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To: Councillor Copland, Convener; Councillor Al-Samarai, Vice-Convener; Councillor David Cameron, the Lord Provost; Councillor Steve Delaney, the Depute Provost; and Councillors Ali, Boulton, Davidson, Fairfull, Macdonald, MacGregor, Massey, McLeod and Thomson.

Trade Union Advisers: Zemeta Chefeke and Carole Thorpe (EIS); Kevin Masson and David Willis (GMB); Jason Currie and 1 vacancy (SSTA); Mark Musk and Alison Robertson (UNISON); Joe Craig and Mishelle Gray (UNITE); Fiona Sales (UCATT) and Rob Stephen and 1 vacancy (VOICE).

Town House,
ABERDEEN, 12 January 2024

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Members of the **STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE** are requested to meet in **Committee Room 2 - Town House on MONDAY, 22 JANUARY 2024 at 10.00 am**. This is a hybrid meeting and Members may also attend remotely.

The meeting will be webcast and a live stream can be viewed on the Council's website. <https://aberdeen.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

JENNI LAWSON
INTERIM CHIEF OFFICER – GOVERNANCE (LEGAL)

B U S I N E S S

NOTIFICATION OF URGENT BUSINESS

1.1. There are no items at this time

DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT BUSINESS

2.1. There are no items of exempt business

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

3.1. Members are requested to declare any interests

DEPUTATIONS

- 4.1. None at this time

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- 5.1. Minute of Previous Meeting of 13 November 2023 - for approval (Pages 3 - 8)

COMMITTEE PLANNER

- 6.1. Committee Business Planner (Pages 9 - 12)

NOTICES OF MOTION

- 7.1. None at this time

REFERRALS FROM COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND SUB COMMITTEES

- 8.1. None at this time

COUNCIL POLICIES AFFECTING STAFF

- 9.1. Managing Performance Policy - CUS/24/021 (Pages 13 - 24)

HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING OF STAFF

- 10.1. Internal Communications and Employee Engagement - update - CUS/24/023
(Pages 25 - 44)
- 10.2. Mental Health and Wellbeing Update - CUS/24/022 (Pages 45 - 58)

Integrated Impact Assessments related to reports on this agenda can be viewed [here](#)

To access the Service Updates for this Committee please click [here](#)

Website Address: aberdeencity.gov.uk

Should you require any further information about this agenda, please contact
Stephanie Dunsmuir, email sdunsmuir@aberdeencity.gov.uk

STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

ABERDEEN, 13 November 2023. Minute of Meeting of the STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Copland, Convener; Councillor Al-Samarai, Vice-Convener; Councillor David Cameron, the Lord Provost; Councillor Steve Delaney, the Depute Provost; and Councillors Ali, Davidson, Fairfull, Macdonald, MacGregor, Massey, McLeod and Thomson.

Trade Union Advisers:- Zem Chefeke and Carole Thorpe (EIS); Kevin Masson and David Willis (GMB); Mark Musk and Alison Robertson (UNISON); and Fiona Sales (UCATT).

The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be viewed [here](#).

Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

1. There were no declarations of interest nor transparency statements made.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2. The Committee had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 4 September 2023 for approval.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER

3. The Committee had before it the business planner, as prepared by the Interim Chief Officer – Governance (Legal).

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would try to reflect in the business planner where decisions had been taken at earlier meetings which had an impact on future reports, to ensure greater transparency for those who may not have been involved in the earlier decision; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the planner.

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STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE EFFECTIVENESS REPORT - COM/23/338

4. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Commissioning which presented the third annual Staff Governance Committee effectiveness report for consideration.

The Convener thanked officers for the report and noted that it reflected the good work of the Committee, concluding by thanking Members and Trade Union Advisers for their input at meetings.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) provide comments and observations on the data contained within the annual report; and
- (b) note the annual report of the Staff Governance Committee.

The Committee resolved:-

to note the report.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT UPDATE - CUS/23/344

5. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Customer Services which presented the annual update on the work that had been undertaken in respect of leadership and management development since November 2022.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) note the continuing progress made on developing leaders and managers and the assurance provided within the report that the programme equipped managers to deal with the challenges ahead; and
- (b) note that a coaching approach to managing and leading was now a core foundation within all the Council's management development programmes.

