

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

29TH NOVEMBER 2021

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – SHEENAGH REES

Matter for information

Wards Affected: All wards

Time to Change Wales Employer Pledge – Action Plan

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update Members in relation to progress made on the Action Plan developed as part of the Time to Change Wales Employer Pledge, which the Council signed up to September 2019.

Executive Summary:

This report provides Members with an update in the relation to the actions which have been undertaken since the last update to this Committee in December 2019 to support the Council's commitment to the Time to Change Wales Employer Pledge.

Background:

The Time to Change Wales Employer Pledge

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.

Following a report to Personnel Committee in May 2019, the Pledge was signed at Staff Council in September 2019.

Project Team

A project team has been established consisting of employees from across the HR division, the Council's communications team and both teaching trade unions and 'green book' trade unions.

Action Plan

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 across the Council.

A copy of the Action Plan is provided in Appendix 1. Members will note that excellent progress has been made in delivering the Action Plan. Some of the actions have been rolled forward due to the pandemic, however, provided below are some of the key actions that have been delivered since the start of the pandemic. Some of which were part of the action plan, but some of which are over and above the action plan, but which were necessary to support our workforce during the pandemic. It is anticipated that during the winter, we will continue to concentrate on initiatives to support the wellbeing of our workforce.

Key actions:-

Staff Health and Wellbeing website - This was launched on 9th April 2020 via Gov Notify message from the Chief Executive. Accessible inside and outside the Council, via range of digital devices, including personal smartphones. Provides support on a range of topics – available to view [here](#)

Occupational Health Unit Helpline for employees - Monday to Friday, office hours provision providing advice and signposting to employees.

Occupational Health Unit Referral Helpline - A referral service for managers to deal with critical OH matters.

Wellbeing Through Work - The Council has been able to access this service, the mental health and wellbeing service provided to NHS employees. This provides a wide range of support on both physical and mental health wellbeing including referral to specialist support services. This onward referral includes Trauma Support for those who encounter traumatic experiences.

School Counselling Service Helpline for School based staff - Signposting advice and guidance in relation to the mental health and wellbeing of teaching and learning support assistants, as well as advisory support and guidance on how teachers and learning support assistants can support young people deal with issues arising from COVID-19.

Communications focus on wellbeing - Mental health and wellbeing feature regularly in employee communications, including the Intranet, HR SWAY, In the Loop and now Yammer.

Virtual Working Guidance issued - to support the workforce that continue to work from home as a result of Covid 19 mitigation measures, and this includes guidance and support for employees and managers on how to support their mental wellbeing whilst working from home.

Hybrid Working Framework issued - which is the stepping stone to our Future of Work Strategy, places employee mental health and well-being as a key consideration in working arrangements. Covid 19 Workplace Risk assessments and manager guidance refer to the emotional well-being impact of the return to workplaces, as well as the physical arrangements that are necessary.

Online First Aid for Mental Health course - The LT&D team have worked with Neath College to develop this into an online webinar, which is also certificated. This has now been completed by 77 employees.

Mindfulness Course: 38 employees completed a 5-week online course offered in partnership with UNISON and funded by WULF.

Financial Impacts:

There are no financial implications associated with this report as all actions are being carried out from existing resources and budgets.

Integrated impact assessment:

There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment as this report is for monitoring / information purposes.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

No implications

Workforce Impacts:

The intention behind the Time to Change Wales campaign and our action plan is to have a positive impact on the workforce by reducing the stigma around mental health and discrimination faced by people with mental health problems within the workplace. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is even more important that we provide this mental health and wellbeing support to our workforce.

Legal Impacts:

No implications.

Risk Management Impacts:

Implementation this proposal is to support the Council's Strategic Equality Plan commitment.

Consultation:

There is no requirement under the Constitution for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Members note the update in relation to Time to Change Wales Action Plan and receive a further update in six months.

FOR INFORMATION

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Time to Change Wales Action Plan

Officer contact

Sheenagh Rees, Head of Human & Organisational Development, Email: s.rees5@npt.gov.uk or tel. 01639 763315

