

## **Appendix 5 – Employee Health and Wellbeing**

The Service continues to promote the value of health and wellbeing with employees throughout all roles and are committed to establishing a positive health and wellbeing culture within the workplace, this includes promoting awareness and understanding of wellbeing, implementing effective and fair processes, and instilling positive behaviours. The Service recognises mental and physical health and wellbeing are equally important and acknowledges the potential impact work can have on both.

This year has seen a review and update of the Mental Wellbeing Support Network, resulting in a total of 37 mental health first-aiders being trained from roles across the Service. This information has been shared with employees throughout the Service and members of the team are easily identifiable with dedicated lanyards being worn and names posted on noticeboards in all Service Premises.



The Service's Occupational Health provider, including the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) went through a tender process in April 2022 and the contract was re-awarded to Milton Keynes Occupational Health. The level of Service provided is being enhanced to provide clinics in Aylesbury and High Wycombe (as required).

The annual flu vaccination programme was successfully completed during Autumn 2021, despite the challenges faced with the global Covid-19 pandemic and 119 vaccinations were provided to employees at vaccination clinics held around the Service.

As employees have returned to the workplace following the Covid 19 pandemic, Flexible Working and Hybrid Working procedures have been developed to formalise new ways of working. The Flexible Working procedure sets out an employee's statutory right to request flexible working and the process to follow to request this. Whilst this was an updated procedure, a significant amendment to the procedure was the ability to request flexible working from day one of employment, rather than once an employee has attained 26 weeks service. This is positive step and shows the commitment the Service has, harnessing the benefits of flexible working and assisting employees to maintain an effective balance between their work and home life. The introduction of hybrid working as a form of flexible working, accommodates employees being able to work flexibility between locations, spending some of their time working remotely, either from their home or alternative Service location, and the rest of the time in their normal place of work. This provides the benefits of

working remotely, with the social and collaborative advantages of working together in the workplace. Hybrid working is not possible for all roles and the needs of the Service will need to be paramount in the consideration. Where hybrid working can be accommodated, it offers benefits to the employee and Service. It helps to attract and retain employees, increase productivity, engagement and motivation and helps individuals to achieve greater work life balance, reduces the cost of commuting and provides some autonomy about where and how to work.

The Service has introduced “pay-day is office day” events, with the intention of reducing social isolation and encouraging professional networking. This is supplemented by informal volunteering activities such as litter picks which promote our role in the local community.

The Service’s Intranet has a dedicated “Wellbeing Hub” which is regularly updated with a range of subject areas designed to support Mental, Physical and Personal health and wellbeing.

Service guidance documents for attendance management, substance misuse, smoking and supporting menopause in the workplace have been either reviewed and updated. A range of “Me too” articles were produced and published internally on the Services Intranet, as a way of sharing employee’s stories to help others; analysis showed that these were some of the most frequently visited pages in the Service.

National wellbeing campaigns are actively supported and promoted by the Service, this includes the healthy workplace award, hope mental wellbeing program and the blue light pledge.

There continues to be progress made regarding addressing inequalities, the 2021 gender pay gap report presented to the Executive Committee on 23 March 2022 was well received and approved for publication. Data was appropriately published by the annual deadline date of 30 March. This was the fifth year of undertaking gender pay gap reporting, and for 2021 both the mean (average) and median (mid-point) gender pay gaps decreased, which is positive, taking the Authority’s gender pay gap 1.6 percentage points below the UK national average for 2021, which is 15.4 percent. Both the mean and median gender pay gaps for 2021 are the lowest since first reporting in 2017.

A suicide awareness package has been added to the Services online training system and is accessible by all employees.

The Service has a social media Wellbeing group on Facebook with over 100 members (and growing), this allows the Employee Services Team to share wellbeing messages with employees using a range of more modern mediums.