

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**PUBLIC HEALTH AND PREVENTION CABINET PANEL
WEDNESDAY, 18, SEPTEMBER 2019 AT 10:00AM****HERTFORDSHIRE'S HEALTHY WORKPLACE PROGRAMME***Report of the Director of Public Health*

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1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To describe how workplace health and wellbeing is currently being addressed for Hertfordshire County Council ("the County Council") through the Healthy Workplace Programme.

2. Summary

- 2.1 All employers have a role in ensuring the health and wellbeing of their staff and healthy workplace programmes can be an important part of this role. Healthy workplace programmes are well received and valued by staff, with the potential for long lasting impact on their health and wellbeing. In addition, employers can benefit from programmes that improve staff sickness levels, turnover and productivity. There is clear evidence that comprehensive programmes can impact on these outcomes.
- 2.2 Many organisations across Hertfordshire value healthy workplace programmes and have committed resources to their delivery. Over the past year Hertfordshire County Council has rolled out a programme that develops and draws on a network of Healthy Workplace Champions, provides services and training for staff, and encourages staff to develop initiatives together that meet needs and interests. This Healthy Workplace programme will be reviewed in December 2019 for its impact over a full year. Results of the review and options for roll out to further public and private sector organisations will be presented to this Panel in early 2020 as officers are of the view that a phased approach to extending the scheme initially to the ten districts/boroughs and then other organisations in Hertfordshire could enable mutual learning on effective, accessible and affordable good practice which could be

shared widely across the county. A key focus for this approach would be to add value to what is already in place

3. Recommendations

3.1 Panel is asked to: -

- Note and comment on the content of this report.
- Note and comment upon the Director of Public Health's view that supporting employees to improve their health and wellbeing is an appropriate priority for the County Council, as it can benefit both individual staff members and the organisation as a whole.
- Note that a further paper will be presented at Panel in early 2020, setting out findings from the first full year of the Healthy Workplace programme. The paper will also cover potential next steps for extending the programme in the ten districts/boroughs and other workplaces from April 2020.

4. Background

- 4.1 There is clear evidence that good work in a safe, encouraging and supportive working environment improves health and wellbeing across people's lives. All employers have a role in ensuring the health and wellbeing of their staff: action can range from senior staff actively prioritising workplace health and supportive workplace policies, through to encouraging healthy behaviours such as taking regular breaks, supporting mental wellbeing, being active, and eating well. With people often spending a third of their waking hours at work, the workplace remains an ideal and effective setting for tailored health improvement.
- 4.2 Comprehensive healthy workplace programmes benefit employees and employers, helping to reduce sickness levels, promote productivity and reduce staff turnover. There is also potential for return on investment of between £2 - £10 for every £1 spent. Workplace interventions that promote mental wellbeing can also reduce costs by £495 - £5,160 per affected employee per year. Mental wellbeing and musculoskeletal issues are the two largest causes of staff sickness for the County Council. There is clear evidence for the potential impact of healthy workplace programmes on these issues.
- 4.3 Public Health commissioned a healthy workplace programme during 2013-16 delivered by Business in the Community, supported by Human Resources. The programme worked with 84 public and private sector organisations. More than 400 in house Workplace Health Champions were supported, and more than 1,400 staff were trained on mental health first aid courses. An approach that built on this success at significantly lower cost has been developed within the County Council. Following an initial set up phase, this approach has been delivered across the County Council since January 2019. Interest in the programme can also peak at key parts of the year, such as around the New Year when people reflect on their health. The programme also

needs to have sufficient capacity to give people meaningful options to take up a range of opportunities.

- 4.4 Organisations will usually have initiatives that support the health and wellbeing of their staff already in place. A key issue is whether further opportunities could be added sustainably and add further value. Public Health is in a good position to offer advice and support for local organisations ready to enhance their existing healthy workplace offer, due to the department's experience and established links.

