

Creating a safe and healthy working environment and culture

Employee Health and Wellbeing Framework

2018-2021

Supporting employees to maintain and develop a healthy lifestyle

Foreword

Dundee City Council recognises that our employees play a vital role in delivering the vision for Dundee.

This Health and Wellbeing Framework supports Our People Strategy, which sets out our ambition to work together to make Dundee City Council an employer of choice, provide a positive working environment, where we can do our jobs well, and make a difference to the people of Dundee.

The City Plan sets out health, care and wellbeing targets on reducing obesity, reducing substance misuse and improving mental health and wellbeing in the city. The implementation of this Framework will assist in meeting these targets as approximately 72% of our employees live within the City boundary and around 15% live in a data zone ranked within the 15% “Most Deprived” in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2016.

The framework will also contribute to meeting the Health and Wellbeing Challenges outlined in the Council Plan, and its priorities to have,

“ A flexible, skilled and motivated workforce ”

will also be supported by this Framework, which acknowledges that work is intrinsically linked with the health and wellbeing of our employees, and we are committed to promoting a culture where wellbeing is embraced by all employees.

The Health and Wellbeing Framework will provide a proactive and engaging approach to enhancing the wellbeing of our employees. This will be achieved through wellbeing initiatives, employee support mechanisms, joint working with employees and their representatives and local partners to identify and address areas for improvement.

We already have a number of effective policies and procedures in place to support employee health and wellbeing. We will continue our regular review of these to ensure they support this Framework. The Healthy Working Lives programme will continue to underpin many of the initiatives we will develop.

We expect that improvements in health will lead to,

“ Employees feeling and being healthier at home and in the workplace ”

leading to an improvement in attendance. We also hope that by setting an example as a healthy employer, we will encourage other local employers to follow our lead.

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Introduction

The development of a strategic approach to health and wellbeing in the workplace supports the delivery of Our People Strategy and Our People Charter and demonstrates its key principles in practice.

We recognise that our employees are from a range of backgrounds with different cultures, beliefs, abilities and sexual orientations. We will ensure that any initiatives suggested or implemented take into account these differences so that we do not knowingly preclude any particular group from participating.

By implementing our Framework, we can ensure that every employee has the ability and opportunity to participate actively in the life of the City and we can make it easier for employees to adopt a healthy lifestyle by investing in an infrastructure that supports their wellbeing, such as the promotion of Healthy Working Lives; walking and cycling networks; facilities for sports and physical activity; and access to proactive support through our Occupational Health Contract.

We will provide training, guidance and support to managers so they have the necessary skills, knowledge and ability to support employees to improve their health and wellbeing. We will also ensure that, through a variety of means, we provide information and support to our employees to increase their awareness of the importance of ensuring their own health and wellbeing to maintain attendance at work. In particular this support will demonstrate the correlation between positive emotional and mental health and wellbeing and exercise.

Background

Many of the factors that impact positively on employee health and wellbeing in the workplace are identical to those that impact positively on the health and wellbeing of communities.

Research conducted by Health Scotland (2010) Good Work for All states that:-

- Work is generally good for physical and mental health;
- For around 5-10% of people work may contribute to poor health (however, this does have to be balanced against the harmful effects of long term unemployment);
- For individuals with common health problems (mental health, musculoskeletal disorders, cardio respiratory issues) the consensus holds that it is better for their health for them to remain in work, or return to work as soon as possible;
- Work needs to be 'good', in terms of being both meaningful and in a workplace conducive to maintaining self-esteem, to maximise the benefits of being in work;
- Research shows a link between high levels of employee engagement or worker commitment and lower sickness absence.

The recent Stevenson and Farmer review of Mental Health and Employers: **"Thriving at Work"** states that the UK is facing a mental health challenge at work that is much larger than previously thought and this has a big human cost, not only of poor mental health at work, but also the knock-on impacts for society, the economy and government.

The report sets out mental health core standards, which the authors believe all organisations are capable of implementing quickly.

These core standards are as follows:-

- Produce, implement and communicate a mental health at work plan;
- Develop mental health awareness among employees;
- Encourage open conversations about mental health and the support available when employees are struggling;
- Provide employees with good working conditions and ensure they have a healthy work life balance and opportunities for development;
- Promote effective people management through line managers and supervisors;
- Routinely monitor employee mental health and wellbeing.

The Council has already taken steps towards achieving these standards in mental health. It is also our ambition to achieve the enhanced standards included in the report:-

- Increase transparency and accountability through internal and external reporting;
- Demonstrate accountability;
- Improve the disclosure process;
- Ensure provision of tailored in-house mental health support and signposting to clinical help.

This Framework will provide the structure to develop further initiatives and monitor progress in mental health as well as in other areas of health and wellbeing.

