

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO THE CABINET

1.	Meeting:	The Cabinet
2.	Date:	05 November 2014
3.	Title:	Workplace Health Programme
4.	Directorate:	Public Health

5. Summary:

Supporting health during a person's working life is a key part of the life course approach to health and the Health and Wellbeing priority of early intervention and prevention.

In June 2014 Public Health England launched a new workplace health initiative; 'The Workplace Wellbeing Charter'. The Workplace Wellbeing Charter is a national framework for local Health and Wellbeing Boards to use as part of their work to address the health and wellbeing of adults, utilising the national framework will allow us to engage businesses and local chambers of commerce into making Rotherham's workforce healthier. The Workplace Wellbeing Charter will contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of working age people through promoting the positive links between health and work and helping more people with health conditions to stay in or return to employment.

6. Recommendations:

That The Cabinet adopts the following recommendations:

- 1. That Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council: signs up to the Workplace Wellbeing Charter.**
- 2. That Rotherham Occupational Health Advice Service delivers the Workplace Wellbeing Charter as part of the Rotherham Public Health Workplace Health Service.**

7. Proposals and Details:

The Workplace Wellbeing Charter is a tool used by public health teams to encourage organisations to invest in the health and wellbeing of their staff, and is used as a management tool to audit, plan for improvements, and gain external recognition for the participating organisations.

Signing up to deliver the Workplace Wellbeing Charter in Rotherham will further demonstrate the council's commitment to the health and wellbeing of the people of Rotherham. It will send a strong message to employers and employees across Rotherham that Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council is committed to reducing health inequalities and that the workplace provides a real opportunity to protect and improve the health and wellbeing of staff and to positively improve health behaviours.

The Workplace Wellbeing Charter will support and reward local businesses of all sizes for their commitment to their employees' health and wellbeing. The Workplace Wellbeing Charter provides a clear set of wellbeing standards, covering physical and mental health and health improvement.

Good health is now increasingly recognised as everyone's business. Making Every Contact Count is a way of drawing on the potential of employers in the private and public and third sectors to help tackle health inequalities through the influence they have over health in the workplace. The Charter standards complement the Making Every Contact Count framework.

Whilst the Framework is designed to assist organisations and individuals, the ultimate beneficiaries are of course people, communities and populations. Making Every Contact Count is a powerful tool to improve the health and wellbeing of the public.

The Workplace Wellbeing Charter comes in three levels, each containing different standards to achieve. Each of the three levels will consider issues such as leadership, sickness management, awareness of alcohol and drug misuse, smoking, sexual health, mental health and stress, healthy eating and physical activity.

The assessment contains standards under each of the main areas that an organisation can address to improve the health and wellbeing of their employees. The purpose of the standards are to provide a guide as to what steps can be taken and give an indication of where an organisation may need to improve, or where they are doing well. Under each area, the standards are separated into three categories: Commitment, Achievement and Excellence. These categories are there to provide a general overview as to how an organisation is performing in each area.

Commitment

The organisation has addressed each area and provides employees with the tools to help themselves to improve their health and wellbeing.

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 wellbeing 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.

There will be a requirement for Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council to register as the commissioning organisation for the Workplace Wellbeing Charter so local businesses have one point of contact. This will be supported by a dedicated web page and resources made available via Public Health England. There will be no additional cost to the council for this resource.

The Workplace Wellbeing Charter assessments will be delivered by Rotherham Occupational Health Advice Service. Support for participating businesses would be provided by Rotherham Occupational Health Advice Service accredited staff and would vary dependant on the business needs. Our early engagement would focus on supporting small and medium size enterprises and businesses furthest from achieving the standards.

The latest sickness absence data available is for the 3 years 2009-2011 and shows that 2.9% of Rotherham employees had at least one day off in the previous week compared to, 2.2% in England and 2.3% Yorkshire and the Humber. The percentage of working days lost due to sickness absence was 2.3% in Rotherham compared to 1.5% in England and 1.7% in Yorkshire and the Humber. (Source: Labour Force Survey, Office for National Statistics).

According to research by PruHealth with Vitality and Mercer (2014), almost one in five (19%) British workers suffer from a chronic illness, including heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure. Serious health problems cost employers £58 billion a year, the equivalent of 7.78% of their annual wage bill. Most employees are unaware of issues surrounding their health.

In October 2013 a meeting was held with stakeholders to discuss early proposals for how The Charter could be implemented in Rotherham. Further meetings have taken place with the Rotherham and Barnsley Chamber of Commerce and Rotherham Investment and Development Office regarding the introduction of the Workplace Wellbeing Charter in Rotherham. Initial feedback supports the introduction of The Workplace Wellbeing Charter. Discussions have also taken place with the Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Human Resources Director.

8. Finance:

Rotherham Occupational Health Advice Service currently has 2 part time members of staff delivering the Workplace Health Programme (1.76 whole time equivalent). The cost of the service including staff on costs is £58,927 per annum.

From October 2014 the Government will be phasing in a Health and Work Service that will be available for people who are off work for up to four weeks. The introduction of this service is likely to result in a gradual reduction in the referrals of those on short-term sick leave to the Primary Care Workplace Health Advice Service currently provided by Rotherham Occupational Health Advice Service. This will give Rotherham Occupational Health Advice Service the capacity needed to begin a phased introduction of the Workplace Wellbeing Charter to Rotherham business.

Implementation of the Workplace Wellbeing Charter in Rotherham will therefore be able to be delivered within existing budgets.

9. Risks and Uncertainties:

It is uncertain at this stage the number of employers who will sign up to the Workplace Wellbeing Charter.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications:

There are two workplace health related indicators in the Public Health Outcomes Framework:

- sickness absence rate
- employment for those with Long Term health conditions/learning disability

The Workplace Wellbeing Charter is one of the key actions in the Public Health England Business Plan 2014 – 2015; Improving the public's health and wellbeing.

Rotherham Occupational Health Services work contributes to the delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, particularly the themes of prevention and early intervention and poverty.

11. Background Papers and Consultation:

1. Feedback from Liverpool Workplace Wellbeing Charter [W:\Public Health\02 Health Improvement\WWC Self Assessment Standards A4 Booklet Liverpool 2 WEB.pdf](#)
2. Workplace Wellbeing Charter Standards [W:\Public Health\02 Health Improvement\H@W Charter feedback liverpool.pdf](#)

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