The Committee resolved:-

to approve the recommendations.

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY AND PROCEDURE - CUS/23/250

6. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Customer Services which sought approval of the revised Whistleblowing Policy. The report advised on the process that had been undertaken to review the policy, and set out the revisions made.

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During the discussion of the report, Members requested that officers ensure that the information was cascaded to staff. It was also noted that if any Members had any queries in relation to the application of the policy, officers in People and Organisational Development would be happy to meet to discuss further.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee approve the revised policy.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to request that Chief Officers ensure that their managers cascaded information on the revised policy to all staff; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendation.

MANAGING SUBSTANCE MISUSE POLICY - CUS/23/349

7. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Customer Services which presented the revised Managing Substance Misuse Policy for consideration and approval. The report advised of the process which had been undertaken during the review, and set out the proposed changes to the policy.

During the discussion, Mr Willis expressed concern as to whether there was a meaningful resource within the Council for employees to access. Officers advised that while there was no in-house support, employees were directed to a wide range of external support. They noted that there was still work to be done around the supporting guidance for the policy and invited the Trade Unions to participate in that work.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) approve the revised Managing Substance Misuse Policy; and
- (b) instruct the Interim Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development to ensure that managers had access to the required guidance, training and support to allow them to support employees through the process with confidence.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would be undertaking work on the accompanying guidance, and that Trade Union colleagues were to be invited to participate in that work; and
- (ii) to approve the recommendations.

CORPORATE HEALTH & SAFETY QUARTERLY UPDATE - COM/23/346

8. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Commissioning which presented a summary of statistical health and safety performance information for the three

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month reporting period from July to September 2023, to provide the Committee with the opportunity to monitor compliance with health and safety legislation.

Members asked a number of questions on the report, specifically around the number of incidents within the Education Service. It was further noted that there had been two dog bite incidents during the reporting period, and officers advised that the incidents had been checked and monitored against the trend from August 2022. Staff had been reminded of procedures and officers had produced a short training presentation which had been shared with relevant staff and would be made available on the Council's intranet.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee note the report and provide comment on the health, safety policy, performance, trends, and improvements.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would liaise with Councillor Thomson outwith the meeting in relation to the anecdotal reports she had received about a possible lack of consistency in schools who were reporting incidents;
- (ii) to request that officers provide a service update to Members and Trade Union Advisers in respect of the work of the Health and Safety sub group, which had been set up to undertake analysis of health and safety data generated by schools, to include the action being taken to address short-term behavioural incidents;
- (iii) to note that officers had prepared a short training presentation for relevant staff on how to deal with any incidents involving animals, and to request that the presentation also be circulated to Elected Members; and
- (iv) to note the report.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SCHEME / OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH / SICKNESS ABSENCE SIX MONTHLY REPORT - CUS/23/347

9. The Committee had before it a report by the Director of Customer Services which provided (a) an update on the utilisation of the Employee Assistance Service (EAS) through the provider VIVUP during the last 6 month period (1 January 2023 to 30 June 2023) and (b) a 6 monthly update on the Occupational Health and Absence for the period 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2023.

Members asked a number of questions on the report in respect of absence data and the high levels of low mood, anxiety and depression reflected in the self-help download statistics and what was being done to mitigate this.

The report recommended:-

that the Committee –

- (a) consider the contents of the report; and

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- (b) note that the data included within the report evidenced progress made to date against the specific aims of the Absence Improvement Project as detailed in section 3.4 of the report.

The Committee resolved:-

- (i) to note that officers would include data around Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) in the Mental Health and Wellbeing update report which was due to Committee in January 2024;
 - (i) to note that officers had undertaken to include information on SAD within the toolkits and leaflets available to staff, and would liaise with VIVUP to ascertain whether any other support was available;
 - (ii) to note that officers had made information available on the intranet in respect of wellbeing in winter, including a podcast on SAD, and that this would be circulated to Members and Trade Union Advisers for information;
 - (iii) to note the potential impact on the mental health of staff who were either being investigated or who had raised matters through the other Policies for People, and that officers would include detail on this in the January Mental Health and Wellbeing update report; and
 - (iv) to note that the data included within the report evidenced progress made to date against the specific aims of the Absence Improvement Project as detailed in section 3.4 of the report.
- **COUNCILLOR NEIL COPLAND, Convener**

