

Meeting:	Trade Union Consultation	Date:	12 June 2012
	Employee Forum		12 July 2012
	Organisational Development Committee		3 September 2012
	Licensing and Enforcement Committee		11 September 2012
Subject:	Health, work and well-being		
Report Of:	Martin Shields		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
Contact Officer:	Ed Pomfret, Health and Safety Service Manager		
	Email: edward.pomfret@gloucester.gov.uk Tel: 396069		
Appendices:	<p>1: Workplace Wellbeing Charter – Making well-being at work your business</p> <p>2: Self Assessment Standards – Workplace Wellbeing Charter</p>		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To outline work done around health, work and well-being within Gloucester City Council and update on proposals for future work in this area.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 To note the work done up to now on health and well-being at work.

2.2 To note the set of standards, as outlined in the report, to improve the health and well-being of Gloucester City Council employees.

2.2 To note that, following development of the standards within Gloucester City Council, the Health and Safety team will then encourage our partners and businesses in Gloucester to sign up to this scheme.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

3.1 There is plenty of evidence to demonstrate the impact that poor health and well-being is having on both individuals and their employers:

- Around 135 million working days were lost to sickness absence – approximately five days per employee – in the year to March 2011
- More than 90% of people with common health conditions could be helped to return to work if basic principles of good health care and workplace management principles were followed
- The total annual cost of statutory sick pay to employers is estimated to be more than £1.5 billion

3.2 In relation to Gloucester City Council, 1615 working days were lost to sickness absence between March 2010 and April 2011. This equates to approximately seven days per year per employee.

3.3 Some examples of the benefits of implementing well-being programmes include:

E.on – implemented a variety of well-being initiatives that made health relevant for each employee:

- 25% reduction in number of new cases and days lost through mental health-related absence
- Continuous reduction in sickness absence over three years led to around £28.23 million cost savings

Airbus – introduced mental health initiatives to meet the needs of their male-dominated workforce:

- 89% of staff remain in work while using the service
- Overall absence down from 5% to 3.4%
- Savings of £1.1 million in absence costs
- Increased productivity

Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council – introduced a revised stress management policy to provide managers with support, advice and tools to effectively manage work-related stress. The number of stress related sickness days lost reduced by 13,194 from 39,699 days. More managers and staff take advantage of training and development opportunities which has given employees the opportunity to gain new skills and raise their awareness of stress management.

3.4 Work done in the city council to date has included:

- A well-being launch day held in February 2011. This was well attended by employees and there were representatives from a variety of organisations who were able to provide advice and support for staff.

- Health walks have been re-introduced and are now a regular occurrence on Friday lunchtimes.
 - Use of GL1 has been encouraged through a staff discount scheme.
- 3.5 Health, Work and Well-being is a cross-government initiative to protect and improve the health and well-being of working age people. It promotes the positive links between health and work and aims to help more people with health conditions to stay or return to employment. It brings together employers, trade unions, healthcare professionals and other partners and builds on a growing evidence base that working is good for health.
- 3.6 As part of this initiative, a Workplace Wellbeing Charter has recently been introduced (Appendix 1). It is an opportunity for employers to demonstrate their commitment to the health and well-being of their workforce. The positive impact that employment can have on health and well-being is now well documented. There is also strong evidence to show how having a healthy workforce can reduce sickness absence, lower staff turnover and boost productivity - this is good for employers, workers and the wider economy.
- 3.7 The Wellbeing Charter provides employers with an easy and clear guide on how to make workplaces a supportive and productive environment in which employees can flourish. Employers who volunteer to sign up will find help and support available through their regional Health, Work and Well-being Co-ordinator.
- 3.8 The co-ordinators can provide employers with access to the services and advice they need to meet the charter, and help them to build the healthy workforce that business needs for the future.
- 3.9 The Charter is a statement about the way an organisation is run and how the workforce is supported, demonstrated by adherence to a set of standards. The aims and objectives of the Charter are:
- Introduce clear, easy to use well-being standards
 - Improve well-being and reduce absenteeism
 - Provide tools to measure and evaluate progress
 - Identify and share good practice and real-life examples
 - Show that workplace health and well-being is a worthwhile investment
- 3.10 The purpose of the standards is to provide a guide as to what steps can be taken and give an indication of where improvements can be made or where things are being done well. Under each area, the standards are separated into three categories: commitment, achievement and excellence:

Commitment: the organisation has addressed each area and provides employees with the tools to help themselves to improve their health and well-being

Achievement: having put the building blocks in place, steps are being taken to actively encourage employees to improve their lifestyle and some basic interventions are in place to identify serious health issues

Excellence: Not only is information easily accessible and well publicised, but the leadership of the organisation is fully engaged in well-being and employees have a range of intervention programmes and support mechanisms to help them prevent ill-health, stay in work or return to work as soon as possible.

In order to progress from one level to another, e.g. from commitment to achievement, all the standards of the lower level must be fully met.

- 3.11 The Charter is a voluntary, self assessment scheme open to all public, private and voluntary sector organisations based in England. The self assessment standards are attached at Appendix 2.
- 3.12 To gain recognition, the assessment can be submitted to an accreditation panel and a Charter Award would be valid for two years. This time can be used to further develop the health and well-being programme and progress to a higher level. Work is currently being carried out to set up an accreditation panel in Gloucestershire.

4.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 None considered.

5.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 5.1 The adoption of the national standards will help to protect and improve the health and well-being of employees and demonstrate the council's commitment and productivity.

6.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 6.1 Whilst some work has already been done, it is difficult to measure outcomes. For real benefits to be achieved, measurable objectives should be set.
- 6.2 By signing up to the Workplace Wellbeing Charter, there are a set of standards that an organisation can aim to achieve. This can then help to develop a sustainable plan for health and well-being within the council and give clear targets to aim for.
- 6.3 By promoting the Charter to businesses, encouraging them to sign up and gain accreditation will benefit Gloucester's workforce, employers and the city's economy.
- 6.4 It is important that future work is sustainable and embedded within the organisation if measurable outcomes in terms of performance and health improvements are to be achieved.

6.5 The Workplace Wellbeing Charter is a useful tool that can help an organisation to see how it is performing in terms of health and well-being and focus on the areas that need improvement.

6.6 It is proposed that Gloucester City Council signs up to the Workplace Wellbeing Charter to assess measures already in place and identify areas for improvement with the aim of ultimately achieving “excellence” in all areas.

6.7 It is proposed that businesses in the city are encouraged to sign up to the Charter.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 None.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

8.0 Legal Implications

8.1 Will ensure continued compliance with health, safety and welfare legislation.

(Legal Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

9.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

9.1 Positive outcomes will be achieved by reducing working days lost through ill health.

10.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

10.1 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact. Therefore, a full PIA was not required.

11.0 Other Corporate Implications

Community Safety

11.1 None

Sustainability

11.2 None

Staffing & Trade Union

11.3 None

Background Documents: None