

Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority



MEETING	Fire Authority
DATE OF MEETING	19 June 2019
OFFICER	Lynne Swift, Director of People & Organisational Development
LEAD MEMBER	Lead Member for People and Equality and Diversity
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Well-being Strategy Update
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>This report provides an update on the implementation of the Well-being Strategy and associated work streams by the Task and Finish Group (Well-being Strategy - Appendix 1).</p> <p>Since its approval by the Fire Authority in June 2018, the Well-being Strategy has been communicated to employees through various means, intranet articles, the Health, Safety and Well-being Committee and via the Well-being Roadshows and the Health, Safety and Well-being update presentations. A communications plan has been devised and is being implemented.</p> <p>Governance of this Task and Finish Group is currently via the Director of People & Organisational Development, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer and the Health, Safety and Well-being Committee.</p> <p>Following the self-assessment against the College of Policing Blue Light Well-being Framework an action plan has been created as the framework to deliver improved well-being awareness and support networks for employees. Progress is routinely monitored and reported on. A further self-assessment against this framework will be carried out this year in order to benchmark improvement. This framework is endorsed by the National Fire Chiefs Council as the tool to be adopted by fire and rescue services.</p> <p>A programme of training for Mental Health First Aiders and Mental Health Champions has been delivered resulting in 19 qualified Mental Health First Aiders and 14 Mental Health Champions from across all sectors of the Service.</p> <p>A funding bid for this financial year has been placed as part of the Training Needs Analysis for Blue Light Trauma Awareness training for operational personnel.</p> <p>Health, Safety and Well-being notice boards have now been installed at every site in the Service, mental health and stress awareness information has been</p>

	<p>posted on these boards together with a list of names of the people who have received Mental Health First Aider training. It has also been agreed that all staff who have received First Aider and Champions training will be provided with a Mental Health pin to wear so that all staff know that they can be approached for support if necessary.</p>
<p>ACTION</p>	<p>Noting</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS</p>	<p>That the report is noted.</p>
<p>RISK MANAGEMENT</p>	<p>Employee well-being, both physical and psychological, is a focus nationally, with particular attention being paid to mental health illness and stress issues and how organisations can both proactively and reactively support and assist their employees.</p> <p>Absence:</p> <p>High absence levels pose several risks to the Authority with the main ones being potential adverse impacts on both operational resilience and support staff functions; higher than budgeted employee costs; poor employee morale and significant time and cost investment in case management. Focussing on improved well-being will help to mitigate those risks.</p> <p>The embedding of the Well-being Strategy will assist in highlighting to potential employees the benefits of working for the Authority in terms of well-being and provides assurance to existing employees that the Authority is committed to their ongoing well-being thus aiding retention.</p> <p>Well-being:</p> <p>Failing to support the well-being of employees' would present a risk to the Authority in terms of compliance with the rights of employees with mental health illness. This could lead to health and safety risks and the potential for claims to an employment tribunal under the Equality Act.</p> <p>The work of the Task and Finish Group so far has focussed on mental health initiatives, in particular, training for Mental Health First Aiders and Champions in order to provide the first means of support for those who may be suffering from mental ill health.</p> <p>It has been recognised that the employee demographic is moving towards an ageing workforce, therefore a key part of the work of the Task and Finish Group is to identify and implement initiatives to optimise employee contribution and mitigate the risk of claims. The pre-retirement seminars held in March of this year and again in September is one such example.</p>

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	Further funding has been identified within the Training Needs Analysis for this financial year, for Blue Light Trauma Awareness and Critical Incident Stress debriefing training. Any future financial implications will be discussed with the Organisational Development Manager in terms of funding for training.
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	A failure to support the well-being of our employees could create a risk to the Authority in terms of non-compliance with the rights of employees with mental health issues; and could lead to health and safety risks and claims.
CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF COLLABORATION	Collaboration has taken place with Oxfordshire in terms of Mental Health First Aid and Champion training. Opportunities to collaborate further and across the Thames Valley will be explored wherever possible. Further collaboration has taken place with Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service with regard to the Occupational Health service provision and the Employee Assistance Programme.
HEALTH AND SAFETY	The Well-being Strategy and the work of the Task and Finish Group supports the health and well-being of employees. Both will assist in reducing workplace absence through mental health and stress illness. Workplace absence is monitored by both the Human Resources and Health and Safety departments, and progress in this area is reported through the Performance Management Board and the Health, Safety and Well-being Committee.
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY	<p>The Well-being Strategy dovetails into the People Strategy, which includes the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion aspects. It contributes to the Authority's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion programme by supporting those with disabilities and serves to protect the Authority from risks arising from claims under the Equality Act.</p> <p>The overarching aim of the Task and Finish Group is to improve well-being services for all employees and this will have positive impacts on those with protected characteristics.</p>
USE OF RESOURCES	<p>The arrangements for setting, reviewing and implementing strategic objectives:</p> <p>The Well-being Strategy dovetails into the People Strategy which, along with the Corporate Plan, details the overarching strategic objective "<i>To optimise the contribution and well-being of our people</i>". The Well-being Strategy forms part of the 2019-20 strategic objectives.</p> <p>Communications – stakeholders and employees:</p> <p>Stakeholder communication remains a significant part</p>

	<p>of the successful implementation of this initiative. Communication with employees is carried out using a range of media, for example, face to face, via the intranet, by letter and through briefing sessions.</p> <p>The system of internal control:</p> <p>The implementation of the Well-being Strategy is monitored through quarterly updates at the Health, Safety and Well-being Committee; bi-annual reports at Performance Management Board and the Strategic Management Board and annual updates to the Fire Authority.</p> <p>Progress against the self-assessment action plan is monitored using the RAG status method and reported on at the same.</p> <p>The balance between spending and resources:</p> <p>Wherever possible the well-being initiatives will be completed using existing resources with ongoing support from the People and Organisational Development and Health and Safety departments.</p> <p>The medium term financial strategy:</p> <p>Positive contributions to the Medium Term Financial Plan are a reduction in absence levels and the mitigation of health and safety risks.</p> <p>High absence levels have an adverse impact on operational costs and performance levels; as the reduction in funding continues this wastes valuable resources, which could be used elsewhere within the Authority.</p>
<p>PROVENANCE SECTION & BACKGROUND PAPERS</p>	<p>Background</p> <p>The documents that form an integral part of the work of the Task and Finish Group and will assist in the creation of robust tools and processes to support improved well-being across the Service include:</p> <p>College of Policing Blue Light Well-being Framework</p> <p>Well-being Strategy – see Appendix 1</p>
<p>APPENDICES</p>	<p>Annex A: Well-being update information paper</p> <p>Appendix 1: Well-being Strategy</p>
<p>TIME REQUIRED</p>	<p>5 Minutes</p>
<p>REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT</p>	<p>Ali Chart achart@bucksfire.gov.uk 01296 744490</p>