

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
IMPROVEMENT AND SCRUTINY – RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**REVIEW OF INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE STAFF WELLBEING AND GOOD  
MENTAL HEALTH**

**SCOPING REPORT**

**19 July 2018**

**1. Purpose of the Report**

To inform Members of a proposal to review the Council's policies and procedures to promote staff wellbeing and good mental health.

**2 Information**

Employers, and society in general, are becoming more aware of mental health and wellbeing issues in the workplace. The human cost for the individual suffering poor mental health at work is considerable and frequently there are knock on effects that impact on family members, friends and colleagues. An increasing body of evidence has highlighted the need for employers to support staff experiencing poor mental health and has drawn attention to the benefits of employers adopting a preventative approach in the workplace to promote wellbeing.

It is estimated that 1 in 4 people in the UK will experience a mental health problem each year <sup>[1]</sup> and that in England, 1 in 6 people report experiencing a common mental health problem (such as anxiety and depression) in any given week<sup>[2]</sup>. This has a cumulative impact on society and the economy with employers losing billions of pounds as a result of employees being less productive, less effective, or off sick <sup>[3]</sup>.

A recently published report "Thriving at work" (2017) was commissioned by the government. This independent review considered how employers can better support the mental health of all people currently in employment including those with mental health problems or poor wellbeing to remain in, and thrive through work. The report stated that "More people are in work with a mental health condition than ever before, but many individuals with mental health problems are struggling emotionally, off sick, less productive, or leaving employment. 300,000 people with a long term mental health condition leave employment every year, equivalent of the whole population of Newcastle or Belfast. Around 15% of those in work in England have symptoms of a mental health problem and individuals with long-term mental health conditions are still far less likely to

be in work than those without any health conditions, or those with a physical health condition”

The overriding message of the “Thriving at work report” was that employers should provide support for all employees to thrive, and more targeted and tailored support for those who may need it. The report identified areas of good practice and used this evidence to formulate a number of mental health core standards that could be adopted across all workplaces at relatively little cost. Examples of the core standards include implementing a mental health at work plan that encourages and promotes good mental health of all staff and an open organisational culture, developing mental health awareness among employees and encouraging open conversations about mental health and the support available when employees are struggling.

The proposed scrutiny review will consider what the Council is currently doing to promote staff wellbeing and good mental health, and will consider the effectiveness of this approach. It will also explore opportunities to better support staff, especially those with mental ill health or poor wellbeing, to remain in and thrive at work.

During the review evidence will be gathered about:

- The nature and effectiveness of the Council’s current initiatives to promote staff wellbeing and good mental health.
- The Council’s current policies, strategies and initiatives available for staff who need more targeted support. How this support is publicised and accessed, and the experiences of staff receiving this support.
- The thoughts and experiences of staff who have experienced mental health problems (whilst employed by the Council) who have not received or have not tried to access support provided by the Council.
- The level of staff awareness and understanding of mental health issues, especially the awareness of staff in supervisory or managerial roles.
- The data available to quantify and monitor the prevalence of staff experiencing mental health problems and the potential benefits (if any) of improving the monitoring of employee mental health and wellbeing.
- Current best practice to promote and support wellbeing and good mental health in the workplace.

During the course of the review evidence will be gathered from numerous sources, including relevant officers from Occupational Health, Public Health and Human Resources and the Cabinet Member for Council Services. The views of staff will also be sought.

A working group will be appointed by this Committee to undertake the review. The working group will submit progress reports and a final report to the full Committee at the conclusion of the review. It is anticipated that the review will

be completed within 6 Months.

### **3. References**

[1] McManus, S., Meltzer, H., Brugha, T. S., Bebbington, P. E., & Jenkins, R. (2009). Adult psychiatric morbidity in England, 2007: results of a household survey. The NHS Information Centre for health and social care.

[2] McManus S, Bebbington P, Jenkins R, Brugha T. (eds.) (2016). Mental health and wellbeing in England: Adult psychiatric morbidity survey 2014. Leeds: NHS digital.

[3] Stevenson D., Farmer P. (2017) Thriving at Work: The Independent Review of Mental Health and Employers

### **4. Considerations**

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: financial, human relations, legal and human rights, prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

### **5. Officer's Recommendations**

The Committee is requested:

1. To note the scope of the review of initiatives to promote staff wellbeing and good mental health.
2. To appoint Members to the working group.

**Janie Berry**  
**Director of Legal Services**