Our Council employs just over 7,000 employees. The demographic profile of the workforce indicates that we have an ageing population with 38% of employees who are over 50 years of age. 4.8% are under 25 years of age and 48% are aged between 31 and 50.

2016/17 data shows that the number of days absence per full-time equivalent employee was 11.36 days, with a target of 10 days and that, by far, the highest cause of absence is poor mental health (35%).

The 2016 employee survey showed that the main areas for improvement are communication and engagement, feeling valued, leading change, health and wellbeing and fairness and consistency.

What is a Healthy Workforce/Workplace?

A healthy workforce can be demonstrated by:-

- A more engaged workforce
- Motivated employees with increased morale
- Employee retention and lower employee turnover
- Reduced sickness absence
- Good employee/management relations

A healthy workplace can be demonstrated by:-

- A positive image in the eyes of both employees and customers
- A place where health risks are recognised and managed if they cannot be removed
- A place where work design is compatible with employees' health needs and limitations
- An environment that supports the promotion of healthy lifestyles
- A place where employees and employers recognise their responsibility for their health and the health of colleagues

Source: The healthy workplaces handbook – the NHS reference guide to staff wellbeing 2007/8.

Aims of the Framework

This Framework aims to:-

1. Create a safe and healthy working environment and culture
2. Develop resilience within our culture
3. Improve physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of employees
4. Encourage and support employees to maintain and develop a healthy lifestyle
5. Positively and constructively support and enable our employees with health issues to maintain attendance at work
6. Improve employee satisfaction, recruitment and retention

A broad range of policies, practices and procedures is already in place to support these aims, as outlined in **Appendix 1**.

1**Create a safe and healthy working environment and culture by:-**

- Implementing the Council's Health and Safety Plan 2018-2022
- Ensuring safe working practices
- Undertaking risk assessments
- Occupational health surveillance
- Providing related training
- Equipping our managers with the tools and models to support our employees through change
- Equipping managers to support employees experiencing difficult personal circumstances, health issues etc.
- Supporting new managers via a Managers' Induction Programme

**2****Develop resilience within our culture, by:-**

- Developing a strong team spirit across the Council
- Promoting positive work-life balance
- Recognising hard work and constructive effort
- Maintaining a focussed training and development programme



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Improve physical, mental and emotional wellbeing by encouraging employees to look after their health and investigating and addressing areas of concern by:-

- Providing learning opportunities
- Promoting positive choices through Healthy Working Lives etc
- Providing training on mental health and wellbeing, managing change and resilience
- Providing counselling, through Occupational Health, to employees in difficulty
- Analysing absence data to identify areas of concern and target resources to address these



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Encourage and support employees to maintain and develop a healthy lifestyle through initiatives such as Healthy Working Lives, by:-

- Promoting healthy eating
- Recognising the importance of physical activity
- Providing information on health issues associated with misuse of alcohol and drugs
- Encouraging employees to reduce tobacco use



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Positively and constructively support and enable our employees with health issues to maintain attendance at work through initiatives and policies such as:-

- Attendance support plans
- Phased return to work
- Retention and redeployment for medical reasons
- Assistance for employees with substance misuse issues



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Improve employee satisfaction, recruitment and retention through engagement events at all levels by:-

- Providing health and wellbeing benefits such as Dental Plan, Cycle to Work Scheme, Occupational Health Service, Counselling and Physiotherapy Service etc.
- Providing employee benefits such as Local Government Pension Scheme, Trade Union recognition, Flexible Working Opportunities, Salary Sacrifice Schemes for Childcare Vouchers, AVCs, Cars; Credit Union etc.
- Reviewing Employee Survey results, holding focus groups and acting on findings
- Succession planning and talent management
- Equipping our leaders with the relevant skills and knowledge to support health and wellbeing initiatives



Key Partners

There are a number of key partners with whom we will work to deliver the Framework.

Employees and managers within Dundee City Council

Trade Unions

The Council's Occupational Health Provider

Healthy Working Lives Co-ordinating Group

Human Resources and Business Support

Service Management Teams

Communications Division

Health and Safety Committees

Workplace Chaplaincy

Leisure & Culture Dundee

NHS Health Promotion

Macmillan Cancer Support

Maggie's Centres

Carers Scotland

Actions

In addition to the health benefits for individuals, the Framework's success will be seen in

- Reduced sickness absence
- Improved attendance
- Improved recruitment and retention
- Improved employee engagement and satisfaction
- Increased awareness and take-up of health and wellbeing interventions.

This is an over-arching framework and many of the specific actions which contribute to its objectives are contained in the existing policies, practices and procedures listed in the appendix.

