



EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE – 23 OCTOBER 2013

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to advise Employment Committee on the implementation of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) across the Council, and to request that Employment Committee endorse its continued progress.

Background

2. Mental health problems are receiving increased attention, with the added complex pressures of the economy, employment and work life balance forming part of the growing awareness of the issues potentially impacting upon mental health. 'Stress/Depression, Mental Health & Fatigue' contribute to sickness absence within the Council and a range of measures are in place to support all employees in this area.
3. As part of the Council's approach to supporting the health and wellbeing of employees the People Strategy Board and Corporate Management Team agreed to the Council becoming an accredited provider of MHFA, with the training initially focused at managers to enable a shift in culture within the Council. Since April 2013 MHFA training has also been delivered to staff without line management responsibility. This cultural shift is supporting recognition that discussing mental health with colleagues reduces the risk of long term absence, whilst also reinforcing the work of the Council as a mindful employer.
4. MHFA is an accredited training programme delivered over 2 days which supports attendees to identify the signs that someone may be becoming mentally unwell and to provide immediate help on a first aid basis until specialist mental health support is accessed.
5. As an outcome of this training, since May 2012 23 MHFA Instructors have been trained, who in turn have delivered the 2 day MHFA training to 377 employees. The breakdown by department is:

	Number	% of 377 trained
Adults and Communities	203	53.8%
Chief Executives	17	4.5%
Children and Young People's Service	43	11.4%
Corporate Resources	65	17.2%

Environment and Transport	49	13%
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6. The focus for delivery has centred on responding to demand. Further work is therefore required to ensure a greater balance of resource is used to support the Council as a whole, and in particular to ensure Public Health is able to access the programme.

Evaluation of the impact of MHFA training

7. A detailed evaluation has been undertaken on the impact of MHFA seeking to identify how MHFA has contributed to employees health and wellbeing, including on a long term basis to reduce sickness absence rates reported under 'Stress/Depression, Mental Health & Fatigue'.
8. Overall high levels of positive feedback about the MHFA programme have been received in addition to the results of this evaluation. This formal evaluation surveyed all 377 employees who have completed the MHFA training, with 124 responding, giving a response rate of 33%. Across all service areas this response rate breaks down into the following:-

Adults & Communities	Chief Executives	CYPS	Corporate Resources	E&T
49.2%	6.5%	12.1%	20.2%	12.1%

9. Analysis of the data shows that as an outcome of being MHFA trained:-
- 83% state they have used the skills and knowledge gained from the course
 - 60% have used the skills and knowledge gained to help a work colleague, which is a significant contribution to the broader aim of being a mindful employer and supporting the health and wellbeing of employees.
 - 41% have used the skills and knowledge gained with staff they manage/supervise, which clearly supports the role of the manager in relation to the health and wellbeing of all employees.

Of the help and support given as an outcome of MHFA training:-

- 68% state they have encouraged the member of staff/colleague to seek professional help
- 53% state they have encouraged the use of self help
- 29% stated they have risk assessed and offered support as appropriate.

Respondents have also reported that as a result of attending MHFA training:-

- 32% state a member of staff was not on sick leave and they supported them to remain at work rather than go on sick leave
- 22% reported that a member of staff was on sick leave and they supported them to return to work

- 43% reported they encouraged the member of staff to contact the Employee Wellbeing Service
- 31% reported that they encouraged the member of staff to visit their G.P.

10. The results above provide clear evidence of the contribution MHFA is making to support the health and wellbeing of employees, as part of the wider programme of support available.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to:

- (a) Support the continued implementation of MHFA; and
- (b) Receive further evaluation feedback based upon the continued delivery and use of MHFA.

Background Papers

None.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedures

None.

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Equal Opportunities Implications

There are no equality issues arising from this development.

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