

Councillors Briefing Note

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Service : Occupational Health & Safety
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Council receives workplace health accreditation

Wiltshire Council has demonstrated its commitment to the health and wellbeing of its staff by being awarded the highest rating of 'excellence' under Public Health England's national Workplace Wellbeing Charter.

Starting in 2014, and focussing on accreditation under the Workplace Wellbeing Charter, the Workplace Health project reviewed the health, safety and wellbeing provision offered by the council. In doing this the council was audited and benchmarked against an established and independent set of workplace health standards.

This has allowed the council to identify what it's doing well and where improvements can be made in relation to workplace health.

The charter consists of eight areas – Leadership, Absence Management, Health & Safety, Mental Health, Smoking & Tobacco, Healthy Eating, Physical Activity and Alcohol & Substance misuse.

A number of sub-projects and activities have taken place since the project began in 2014. Although health promotional events are only a small part of the overall objectives, large numbers of staff have engaged with a series of awareness raising campaigns, events and initiatives around employee wellbeing. These have included:

- Health MOTs consisting of blood pressure, cholesterol and carbon monoxide checks for staff based in council depots
- The creation of mandatory mental health e-learning for all staff
- Drop-in talks across all hubs on the signs and impact of depression including same day occupational health appointments if required
- Month long 'Calorie Counter' campaign across all hubs to encourage stair usage and reduce sedentary behaviour
- Increase the availability and usage of sit-stand desks among office based staff
- Introduction of computer based pop-up notifications which identify when a member of staff has been at their computer for an hour to interrupt prolonged sitting and encourage them to stretch and move around

- Trialling free to use health monitors in all hubs which allow staff to measure height, weight, pulse rate, BMI and blood pressure
- The creation of a corporate healthy eating policy and action plan
- A week long healthy eating campaign across all hubs which included a competition to design a healthy lunch, taste test workshops to identify hidden sugar, salt and fat in foods, interactive healthy eating display, cooking demonstrations and food labelling workshops

Statistics:

- A health survey was completed by over 1,500 employees
- 45 staff based at council depots were given Health MOTs
- More than 1,700 staff have completed the MH awareness e-learning
- 110 staff attended mental health drop-in sessions
- Two sit-stand desks were introduced initially to enable teams to test them. Given the demand this was increased the number of desks available and now have 24 spread over eight buildings.
- The computer pop-ups to interrupt prolonged sitting are enabled on 4,458 employee computers

The charter assessment culminated in two days of interviews with staff from across the organisation on 12 and 13 April. The assessor who conducted the interviews, said of her visit: "I would like to thank everyone involved who made the assessment a seamless process and for the warm hospitality offered during the visit. It is not often you can honestly leave an organisation and think that it was not a workplace you had left but a community".

The council will receive the assessor's full report soon.

Teams from across the council have worked on this project including occupational health and safety, the programme office, leisure, public health, facilities management, public protection, equalities and diversity, human resources, transformation, communications and ICT.

The occupational health and safety team will now be leading on a strategy to realise the benefits made possible by the project and to further embed positive workplace health management standards. This strategy will:

- a. further influence and embed positive management behaviour in relation to health awareness and sickness absence;
- b. further influence and engage staff participation in health promotional events and awareness training;
- c. ensure a consistent and sustained communication strategy that promotes and celebrates positive health as a key workplace priority.