Our People Strategy contains actions to develop our people which include development programmes to support employees through change and build resilience; the Corporate Health and Safety Plan includes specific actions to provide and maintain a health and safety culture in which the risk of accidents and occupational health illnesses are minimised; and an action plan has been drafted to address the issues identified as a result of the employee survey.

In addition, Human Resources and Business Support monitor and report on a range of measures such as absence rates, attendance rates and reasons for absence on a quarterly basis.

The main actions to achieve the objectives of the Framework are set out in the following table.

Health and Wellbeing Action Plan

Objective	Action	Success measures	Lead officer (s)	Timescale
Create a safe and healthy working environment and culture	Implement HWB Framework across the Council, as outlined in Our People Strategy action plan		Head of HRBS / Senior HR Officer	March 2018 Annual progress reviews
	Undertake regular health and wellbeing working group meetings with employees and trade union reps	Progress HWB group's action plans New initiatives explored and implemented	HWB Group / Senior HR Officer	Action plan reviewed bi-monthly
	Develop an employee health and wellbeing communication plan	Improved access and awareness of information including the hard-to-reach groups in the Council	HWB Group / Communications Officer	March 2018
	Implement the Council's Health and Safety Plan 2018-2022, as outlined in Our People Strategy action plan	Progress action plan	Health and Safety Co-ordinator	March 2018
	Produce and implement a mental health at work plan	Communicate action plan and regularly report on progress	Head of HRBS / Senior HR Officer	April 2018
Develop resilience within our culture	Equip managers to support employees via relevant training and manager induction programme	Roll out of Managers' induction programme	Learning and Organisational Development Manager	April 2018
	Develop an employee engagement strategy, as outlined in Our People Strategy action plan	Maintain transparent and open communications across all services	HWB Group / Communications Officer	March 2018

Objective	Action	Success measures	Lead officer (s)	Timescale
	Implement EPDR Framework in every service as outlined in Our People Strategy action plan	Recognition of hard work and constructive effort	Head of HRBS/ Learning and Organisational Development Manager	March 2018
	Develop a reward and recognition programme, as outlined in Our People Strategy action plan	Celebration of Outstanding Service and Commitment through OSCA ceremony	Head of Chief Executive's Service	March 2018
Improve physical, mental and emotional wellbeing	Provide learning opportunities to employees and managers;	Increased number of employees taking up learning opportunities	Learning and Organisational Development Manager	March 2018 Review annually
	Promote positive Health and Wellbeing choices	Develop health and wellbeing pages on OneDundee linking to regular information on HWL activities	HWB Group / Communications Officer	March 2018
	Work towards achieving the enhanced standards in the "Thriving at Work" report	Increased transparency and accountability through internal and external reporting	HR Managers	Review quarterly together with absence reports
Encourage and support employees to maintain and develop a healthy lifestyle	Support a network of Healthy Working Lives Coordinators to act as 'ambassadors' for the Council's wellbeing efforts. Including 2 hours paid time each month (pro rata) to undertake this role	A network of Healthy Working Lives Coordinators is established across the Council.	Head of HRBS / HR Officer	March 2018

Objective	Action	Success measures	Lead officer (s)	Timescale
	Provide an annual programme of HWL events	An increase in service areas participating in Healthy Working Lives Activities. Each service area achieves a minimum of Bronze Level	Head of HRBS / HR Officer	March 2018
	Recognise and promote the importance of physical activity for physical and mental health	Implementation of "The Daily Mile" and Dundee Physical Activity Strategy	Head of HRBS / HWB group	March 2018
	Provide information on health issues and encourage employees to reduce tobacco use	Increase in number of employees engaged in HWL activities and programmes Revise Smoking at Work policy in line with Scottish Government guidance	Head of HRBS / HWB Group Head of HRBS	Annual HWL reports March 2018
Positively and constructively support our employees with health issues to maintain attendance at work	Ensure policy on Promoting Health and Attendance is followed fairly and consistently and appropriate use of attendance support plans and phased return to work plans,	Improvement in attendance rates MIS reports show reduction of outstanding issues and reduction in length of long term absences	HR Managers	Reviewed quarterly
	Analyse absence data to identify areas of concern and take appropriate action	Improved attendance rates in areas identified	HR Managers	Reviewed quarterly
	Develop workshops on Promoting Health and Attendance for managers;	E-learning course on policy for Promoting Health and Attendance	HR Managers	April 2018