5. Current health and wellbeing support for County Council departments

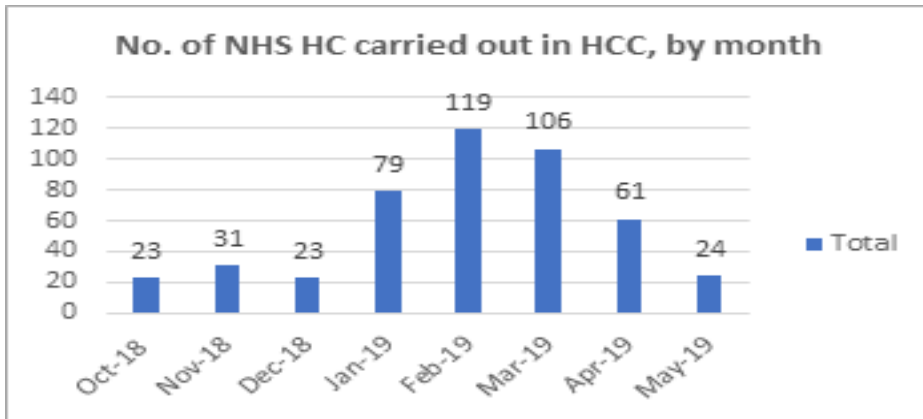
- 5.1 Officers within Human Resources (HR) and Public Health are working jointly to support and stimulate action on health and wellbeing across the County Council. Initiatives have been developed *for* staff following review of good practice, and directly *by* staff following interest within teams.
- 5.2 HR has set up a web-based directory "Herts Rewards" which provides a range of savings opportunities and benefits aiming to support staff wellbeing. This includes discounted leisure centre and exercise memberships, access to independent financial advice, the ability to purchase additional annual leave, access to an employee assistance programme, and a central portal providing advice/support and promotion of on-site activities – part of an evolving Wellbeing Action Plan.
- 5.3 The paragraphs below detail key health and wellbeing related initiatives developing across the County Council.
- 5.4 Workplace Health Champions are supported centrally to share information, raise awareness, signpost and initiate action within their teams as part of their day job (half a day a month). The Workplace Health Champions are trained in mental health support and Making Every Contact Count (MECC). There are currently 38 Health Champions fully trained (Table 1). The aim is for at least 70 Workplace Health Champions to be in place by March 2020, a ratio of around 1 Workplace Health Champion per 75 staff. An individual's role as a Workplace Health Champion is included in their annual appraisal, enabling this role to be recognised as a core part of the individual's job role.

Table 1: Health Champions, by County Council Department

County Council Department	Workplace Health Champions Trained	Workplace Health Champions per staff ratio
Adult Care Services	16	142
Children’s Services	9	210
Resources	8	198
Environment and Infrastructure	4	120
Public Health	1	79
TOTAL	38	

- 5.4.1 Workplace Health Champions have publicised county wide initiatives, such as the Mass Health Walk and (stair) climbing Mount Everest. They have delivered mental health awareness training within their teams, signposting individuals for support, developed regular initiatives like walking, Tai Chi, Yoga, running, and meditation groups, as well as promoted health campaigns. Workplace Health Champions meet regularly and receive a quarterly newsletter to share what they have done within their teams and stimulate ideas for further action. This case study video shows two Workplace Health Champions talking about their impact with colleagues <https://youtu.be/C0Dd-wG6TI8>.
- 5.5 Health Improvement Campaigns and Communications such as “Stoptober” (smoking) and “It’s Never too Late” (physical activity) have been publicised directly to County Council staff, as well as residents. The Year of Physical Activity was also promoted with staff. Workplace Health Champions can help to amplify the reach of these communications within their teams.
- 5.6 NHS Health Checks for staff - NHS Health Checks help to identify those people with as yet undiagnosed conditions and can help people reduce future risk of having a heart attack, stroke, high blood pressure, or diabetes. They are offered at work for free to improve access for those who struggle to attend their general practice. 466 NHS Health Checks have been completed up to the end of May 2019 within the County Council, (including for Serco and Ringway staff – see Chart 1). A further 111 have been carried across the districts/boroughs.