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	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	STAFF GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLANNER The Business Planner details the reports which have been instructed by the Committee as well as reports which the Functions expect to be submitting for the calendar year.								
2	Report Title	Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report	Update	Report Author	Chief Officer	Directorate	Terms of Reference	Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D, R, or T	Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred
3	24 January 2024								
4	Managing Performance Policy and Procedure	To seek approval of the policy		Kirsten Foley	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.5		
5	Internal Communications and Employee Engagement - update	For noting and assurance		Sandie Scott	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.4		
6	Mental Health and Wellbeing Update	To provide an update on recent work which has been undertaken SGC 13/11/23 - to request that officers include data in this report on Seasonal Affective Disorder and information on investigations and those who may have raised issues through any of the Policies for People		Kirsten Foley	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.7		
7	22 April 2024								
8	EAS Annual Progress Update Occupational Health and Absence Annual Update	To present an annual report for the EAS/OH & Sickness Absence figures		Kirsten Foley	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.7		
9	Corporate Health & Safety Quarterly Update	For period to 31 December 2023		Colin Leaver	Governance	Commissioning	3.2		
10	Zero tolerance pledge	To update Committee on the work in relation to the zero tolerance pledge, including an action plan for approval		Lindsay MacInnes	People & Organisational Development	Customer	TBC		
11	Equality and Diversity Policy	To report back on the revised policy		Darren Buck	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.6		
12	24 June 2024								
13	Family Friendly Policies	SGC 04/09/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development and Customer Experience to report back to Staff Governance Committee in June 2024 with updated policies and documentation for approval		Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.5		
14	Corporate Health & Safety Quarterly Update	For period to 31 March 2024		Colin Leaver	Governance	Commissioning	3.2		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	Report Title	Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report	Update	Report Author	Chief Officer	Directorate	Terms of Reference	Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D, R, or T	Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred
2									
26	Managing Substance Misuse Policy	The revised policy was approved at Committee in November 2023 - to be reviewed annually (report will not be required if no changes are to be made)		Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.5		
27	Corporate Health & Safety Policy	To present the revised Health & Safety Policy, subject to approval being required		Colin Leaver	Governance	Commissioning	2.5		
28	Corporate Health & Safety Quarterly Update	For period to 30 September 2024		Colin Leaver	Governance	Commissioning	3.2		
29	2024 - Reporting dates to be confirmed								
30	Employee Code of Conduct	To present an update on the Employee Code of Conduct		Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.5		
31	Staff Travel Plan & Policy	For noting		Sandie Scott	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.5		
32	People development policy / guidance	To seek approval of the policy		Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.5		
33	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan	SGC 13/03/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development to provide an update to Staff Governance Committee at a future meeting of the Committee on any impact this report has on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan as well as any changes, updates or new areas of focus based on the data and analysis SGC 26/06/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development to report to Staff Governance Committee on progress to the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan on an annual basis which will either be as part of Mainstreaming or Progress Report updates or as an independent report in years where there is not a Mainstreaming or Progress Report		Isla Newcombe	People & Organisational Development	Customer			
34	2025								
35	Equality and Diversity Staffing Outcomes / 2025 Update on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan	SGC 26/06/23 - to instruct the Chief Officer - People and Organisational Development to report to Staff Governance Committee in advance of the next Mainstreaming Report being presented to Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee in March 2025 (dates to be confirmed) with an update on proposed staffing-related content and Outcomes. This will include the annual update on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan		Darren Buck	People & Organisational Development	Customer	TBC		

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	Report Title	Minute Reference/Committee Decision or Purpose of Report	Update	Report Author	Chief Officer	Directorate	Terms of Reference	Delayed or Recommended for removal or transfer, enter either D, R, or T	Explanation if delayed, removed or transferred
2									
36	Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure	The revised policy was approved at Committee in November 2023 - due for review November 2025		Kirsten Foley	People & Organisational Development	Customer	2.5		

