

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 14 June 2018

REPORTING OFFICER: Director of Public Health

PORTFOLIO: Health and Wellbeing

SUBJECT: Work Place Health & Time to Change Employer Pledge

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide an update to Executive Board on the work undertaken across the Borough to improve workplace health.

To propose Halton Borough Council sign up to Time to Change's employer pledge by establishing a working group who can drive the development of an action plan which tackles mental health stigma in the work place, encouraging employees to talk about mental health.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) Executive Board approve participation in the Time to Change Employer Pledge.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Workplace Health

The workplace is a setting where many people spend the largest proportion of their time. Work and health is central to the story of people and place. Helping people with health issues to obtain or retain work, and be happy and productive within the workplace is a crucial part of the economic success and wellbeing of every community.

Workplace health is promoting and managing the health and wellbeing of staff, and includes managing sickness absence and 'presenteeism' (a person physically at work, but unproductive). Workplace health interventions are activities undertaken within the workplace by an employer or others to address these issues; it also includes action to address health and safety risks.

The benefits of businesses investing in workplace health are well

documented (Black 2015, PHE 2016).

Benefits include:

- Reduction in absence and increased productivity
- Return on investment – employee wellness programmes return between £2 and £10 for every £1 spent
- Reduced staff turnover and associated reduction in recruitment costs
- Healthy employees are three times more productive as those in poor health
- Workplaces with “very satisfied” employees had higher labour productivity, higher quality of output, and higher overall performance.

3.2 **Halton Healthy Work Places**

Over the last 18 Months the Health Improvement Team has been rolling out a comprehensive Workplace Health Programme to local businesses across Halton. During this time the team has worked with 50 local businesses to improve their workplace health offer. Examples include Halton Borough Council, Mexichem Runcorn, Capita Telefonica, Kawneer, Electron Technical Solutions, Fresenius Kabi, Halton Housing Trust, Home Retail Group, Kerrys Ingredients and the Widnes and Runcorn Cancer Support group to name a few.

Prior to commencing a Workplace Health Programme a site visit is arranged and a Mini health needs assessment of the workforce and workplace is undertaken in conjunction with HR, Management and Occupational Health staff in order to develop a tailored package of support for the business. This can include: a review of health policies, NHS Health Checks/ Lung Age checks for staff, smoking cessation clinics, health awareness events, training for staff and managers in how to maintain good mental health, and recognize early signs and symptoms of cancer and bespoke physical activity or back pain classes and weight management groups for staff.

An offer of an NHS Health check has been a successful hook for engagement of staff to enable a health conversation, to this end 536 health checks have been completed in a workplace environment. These people undoubtedly account for some of the 40% that we know traditionally do not engage with health services. Through the Workplace Health Programme the team has identified people that have gone on to be diagnosed with health conditions such as diabetes, hypertension and atrial fibrillation.

Staff training is a core part of the workplace offer, in particular early signs and symptoms of cancer training and also mental health resilience training including suicide awareness and stress management for both frontline staff and managers. To date the team has trained in excess of 300 frontline staff.

3.3 **Mental Health and the workplace**

Subject to approval by Executive Board the next phase of the Workplace Health Programme is to work with local businesses to further improve their mental health offer and support them to undertake the “Time to Change” employer’s pledge.

Mental health stigma prevents those that need support from speaking out and seeking help. There are a significant number of adults suffering from a range of mental health issues with 1 in 6 British workers affected by conditions like anxiety, depression and stress every year. Mental ill health is the leading cause of absence in the UK, costing an average of £1035 per employee per year and between £33 billion and £42 billion cost to employers as a whole. There is no denying mental health stigma contributes to significant mental health challenges at work therefore tackling stigma can make a positive difference to sickness absence rates, presenteeism, staff wellbeing and productivity as well as retention.

3.4 **Time to Change**

Time to Change is the leading national social movement aimed at improving public attitudes and behavior towards people with mental health problems. Since Time to Change began in 2007 4.1 million adults in England have improved attitudes towards mental health problems with more people than ever able to open up about their mental health problems. Time to Change know it can be really difficult to talk about mental health problems that’s why they provide support to employers to develop an action plan to get employees talking about mental health. The more comfortable employees feel talking about mental health the earlier they can access support meaning they are more likely they are to stay in work preventing mental health problems from escalating and ultimately reducing the cost to the employer.

