

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Personnel Committee

13th May 2019

Head of Human Resources – Sheenagh Rees

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected:

All Wards

Time to Change Wales Campaign

1. Executive Summary

Mental health related absence accounts for the most days lost to sickness absence and therefore it is a priority in the workforce plan to develop a strategy in relation to mental health in the workplace.

The Time to Change Wales Campaign's Employer Pledge provides a framework for employers to work within to support employees with their mental health. The Campaign provides support to employers including training and access to a range of resources. There are no financial costs to the scheme. Corporate Directors and trade unions have been consulted and are supportive of this proposal.

2. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to ask Members for authority to commit to the Time to Change Wales Campaign's Employer Pledge Commitment.

3. Background information

Mental health related absence has represented the highest number of days lost to sickness absence in the Council for a number of years and because of this, it is a Workforce Plan priority to develop actions to support the mental health of our employees

Time to Change Wales is a national campaign to end the stigma and discrimination faced by people with mental health problems. The campaign is delivered by a partnership of two leading Welsh mental health charities, Mind Cymru and Hafal, overseen by a Programme Management Board (PMB) which includes the Chief Executives and key senior staff from the two partner organisations. The PMB also includes people with lived experience of mental health problems and individuals with expertise relevant to the campaign. The campaign is funded by Big Lottery, Comic Relief and Welsh Government.

People who experience mental illness often face stigma and discrimination in the workplace, socially and within families. This can make life with a mental health problem more difficult than the symptoms themselves. The Campaign seeks to improve knowledge and understanding about mental illness and, most importantly of all, get people talking about mental health. This is an evidenced based approach, which has demonstrated that by sharing lived experiences and life stories by those who have suffered or suffer with mental health problems, this can lead to transformational change in attitude and a reduction in stigma and discrimination amongst those with who the story is shared. Champions and people are at the heart of the Time to Change Wales programme.

4. The Employer Pledge Commitment

The Time to Change Wales pledge is a public declaration that an organisation wants to step up to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination. It isn't a quality mark, accreditation or endorsement. There is no test or application. Employers just have to commit to taking actions that are realistic and right for them, that will lead to a

reduction in discrimination within the organisation and wider community.

Every organisation is different and there are any number of ways in which the pledge can be put into action. A draft action plan for the Council is attached at Appendix 1, and this has been developed in partnership with our trade unions. The action plan draws on the internal resources we already have in place as well as resources that will be made available by Time to Change Wales, including support to train a pool of 'Employee Champions' who will be instrumental in disseminating messages and information about mental health. The actions include awareness raising actions as well as the development of policies and processes that help address mental health problems in the workplace, help for managers and employees to enable them to talk about mental health, and actions to ensure employees have access to information and where to find help.

5. Next steps

If Member approval is given to commit the Council to the Employer Pledge Commitment it is intended to implement the action plan as set out in the appendix to this report.

6. Financial impact

There is no financial impact in relation to this Pledge.

7. Integrated impact assessment

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The first stage assessment has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required. A summary is included below:

“A full impact assessment is not required as the initiative to sign the employer pledge will not in itself affect any changes to employment. As and when actions are developed and prior to implementation this first stage screening assessment will be re-visited to determine whether anything has changed and whether a full impact assessment is then needed”.

8. Workforce impacts

The intention behind the Time to Change Wales campaign is to have a positive impact in relation to stigma and discrimination faced by people with mental health problems within the workplace. Trade unions are supporting the initiative and are key members of the project team established to deliver the action plan.

9. Legal impacts

No implications

10. Risk Management impacts

This proposal is a mitigating action in relation to Operational risk HR2, the risk of service delivery failure if sickness absence levels increase across the Council – as mental health related absence accounts for the highest reason for sickness absence, by putting in place supportive measures to address mental health in the workplace the risk of increased sickness absence should be addressed positively.

11. Crime and Disorder Impacts

No impact.

12. Counter Terrorism Impacts

No impact.

13. Consultation

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

14. Recommendation

It is recommended that Members approve the proposal to commit to the Time to Change Wales Campaign's Employer Pledge Commitment.

15. Reasons for proposed decision

To support employees with mental health problems in the workplace.

16. Implementation of decision

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

17. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Employer Pledge Action Plan

Appendix 2 – Integrated Impact Assessment

18. Officer contact

Sheenagh Rees – Head of Human Resources,
s.rees5@npt.gov.uk, telephone: 01639 763315