



**SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**



Employment Committee

17 November 2021

Report of: Councillor Annie Mason

Cabinet Member for People &
Safer Communities

Mental Health and Wellbeing

To update members of the Employment Committee on the Council's Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2021/22

Report Author

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Corporate Priority:	Decision type:	Wards:
High Performing Council	Administrative	All Wards
Reviewed by:	Alan Robinson (Deputy Chief Executive)	4 November 2021
Approved by:	Karen Bradford (Chief Executive)	9 November 2021
Signed off by:	Councillor Annie Mason (Cabinet Member for People & Safer Communities)	9 November 2021

Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s)

- Notes the update on the Mental Health and Wellbeing action plan at South Kesteven District Council

1 The Background to the Report

- 1.1 The findings of the January 2021 Health and Wellbeing 'Pulse' Survey led to the development of a Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan which was presented at Employment Committee on 10 March 2021. The Action Plan outlined the various wellbeing plans which were to take place during the four-month period March – June 2021.
- 1.2 At Employment Committee on 22 September 2021, an update was provided on the Council's Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan. The update included information on the range of wellbeing initiatives rolled out to staff, including virtual sessions on mindfulness, mental health and resilience; virtual workshops promoting the Council's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP); GP-led virtual workshops on diet, weight loss management and smoking and virtual cookery lessons supporting Healthy Eating Week. The update also included staff feedback received from the wellbeing initiatives. Also presented to Employment Committee on 22 September 2021 was an update on the response from senior management regarding supporting employees' work/life balance and addressing the additional financial costs for employees working from home.
- 1.3 HR has continued to support the mental health and wellbeing of Council employees and Members through the implementation of additional wellbeing plans, as outlined in the updated Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan (Appendix 1). The purpose of this report is to update the Employment Committee on the Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan, through providing detail on the various wellbeing plans which have taken place during the four-month period August 2021 – November 2021.

2 Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan Update

2.1 Mental health and wellbeing training for staff

As part of work undertaken by the Council's Mental Health Working Party, HR have implemented a range of training for staff with the aim of supporting their mental wellbeing. During the period August 2021 – October 2021, the below training has been undertaken:

Mental Health First Aider Refresher Training – The Council's 12 existing Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs) undertook refresher training, as per best practice guidelines from MHFA England which state that MHFAs should undergo refresher training every 3 years. Refresher training is recommended so that MHFAs renew their skills, update their knowledge of mental health supports, and have a chance to practice applying the Mental Health First Aid action plan. The training took place in-person over the course of a day and was provided by local Bourne charity Don't Lose Hope.

Mental Health First Aider Training – A review of the Council's existing MHFAs found that some service areas would benefit from the training of additional MHFAs. This was either because there was a high volume of staff approaching MHFAs in those service areas, or because existing MHFAs had left the organisation. An all-staff email was sent out inviting staff to undertake the training and subsequently 9 new MHFAs were trained. The training took place in-person over the course of a day and was provided by local Bourne charity Don't Lose Hope. The existing poster which shows the Council's MHFAs will be updated to include all newly trained MHFAs and this will be communicated to all staff as well as physically displayed in work stations.

Bespoke mental wellbeing support training for specific service areas - Between September and October mental health support sessions were provided for members of the Customer Service and CCTV teams after it had been raised that they had been dealing

with some distressing calls during, and following, the lockdown period. These sessions were designed to help the attendees learn different techniques around how to engage with people who may be experiencing mental health difficulties. The sessions also aimed to support attendees' own mental health and any wellbeing issues that they may have. The sessions were delivered by Eleanor Haswell and Dr Andrew Coward from Get Sorted People, an organisation which had previously delivered the 'Health Shot' sessions to Council staff on mental health and men's/women's health.

Mandatory mental health training module for all staff – HR are in the process of entering into a 1 year contract with national mental health charity, MIND, to deliver mandatory online training for all staff. The training will consist of a single 45-minute module of interactive learning and will be hosted on the Council's Learning Management System (LMS). The module offers an introduction to mental health and workplace wellbeing to employees at every level. Topics will include: an introduction to mental health and mental health problems; depression, anxiety and stress (causes, signs and symptoms); mental health and work, workplace triggers and tips for building resilience; tips for taking care of mental health at work, five ways to wellbeing and wellness action plans; support that staff can offer and tips for having conversations about mental health; sources of support.

Mandatory mental health training module for managers - HR are in the process of entering into a 1 year contract with national mental health charity, MIND, to deliver additional mandatory online training for managerial staff. The course will complement the mental health training module for all staff and will offer additional learning material for people managers at the Council. The course emphasises the importance of looking after managers' and their teams' mental health and will consist of four modules. Each module will encourage a greater awareness of mental health in the workplace and will build managers' confidence in supporting staff at different stages. The course will last 1.5 hours in total with each module lasting between 15 to 25 minutes. All four modules will be hosted on the Council's Learning Management System (LMS). Topics will include: mental health, the business case and the role of managers; promoting an boosting staff wellbeing and taking stock; conversations about mental health and supporting employees; positive and proactive performance management; signposting to information and support.

2.2 Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) awareness sessions for Members

Throughout the period September – October, a range of Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) awareness sessions ran for Members. The sessions aimed to provide Members with an understanding of how the Council's EAP works and what it offers them, when they should make use of the EAP and how to access it, and what the EAP app is and how it works. The sessions were run by the Council's EAP Account Manager, Hannah Hill, and were hosted virtually.

3 Next Steps – Communication and Implementation of the Decision

3.1 Continue to implement the future mental health and wellbeing plans, as outlined in the Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 There is a specific budget of £25,000 in the 2021/22 budget framework to support initiatives to support wellbeing activities. This can be used as required to support activities set out in the report. In addition, use of the corporate learning and development budget has been utilised to support the training referenced.

Financial Implications reviewed by: Richard Wyles, Assistant Director of Finance and s151 Officer

5 Legal and Governance Implications

- 5.1 From an employment law perspective, the work on mental health and wellbeing are to be welcomed, as the Council as an employer has legal obligations to look after the health and welfare of its employees.

Legal Implications reviewed by: Graham Watts, Head of Democratic Services and Deputy Monitoring Officer

6 Equality and Safeguarding Implications

- 6.1 The actions referred to in this report have positive equality implications. An Equality Impact Analysis (Appendix 2) has been undertaken to ensure that the action plan does not present barriers to participation or disadvantage any protected groups from participation. There are no safeguarding implications resulting from this report.

7 Risk and Mitigation

- 7.1 The key risk associated with the Health and Wellbeing Action Plan is an increase in staff sickness as a result of poor mental health and wellbeing. The actions detailed in the action plan aim to mitigate this risk through supporting the welfare of the Council's employees.
- Community Safety Implications

8 Community Safety Implications

- 8.1 There are no community safety implications relating to this report.

9 How will the recommendations support South Kesteven District Council's declaration of a climate emergency?

- 9.1 The recommendations in this report have no carbon impact.

10 Other Implications (where significant)

- 10.1 There are no other implications relating to this report.

11 Background Papers

- 11.1 N/A

12 Appendices

- 12.1 Appendix 1 - Mental Health and Wellbeing Presentation
- 12.2 Appendix 2 - Equality Impact Analysis