Time to Change will support Halton Borough Council to develop an action plan to get employees talking about mental health (please see appendix 1 for example actions). The action plan focusses on one tangible activity in each of the following key areas;

1. Demonstrating senior level buy in
2. Demonstrating accountability and recruiting employee champions
3. Raising awareness about mental health
4. Updating and implementing policies to address mental health problems in the work place
5. Asking staff to share personal experiences of mental health problems
6. Equipping line managers to have conversations about mental health

7. Providing information about mental health and signposting to support services

Once the action plan has been developed and submitted to Time to Change, Halton Borough Council will receive a pledge board that a senior leader can sign to demonstrate their commitment to tackling mental health stigma in the work place.

Signing the Time to Change Employer Pledge is free and dedicated support throughout the process is available as well as a year of support after receiving the pledge. Halton Borough Council will be able to receive coaching regarding the action plan, connections to other employers and free masterclasses where we can learn from leading employers on how they have achieved success. Time to change will also provide support in recruiting Champions who will essentially drive this campaign forward. Champions will separately have access to training, peer support as well as access to working groups that involve champions from other organisations.

Halton Borough Council already has a variety of activity currently taking place which contributes to tackling mental health stigma and improving the mental health of its employees such as mental health awareness training. By signing up to Time to Change's Employer Pledge the council will be able to collate and celebrate all the great work it is currently delivering and highlight gaps that require further attention.

It would be recommended that a small working group be established to develop and drive the Time to Change Employer Pledge action plan (please see appendix 1 for example actions). The mental health and wellbeing lead for the Health improvement team can establish and chair the working group, oversee the implementation of the action plan and liaise with the Employer Programme Manager from Time to Change for guidance and support. Once the action plan has been established and submitted to Time to Change Halton Borough Council will sign the Time to Change Employer Pledge

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Review relevant policies, such as absent management, to ensure mental health is addressed throughout and were policies already meet this criteria no action will be required

5.0 **OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Mental ill-health is the leading cause of sickness absence in the UK, costing an average of £1,035 per employee per year It can be estimated by decreasing absenteeism by 10% and staff turnover by 10% the local authority could potentially save £464,681 and £832,000 respectively

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

There are no significant implications for this priority

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

Fundamentally, a healthy population is one that has the potential to be a healthy and productive workforce for industry. This is key to attracting and retaining businesses and developing dynamic and diverse communities that are sustainable for the future. Many people live within a relatively short commute to their place of work, so the connection between workplace health in local businesses and population health is very close.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

This aims to improve the health of working age people in Halton as outlined as priority in Halton's Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2017 - 2022)

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

There are no significant implications for this priority

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

There are no significant implications for this priority.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 *None*

8.0 **Appendices**

Appendix 1- Example Actions

Key Areas	Examples of how this could be achieved
Demonstrating senior level Buy in	Appoint a senior mental health champion and encourage senior leaders to talk openly about mental health.
Demonstrating accountability and recruiting employee champions	Establish a working group from a variety of staff across the council to drive the action plan. The recruitment of employee champions could be tied into the local time to change campaign currently being delivered by HIT
Raising awareness about mental health	Mental Health Awareness training is currently available for all staff via HIT but awareness can be raised in a variety of ways

	such as tea and talk days.
Update and implement policies to address mental health problems in the work place	Review relevant policies to ensure mental health is addressed throughout
Asking staff to share personal experience of mental health problems	Staff throughout the organisation could choose to share their experiences in a sensitive way with the support from HIT marketing, Time to Change and Kate Bazley (the mental health and wellbeing lead for HIT)
Equipping line managers to have conversations about mental health	Mental Health Awareness training for managers is currently being developed by HIT
Providing information about mental health and signposting to support services	Support services available in Halton, through the council and national services could be regularly promoted to staff in a variety of ways