

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE EQUALITIES

4 JULY 2019

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

STAFF WELLBEING

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the actions taken and those planned in relation to staff wellbeing, following the findings of the staff survey in September 2018.

2. Connection to corporate improvement objectives/other corporate priorities

- 2.1 Promoting and supporting positive workforce wellbeing assists in the achievement of the following corporate priority:
- **Priority 3** - Smarter use of resources – ensuring that all its resources (financial, physical, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the development of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's priorities.

3. Background

- 3.1 The council acknowledges the importance of creating a positive working environment and a culture where the health and well-being of staff is prioritised.
- 3.2 A 2014 report by the Department of Business Innovation and Skills identified that 'a considerable amount of evidence to indicate that there is a positive association (a correlation) between staff wellbeing and an employee's job performance'.
- 3.3 The two most common methods for measuring employee wellbeing relate to an organisation's sickness absence levels (with particular focus on mental health related absence) and levels of employee job satisfaction.
- 3.4 In 2018/19, 11.79 days were lost due to sickness absence per full time equivalent employee, with 'Stress/Anxiety/Depression/Mental Health' related absences accounting for 30.8% of all days lost.
- 3.5 A range of factors relating to job satisfaction and staff wellbeing were measured in the staff survey undertaken during 2018. Of those employees responding:
- 81% strongly agreed or agreed that they enjoyed their role;
 - 54% strongly agreed or agreed that they felt valued at work;

- 88% strongly agreed or agreed that they understood what was expected of their role;
- 76% strongly agreed or agreed that they made a difference in their role;
- 50% strongly agreed or agreed that morale in their team is good
- 59% strongly agreed or agreed that they were satisfied with BCBC as an employer;
- 69% strongly agreed or agreed that working here made them want to perform to the best of their ability.

3.6 72% of respondents said they were comfortable with the demands placed on them all or most of the time as well as 71% being able to meet the demands of their job either all or most of the time.

3.7 Whilst much of the feedback from the staff survey was good, awareness of staff benefits was mixed with limited knowledge of the health related benefits available. Within the comments provided, respondents raised concern about workload pressures, staffing issues and poor employee wellbeing.

3.8 We know that staff wellbeing needs to be an important area of focus for the council. As a result of the survey it was clear that we can both do more and better promote access to the wellbeing resources that already exist.

4. Current situation/proposal

Current provision

4.1 The council is able to support its employees through the application of various HR protocols, the role of occupational health and the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) as well as various staff benefits. A summary is available at Appendix 1.

4.2 Eligible employees, for example, can request a change in working hours, working patterns and corporate staff can apply to purchase up to 10 days via the Additional Annual Leave Purchase scheme.

4.3 The council's occupational health provider plays a vital role in protecting and promoting the health and wellbeing of employees. It provides health surveillance checks, supports employees to return to work following an absence wherever possible, and provides early interventions to prevent sickness absence.

4.4 The council's EAP via Care First provides counselling services (online, telephone and face to face) as well as a various resources to access advice and guidance on a range of issues such as debt, nutrition, pregnancy and managing stress.

New provision

4.5 A commitment has been made in the staff survey action plan to develop an Employee Wellbeing strategy, which will focus on how the council intends to develop a strong wellbeing culture to support a motivated, flexible and committed workforce. Whilst this is ongoing, there has already been an increased focus on employee wellbeing initiatives.

- 4.6 The introduction of monthly 'health check' clinics has proven popular. Insync (our occupational health provider) have held 6 clinics offering cholesterol and blood pressure checks, which have been accessed by 157 individuals. There have also been 2 clinics held by HALO leisure, with 44 staff receiving 'bodometrics' measurements, as well as receiving tailored advice and signposting to improve personal health and wellbeing.
- 4.7 Working in partnership with Trade Union colleagues, the council has accessed funding from the Workplace Union Learning Fund (WULF) for the following training courses for staff which focus on specific elements of mental wellbeing:
- Mental Health Awareness in the Workplace (full day)
 - Stress Management (half day)
 - Combating Depression (full day)
- These courses supplement the existing corporate 'Managing pressure, maintaining performance' training for managers. Those who have attended this training were consulted about the course content for staff.
- 4.8 Bridgenders staff messages have been rebranded and the revised weekly messages now include a specific section on employee wellbeing.
- 4.9 As well as work based support, it is important that staff are encouraged to access appropriate support to improve their wellbeing in their own time. To this end, the following support has been promoted;
- Guidance and support available via Care First's 'Lifestyle' website
 - Care First's 'Zest' lifestyle and wellbeing monitoring 'app'.
 - Valley Steps' community based 'Stress Control' and 'Mindfulness Everyday' courses - 6 week courses run from various community venues in lunchtimes or weekday evenings.
- 4.10 We continue to promote the range of staff benefits available. This has included targeted promotion of the cycle to work scheme and weekly promotion of the offers available via the 'Bridgenders' Vectis card.

Future Developments

- 4.11 Discussions are ongoing with partners and local service providers to improve the support available for staff suffering with poor mental wellbeing. Links have been established with colleagues in the Assisted Recovery in the Community (ARC) service to raise awareness of the specialist support available for individuals in appropriate cases.
- 4.12 In addition, we are exploring with local charities how to improve the awareness and understanding of a range of health conditions that may have a positive impact on employee wellbeing. This has included discussions with charities based in Bridgend and working across the Cwm Taf Morgannwg region, including bespoke training and support for mental health and wider employee wellbeing. Any additional services offered as a result of these discussions will be subject to a separate business case.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 The report has no direct effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 This is an information report. As such, no EIA is required.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

7.1 This is an information report, therefore a Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015) assessment has not taken place in order to prepare this report.

8. Financial implications

8.1 There are no financial implications in this report. Any future proposals will include full cost and budgetary implications.

9. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet Committee Equalities note the information contained in this report.

Mark Shephard

Chief Executive

4 July 2019

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11. Background documents:
None.