



## **Well-Being Task and Finish Group**

### **Information Paper – Fire Authority**

**June 2019**

## **1. Background**

Following the self- assessment against the College of Policing Blue Light Well-being Framework (Oscar Kilo) in 2017, the Well-being Task and Finish Group identified that the area of Mental Health support was weak. It also became clear that the work of the Well-being Task and Finish Group would need to encompass all aspects of both physical and psychological health in order to achieve improvement holistically.

## **2. Current position**

### **Blue Light well-being Framework (College of Policing)**

Work is ongoing on the outcomes of the self-assessment with progress being made on the areas identified as 'In development' and 'Under developed'. A further assessment against this document has been completed to measure progress and the outcomes will be communicated to all employees during the second quarter of this financial year.

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) has endorsed this framework as the tool to be adopted by fire and rescue services nationally.

### **Training Initiatives**

A trial 'Blue Light Trauma Awareness' session was delivered to a Watch Commanders Forum in 2017 which was very well received by all attendees. A number of employees came forward to Occupational Health as a direct result.

A Training Needs Analysis was submitted for funding to carry out further training in the financial year 2018/2019. This was successful and as a result the group has focussed its efforts on the delivery of Mental Health First Aider and Mental Health Champion training. There are now 19 First Aiders and 14 Champions across all sectors of the Service.

The aim of the group was twofold; to build a network of Mental Health Champions to act as the 'spotters' for any changes in the behaviour of their colleagues and to promote mental health awareness. These individuals are supported by a layer of Mental Health First Aiders whose role is to offer support to anyone who appears to be struggling with their mental health and signpost them to other support networks available to them. First Aiders and Champions will be issued with Mental Health ribbon pins so that all personnel are able to identify them and seek their support if necessary.

### **Other Initiatives**

As a result of raising the awareness of Critical Incident Stress Debriefing and reducing the stigma that surrounds mental health, there has been a significant increase in the number of debriefs that have been carried out in the past 12 months. In the year 2018 eight debriefs were carried out in total and from January to April this year there have been five.

Health, Safety and Well-being notice boards have been installed at every station and site; mental health and stress awareness information has been posted on these together with a list of the First Aiders names.

The Employee Relations Team are in the process of delivering a Well-being Roadshow to all staff to raise awareness of the support networks that are available to them and how to access them. This initiative is being very well received with positive feedback being given to the team.

### **3. Future work**

A further Training Needs Analysis for this financial year has been submitted to request funding to deliver Blue Light Trauma Awareness training to all operational staff and to refresh the Critical Incident Stress Debriefing training to current and new facilitators. This is subject to approval by the Training Strategy Group.

A meeting has taken place with the Mental Health First Aiders and Champions to discuss how to develop the network; how to raise awareness further and how they, themselves can be supported in terms of allowing them the opportunity to debrief in order to protect their mental health. Consideration is to be given to the introduction of a 'buddy system' to achieve this. This meeting was very productive and is the first of regular quarterly meetings.

A charity, run by an ex police officer (Cameron Grant Memorial Trust) has offered to produce a number of coasters and cards that can be personalised to the Service detailing areas of support, free of charge. The proof has been approved and a request for 4000 of each has been submitted. The aim is to have these coasters and cards available to staff in every meeting room and mess area across the Service.

An article to launch the Mental Health First Aider and Champion network and the distribution of the coasters and cards is to be published on the intranet towards the end of this quarter.

Members of the Task and Finish Group will be providing an update on their work at the next Leadership Forum on the 6 June 2019..

The integrated impact assessment has been reviewed and there are no identified negative equality and diversity issues identified. Improvements in employee well-being can lead to positive outcomes for all protected characteristics.

A rolling programme is underway to review and update all HR policies and procedures taking into account updates in legislation and knowledge of best practice. Progress is monitored monthly.

It is envisaged that the training and awareness support being provided will, in the longer term, result in lower sickness absence relating to mental health issues and potentially fewer employment tribunal claims.

#### **4. Reporting**

Regular progress reports are provided to the Strategic Management Board, the Performance Management Board and the Health, Safety and Well-being Committee via highlight reports. On completion of the project an end of project paper will be produced for evaluation purposes.

[Report ends]