recognised that a positive attitude and well-being enhances productivity through the enabling of potential talent. Managers have a role in identifying and supporting people with health conditions to help them to carry on with their responsibilities or consider opportunities and adjustments where possible. It is generally accepted that keeping people in work has a positive effect generally on their well-being.

6. Key areas of Wellbeing



Key Area	Elements	Wellbeing Activities
HEALTH	Physical Health	Health promotion, health checks, physician support, occupational health support, subsidised sports centre membership, supporting rehabilitation, cycle to work scheme, physiotherapy, drug and alcohol screening and support programme, effective absence management, phased return to work, adaptations and

Physical Safety	adjustments to work environment, smoking cessation initiatives. Safe working practices, safe equipment, health and safety policy and practices, personal safety training, personal security, on line health and safety training, safe driving.
Mental Health	Stress management, risk assessments, counselling, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, mediation, training managers to have difficult conversations, mental health policy, Mindful Employer commitment, occupational health support; Mental Health at Work Policy.

WORK

Work Environment	Ergonomically designed working areas, open and light, break out areas, café facilities, IT systems; easy access to outdoors; focus on culture and Organisational Development.
Line Management	Effective people management policies, training for line managers, sickness absence management.
Work Demands	Clear job roles and design, workload, working hours, flexible working, home working, work life balance, job satisfaction, job enrichment, appropriate work, output not hours culture.
Pay and Reward	Fair pay and benefits, PDR, employee benefits scheme, subsidised gym membership, non financial recognition linked with performance = talent management.

VALUES & PRINCIPLES

Leadership	Clear corporate priorities, Core Values BERT, OD plan, LT & SMT, trust culture, communication strategy, Workplace Wellbeing Charter.
Ethical Standards	Social commitment, social responsibility, dignity at work, equality and diversity, community investment, volunteering opportunities, Double Tick employer "positive about employing people with disabilities".

PERSONAL GROWTH

Career Development	Mentoring, coaching, performance management, performance development plans, career
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Lifelong Learning

development, training opportunities, succession planning, secondments, placements and outplacement support. Resilience, corporate training programme, flexible training programmes that meet current trends and changes, management training, access to training, career opportunities, working in the Suffolk system, challenging and rewarding work.

7. Who is responsible for Wellbeing?

7.1 Organisation

7.2 We need to implement a holistic approach to health and wellbeing that is preventative and proactive, as well as reactive, with a strong focus on rehabilitation and keeping people in work. We need to promote good physical health and good mental health and balance the needs of the workforce with the work that we, as an organisation, deliver on.

7.3 Line Management

7.4 Line managers are key in shaping employees' experience of work and bringing people management policies to life. They play a vital role in every day management and must make it a priority to understand their staff, use emotional intelligence to identify issues and have the confidence and interpersonal skills to implement policies fairly and consistently and manage difficult conversations, when appropriate.

7.5 Health & Safety and HR

7.6 Health & Safety and HR have a pivotal role in ensuring that people management policies are relayed to managers in a way that they can be interpreted fairly and consistently. They should support the delivery in those policies to ensure they steer the health and wellbeing agenda and making sure it is an integral part of the organisations day to day activities. Development of people policies need to ensure they have a clear link to workplace wellbeing and to the organisations priorities.

7.7 Employees

7.8 Employees have a personal responsibility for their own wellbeing and for that of others. They have a responsibility to stay healthy and to be well informed about health and exercise issues. They need to acknowledge the initiatives the organisation offers and benefit from those initiatives where relevant to their needs.

7.9 They, also, can recognise early signs of problems amongst their colleagues and should have confidence and knowledge in order to intervene, if appropriate, in a constructive and supportive way.

8. How will we measure the outcomes?

8.1 The obvious measures

8.2 There are a number of ways of measuring the outcomes of this Strategy.

8.3 There are the obvious organisation metrics that can be used to measure outcomes such as:-

- Reduced absence especially in relation to work related stress.
- Reduced accidents.
- Low turnover/retention of talent.
- Higher performance through the PR process.
- Reduced performance and people management issues.
- Higher levels of customer satisfaction and feedback.

8.4 These are all supported by data and facts and can be attributed to wellbeing. However, it is important to appreciate that these metrics can, also, be affected by many other initiatives and motivational matters outside of the wellbeing agenda. Wellbeing may be just a part of a bigger picture, contributing to improving productivity.

9. The subtle measures

9.1 There are a far greater number of subtle measurements such as increased and proactive staff engagement, greater participation in health and wellbeing initiatives offered, and improved management skill sets. Effective managers need to know their staff and recognise how to build relationships contributing to an identity of partner and 'employer of choice'. Good organisations have proactive responses to issues, third parties offering to work with them on wellbeing issues, lead the way in wellbeing, and are a role model to other bodies.

9.2 It is important to understand that just because a wellbeing initiative is offered, not every member of staff will want to take up that offer. One size does not fit all and it is important that wellbeing opportunities meet the needs of a diverse and wide range of staff and are delivered through the same wide range of delivery models. Not every employee will benefit from a "class room" style approach. The delivery models may be very subtle – ranging from education to notification, activities to signposting, for example. It is important to recognise the key areas of this strategy in Health; Personal Growth; Values and Principles and Work and be clear that delivery of initiatives are linked to these areas in order to enhance and strengthen what the Councils already offer.

10. Conclusion

10.1 A wellbeing strategy is not a set of initiatives that are rolled out over a set period of time in order to tick a box and reap the benefits. A wellbeing strategy is a commitment and culture which recognises challenges and change and is a continuum of initiatives which support the wellbeing of our employees. Our employees are ambassadors of the organisation and influencers of our communities. This strategy sits at the heart of the organisation not just within its OD plan but its day to day business.

- 10.2 A key factor in the wellbeing of the organisation is the skill of managers. Our managers need to be more than just commissioners of work. They need to ensure that they develop strong emotional intelligence skills in order to identify what their staff need in terms of wellbeing in order for those staff to perform at their optimum level. As highlighted throughout this strategy it is important to remember that there is no one size fits all and different staff will have different needs and it is those collective needs which need to be reflected in the offer we have within our wellbeing strategy.
- 10.3 The content of the strategy and the initiatives and policies that link with it will be regularly reviewed, updated and improved to ensure that wellbeing really is central to the success of our workforce, our organisation and our communities.

Revisions

Date of review or revision	Reason	Author
May 2016	Created	Wendy Canham