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance Committee
DATE	22 January 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Managing Performance Policy
REPORT NUMBER	CUS/24/021
DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Lindsay MacInnes (interim)
REPORT AUTHOR	Kirsten Foley
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.5

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report presents the updated Managing Performance Policy for approval.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Committee:

- 2.1 approves the updated policy document;
- 2.2 Instructs the interim Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development to ensure that a full review is undertaken of the process and guidance in consultation with the Trade Unions and managers; and
- 2.3 Instructs the interim Chief Officer - People and Organisational Development to ensure that the Policy document and all supporting process and guidance documents are easily accessible to all staff and managers and that managers are supported in the fair and consistent application of the policy and process through appropriate training.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The existing Managing Performance Policy and Procedure has been in place since 2010, with updates to guidance applied as and when required.
Note: this policy does not apply to teaching employees who are employed on SNCT terms and conditions of employment.
- 3.2 Feedback received from managers and trade unions on recent cases led to the decision to review the existing Policy and Procedure.
- 3.3 The policy elements of the existing document were separated out from the policy and guidance elements and captured in the new corporate policy template.

3.4 A review of the feedback received was undertaken and the following key areas for improvement were identified:

- The importance of early intervention and appropriate escalation routes
- A requirement to update template pro formas and ensure that these are capturing the most relevant information so that they can be used at all stages of the process thus avoiding duplication of work as the process progresses.
- The importance of consistent support being available to both employee and manager throughout the process.
- Ensuring that wellbeing support is promoted to all concerned with the process at all stages.
- Ensuring that reasonable timescales are adhered to, allowing time for the employee to demonstrate improvement but not drawing out the process unnecessarily,

3.5 The review of the feedback identified that the matters requiring to be addressed relate not to the Policy statement, but rather to the process and guidance, and work is underway with focus groups, including Trade Union colleagues, to update these documents. It is intended that this work will be completed by the end of February 2024.

3.6 The key elements of Managing Performance Policy have not changed, and remain as they have been previously, namely:

- Employees have a duty to perform their work to the required standards.
- The employer has a duty to ensure that the required standards are clearly understood and that the employee is supported and enabled to reach the standard required.
- Any performance related issues should be progressed at the lowest level, with the emphasis always initially being on supporting the employee.
- A range of different types of support should be made available to both employees and managers throughout the application of the policy and associated process.

3.7 The Policy elements have been captured in the revised corporate policy template and reviewed by the Risk Board.

3.8 The updated Policy document is now presented to Committee for approval.

3.9 Work is underway with managers and trade union representatives to ensure that the existing process and guidance documents are reviewed in line with the feedback received from both managers and trade unions.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Under performance can lead to reduced service delivery and the possibility of incurring additional cost should work have to be redone.

4.2 Issues arising from poor performance could lead to legal challenge against the Council, potentially incurring costs.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Performance issues can sometimes be due to issues arising from health or other wellbeing issues. The Council has a duty of care to employees under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Equalities Act 2010. The existence of a policy framework under which under performance can be identified and support provided to the employee is a method of discharging this duty of care.
- 5.2 The Council is responsible for providing statutory services at the levels required by legislation. This policy framework provides a tool for supporting employees so that the Council can be confident that all statutory requirements are being met.
- 5.3 Performance issues may ultimately lead to a capability dismissal which is one of the potential fair reasons for dismissal.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	No significant risks identified			N/A
Compliance	Risk of unfair dismissal claims arising from performance management process being applied.	The policy complies with the ACAS guidance on Performance Management, which offers a level of assurance should there be a legal challenge resulting from a performance management process.	L	Yes
Operational	Under performance can have a negative impact on service delivery.	This policy provides a route for employees to be supported to achieve the standards required.	L	Yes
Financial	Under performance can impact on service delivery thus incurring	A policy which identifies under performance at the earliest stage and puts in place support for the employee will minimise the risk of such costs.	L	Yes

	financial cost to the organisation.			
Reputational	Failure to support employees to improve and sustain their performance can have a negative reputational risk.	The existence of a supportive performance management policy will enhance the Council's reputation as an employer of choice.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	No significant risks identified			N/A

