

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO CABINET

23 JULY 2019

### REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

#### DYING TO WORK CAMPAIGN

##### 1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek approval for Bridgend County Borough Council to sign the TUC's Dying to Work Charter.

##### 2. Connection to corporate improvement objectives/other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate priority:
- 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 Dying to Work campaign would like to see terminal illness recognised as a 'protected characteristic' so that an employee with a terminal illness would be entitled to a 'protected period' where they could not be dismissed as a result of their condition. In the absence of legislation, the TUC are encouraging employers to make a commitment towards this campaign by signing the Dying to Work Charter and agreeing not to dismiss any employee diagnosed with a terminal condition.
- 3.2 It is important to note that Council employees who have a terminal illness are treated with dignity and respect and their individual wishes are of paramount importance. Managers and HR officers always support employees (and their families) to achieve their choice of outcome regarding continued employment.
- 3.3 During the discussions with trade union colleagues in relation to this Charter this supportive position has been acknowledged.

##### 4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 In order to meet the requirements of the charter, the council will agree to commit to the following:
- 4.1.1 **Review sick pay and sickness absence procedures and include a specific statement that no employee with a terminal diagnosis will be dismissed because of their condition.**  
Employees' entitlements to sickness pay are in accordance with National Conditions. The council has an Absence Management policy and managers' guidelines that have been agreed by the Trade Unions. When these are reviewed,

reference will be added to confirm: the council's commitment to support employees and their families when diagnosed with a terminal condition; that employees wishes will be taken fully into account.

**4.1.2 Ensure that an Employee Assistance Programme is in place that has the capacity and competency to provide support to any employee with a terminal illness, including access to counselling and financial advice.**

The Council has this in place via a confidential advice, information and counselling service provided independently by Care First.

**4.1.3 Provide training to line managers and all HR staff on dealing with terminal illness, including how to discuss future plans with any employee who has a diagnosis of a terminal illness, and on what adaptations to work arrangements that may be necessary.**

The Managing Absence Workshop for managers, includes guidance on dealing with more challenging and sensitive situations including terminal illness. This is in addition to the direct support provided to managers by HR officers when dealing with employees with a terminal illness on a case by case basis, as each will be different.

**4.1.4 Adopt the Dying to Work Charter and notify all employees that they have made the commitments contained in it.**

Should Cabinet agree the recommendation in this report, the Charter will be signed and publicised in accordance with the TUC requirements.

4.2 Signing the Dying to Work Charter will not mean any change to current practice.

**5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules**

5.1 None.

**6. Equality Impact Assessment**

6.1 An initial screening has been undertaken which suggests that a full EIA is not required.

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

7.1 The Dying to Work Charter contributes to the well-being goals for a healthier Wales and a more equal Wales. The five ways of working have been considered as follows:

- Long term – this will show employees that the council supports their short and longer term needs (in the context of a diagnosis) should they wish to continue working during a terminal prognosis.
- Prevention – there are processes in place to support employees with a terminal illness as part of our wider managing absence arrangements, however, being a formal partner and signing up to the campaign shows employees the importance we place on their well-being.
- Integration – the Council will encourage partners of the Public Services Board to sign up to this campaign

- Collaboration – the Dying to Work Campaign does not need any external collaboration to be implemented, worked with trade unions, members officers to develop the response to the charter principles
- Involvement – the views of members of the public have informed the development of the charter and individual views taken into account when they decide how to spend their final months.

## **8. Financial implications**

8.1 There are no financial implications.

## **9. Recommendation**

9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet agree to sign up to the Dying to Work Charter.

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3 July 2019

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**Background documents:** None