Objective	Action	Success measures	Lead officer (s)	Timescale
	Develop relationships with Macmillan and Maggie's Centres to provide support for employees with cancer and those who care for dependants with cancer	Managers more confident in managing employees with cancer, or with caring responsibilities. Improved engagement and earlier return to work in employees off long term	Head of HRBS / Senior HR Officer	March 2018 Absence statistics reviewed quarterly
	Recognise that employees with caring responsibilities have additional support needs, and provide relevant support	Work towards the Carer Positive Level 2 award as an "Established" Carer Positive Employer, having achieved the level 1 award "Engaged" employer in April 2016	Head of HRBS / HR Officer	August 2018
Improve employee satisfaction, recruitment and retention	Implement action plan from employee survey	Increase in employees who feel valued, engaged and treated fairly	Head of HRBS	September 2019 (employee survey)
	Provide health and wellbeing benefits, and other employee benefits, and investigate areas for improvement	Increase in uptake of schemes such as cycle to work, dental plan, AVCs etc.	HR Business Support Manager	Review annually
	Succession planning and talent management creating opportunities for internal promotion, as outlined in Our People Strategy action plan.	Increase in appointment of internal candidates to promoted posts Improvement in employee turnover rate	Learning and Organisational Development Manager	Review annually

Appendix 1

Health and Wellbeing policies, practices and procedures

The following policies, practices and procedures are already in place to support the health and wellbeing of our employees:-

- **Recruitment and Selection:**
the Council is committed to good practice regarding the employment of people with disabilities, including mental health issues and has achieved the Disability Confident Committed Employer Award;
- **Policy on Managing Stress in the Workplace:**
outlines the procedures for identifying and tackling stress in the workplace;
[Policy on Managing Stress in the Workplace](#)
- **Corporate Health and Safety Plan:**
requires that health and safety matters be given appropriate consideration and equal status to other service demands;
[Health & Safety Policy](#)
- **Policy on Promoting Health and Attendance:**
enables appropriate support and action to be taken where health issues are identified;
[Policy on Promoting Attendance](#)
- **Attendance Support Policy:**
enables temporary adjustments to be made in order to support an employee who may be undergoing treatment for a health condition or awaiting surgery.
[Attendance Support Policy](#)
- **Procedure for Retention and Redeployment (Medical Reasons):**
enables suitable means of support to be identified and implemented to maintain an employee at work or assist in returning to work whether for physical or mental health reasons;
[Procedure for Retention and Redeployment](#)
- **Occupational Health referral service:**
allows advice to be sought from suitably qualified health professionals;
- **Counselling referral service:**
allows support to be sought from a suitably qualified counsellor for affected employees;
- **Physiotherapy referral service:**
allows support to be provided to employees with musculoskeletal problems;
- **Critical Incident Debriefing Protocol:**
provides a means to promote normalisation and recovery for employees who may experience stress following a critical incident;

- **Prevention of Violence to Employees at Work:**
promotes practices which seek to minimise the potential risk of violence to employees at work;
[Prevention of Violence to Employees at Work](#)
- **Policy on Tobacco and Smoking:**
encourages and supports employees who wish to give up smoking;
[Policy on Tobacco and Smoking](#)
- **Substance Misuse Policy:**
allows support and practical assistance to be provided for employees with substance misuse problems;
[Substance Misuse Policy](#)
- **Flexible Working Policy:**
acknowledges the value of a realistic work-life balance as a means of encouraging a healthier lifestyle and reducing pressure;
[Flexible Working Policy](#)
- **Flexible Retirement Policy:**
supports employees to balance work-life demands as they approach retirement;
- **Carer's Leave:**
ensures a sympathetic approach when employees require time off to attend to caring responsibilities; the Council has been awarded the Carer Positive "Engaged" award;
[Carers Leave](#)
- **Workplace Chaplaincy Service:**
provides pastoral and spiritual support to employees of any faith or none;
[Workplace Chaplaincy](#)
- **Workplace Policy on Gender Based Violence:**
recognises the need to provide support for employees who are experiencing gender-based violence;
[Workplace Policy on Gender Based Violence](#)
- **Single Equality Scheme:**
reflects the Council's commitment to achieving the highest equality standards;
- **Personal Harassment Policy:**
outlines the procedure for dealing with harassment and promotes the provision of advice to both the complainant and subject of the complaint;
[Personal Harassment Policy](#)
- **Healthy Working Lives Programme:**
recognises that the promotion of health initiatives and health awareness activities in the workplace have a key role in improving health and quality of life;
[Healthy Working Lives](#)
- **EPDR Framework:**
provides the opportunity for employees to discuss their contribution to service, any work issues and their development needs. [EPDR Framework](#)

Increase in
physical health
and mental
wellbeing

Employees stay
longer - less
turnover



Improved
sense of
wellbeing

Improved
employee
morale

Better job
satisfaction



Benefits of a healthy workforce

Less sickness
and quicker
recovery

Fewer
accidents and
injuries

Reduced
stress

Job
performance
improves

Improved
engagement and
involvement