Chart 1: NHS Health Checks carried out in the County Council, by month



- 5.7 Blood Pressure Checks have started to be offered to staff by the public health service. These can be a standalone check with assurance or further follow up or may lead to eligible people wanting to have a full NHS Health Check or a similar health “MOT”.
- 5.8 Support to Make Every Contact Count (MECC) - Brief MECC I-learning is available to all County Council staff, covering the main unhealthy behaviours and simple actions that can make the difference. Face to face training and support has also been delivered to frontline staff in the Older Adults Social Work team, the Fire & Rescue Service, and in the Libraries, to enable them to initiate brief interventions with their clients. Frontline staff who receive this training need to commit to supporting residents as part of their work. They also need to have a role where advising on health improvement is seen as broadly appropriate.
- 5.9 Mental health training course - Hertfordshire Health Improvement Service devised a more tailored and cheaper alternative to Mental First Aid Training. This is currently offered to Workplace Health Champions as part of their core training and covers defining mental health, identifying signs of poor mental health, improving confidence in talking about mental health, and signposting onto sources of support. External mental health first aid courses are also available – around 40 First Aiders at main sites have been trained in mental health first aid and there are i-Learn modules on mental health at work for managers, and resilience and wellbeing. Organisations on the Health & Wellbeing Board were recently offered a co-ordinated training programme by the Director of Public Health.
- 5.10 Volunteering strategy for staff – HR have been supported by Public Health to develop a volunteering strategy for the County Council. This strategy enables staff to give their own time into County Council services, fulfilling one of the recognised Five Ways to Wellbeing. One popular initiative has been the volunteering with dog’s initiative. Staff bring their dogs in their own time to support services such as the

Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) unit, Day Centres, and Drug & Alcohol rehabilitation.

- 5.11 Tobacco Harm Reduction – Hertfordshire was one of the first areas in the country to develop a policy on e-cigarettes (in 2016). The policy is county wide and has been used by the County Council and other organisations. Work is currently underway developing a Smoke Free Policy for the County Council.
- 5.12 Physical Activity – the County Council’s cycling team launched a pool bicycle scheme in June 2019 for staff. This adds to the offer available for active commuters, including secure bike parking, lockers, showers, a salary sacrifice scheme for bike purchase, and a bicycle users’ group. Stair climbing motivational signs are included across the three main sites.
 - 5.12.1 The eleven Hertfordshire local authorities worked closely to deliver the Year of Physical Activity, with information on local opportunities, joint events like the annual mass health walk, and specific targeted campaigns promoted to staff, as well as residents. Further information on becoming more active and other healthy behaviours is available on the Health in Herts webpages, as well as local district/borough websites. Discounted membership has also been negotiated for staff with a range of leisure centres and exercise opportunities.
- 5.13 Working with occupational health – Public Health supported the re-tender of the occupational health service and the Employee Assistance Programme (“EAP”) undertaken by HR, contributing to the specification. Referrals to the Health Improvement Service have also been received from occupational health and the EAP.
- 5.14 Smart Working (a more flexible approach to working) – Public Health was the first County Council department to apply Smart Working approaches for all staff. This showed that the approach was realistic and could be rolled out with confidence across the organisation.

6. Next steps

- 6.1 Public Health is working with all County Council worksites with the aim of going Smoke free by April 2020. Consultation with staff and unions will underpin this approach which has worked well in other local authorities.
- 6.2 The Healthy Workplace programme will continue to be delivered across the County Council, with a recruitment and engagement programme in place for the rest of this financial year.
- 6.3 A review of the Healthy Workplace programme in December 2019 will determine impact and plans for the future. In addition, a Healthy

Workplace offer could be made to all ten districts/boroughs and other workplaces from April 2020. This could include reviewing what is currently in place, with recommendations on what could add further value for both organisations. There is already interest in mental health training within the districts/boroughs and St Albans District Council for example has a well-developed staff mental health and wellbeing offer. NHS Health Checks have been offered to staff in eight of the districts/boroughs, and there is interest in Health MOTs for those not eligible for NHS Health Checks.

- 6.4 District/borough sports development officers work together across the county to promote initiatives – such as the Year of Physical Activity. Further opportunities to consider on jointly supporting staff health and wellbeing may emerge out of the Year of Culture 2020, and the Healthy Hubs programme.
- 6.5 An options paper and business case will be developed on rolling out the Healthy Workplace programme during 2020/21. Funding could be for an initial development year focusing on sustainable options, with organisations covering any recurrent programme costs from 2021/22.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

- 7.1 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of and have themselves rigorously considered the equalities implications of the decision that they are taking.
- 7.2 Rigorous consideration will ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the County Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) produced by officers.
- 7.3 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 7.4 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken and this is annexed at Appendix 1.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 If workplace health and wellbeing programmes are sufficiently resourced there is evidence supporting potential for return on investment for organisations, as outlined in section 4.2.
- 8.2 Further resource would be needed to roll out the programme across the county. Subject to the review noted within this report and request for additional funding, a business case would set out options for implementation in 2020/21.

Background Information

None