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024</u>	
	Impact of Report
<p>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</p> <p><u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u></p>	<p>The provisions of the policy will assist Aberdeen City Council to ensure that all work in support of the Policy Statement is carried out to the highest possible standard.</p> <p>In addition, the policy supports the commitment to recognise that the Council depends upon its staff to deliver the services it provides and believe the Council must properly reward, train and support its staff.</p>
<p>Regional and City Strategies</p> <p>Workforce Plan</p>	<p>The Workforce Plan sets out the need for efficiency and flexibility in the workforce, and emphasises the need to develop internal capacity. This policy provides a mechanism for ensuring that employees are supported to work at the standard required.</p>

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Stage 1 assessment completed
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 [\[ARCHIVED CONTENT\] Performance management | Acas \(nationalarchives.gov.uk\)](#)

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Managing Performance Policy

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Name	Kirsten Foley
Title	Employee Relations and Wellbeing Manager
Email Address	Kfoley@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Managing Performance

Approved by XX Committee or Board on
20XX with an implementation date of 20XX



Document Control

Approval Date	
Implementation Date	
Policy Number	Request from Assurance Team
Policy Author/s and Owner	People and Organisational Development
Approval Authority	Staff Governance Committee
Scheduled Review	
Date and Changes: 1/12/23 – Previous policy document updated to reflect Corporate Template.	

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1. Why does the Council need this Policy?

- 1.1 Employees have a contractual duty to perform their duties to the standards required by their employer and to behave in a manner that is in line with the Guiding Principles of the organisation.
- 1.2 The employer also has a duty to provide appropriate support and training to enable the employee to carry out their duties to the standard required.
- 1.3 The Managing Performance policy and associated guidance provide a framework to ensure that employees who fall below these standards are managed through early intervention in a fair, supportive and consistent manner.
- 1.4 The policy and associated guidance ensure that the employee is informed of the concerns with their performance and provided with reasonable time and support to meet the required standards.
- 1.5 The employee will also be informed of the consequences of their failure to improve, which could ultimately be dismissal from the Council.

2. Application and Scope Statement

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees of Aberdeen City Council, except teachers whose performance will be considered under the General Teaching Council Code of Practice on Teacher Competence and the associated Local Negotiating Committee for Teachers Agreement. [Code Of Practice On Teacher Competence](#)
- 2.2 The policy aligns with the Guiding Principles of Pride and Trust, which set out the expectation that employees take pride in the work they undertake, work to make things better, and take responsibility for their actions.
- 2.3 The policy is concerned with ensuring that all employees are enabled and supported to perform their duties to the highest standard.
- 2.4 The Council recognises its legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 Managers are responsible for ensuring that all employees know and understand the performance standards expected of them and are provided with the appropriate training and support to allow them to achieve these standards.
- 3.2 Each individual employee is responsible for ensuring that they are aware of the performance standards expected of them, and for engaging with any training and support put in place to enable them to achieve these standards.
- 3.3 People and Organisational Development are responsible for ensuring that this policy and its accompanying guidance are clearly communicated to all staff.

- 3.4 People and Organisational Development are responsible for ensuring that appropriate training and support is available to managers in respect of the application of this policy.

4. Supporting Procedures and Documentation

- 4.1 An accompanying procedure and guidance document has been put in place to support the application of and adherence to this policy and is available on People Anytime on the Council Intranet.

- 4.2 This policy also links to:

- The Council's Guiding Principles [Our Guiding Principles \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- The Managing Discipline Policy [ACC Policy - Managing Discipline 2021 \(sharepoint.com\)](#) and accompanying guidance [Guidance - Managing Discipline Guidance 2021.pdf](#)
- The Employee Code of Conduct [Code of conduct | Search Results | Aberdeen City Council: People Anytime](#)
- Investigations Procedure
- Diversity and Equality Policy
- ICT Acceptable Use Policy

5. About this Policy

- 5.1 This policy is not creating any specific regulations or requirements other than what is stated under Core Principles below

Policy Core Principles

- 5.2 A supportive, informative and constructive approach to performance issues will be encouraged and applied by employees, managers and trades unions, with any concerns being raised informally in the first instance.
- 5.3 Early intervention is key to providing support to employees who are experiencing a lapse in their performance levels.
- 5.4 Managers should give employees every opportunity to identify any health, equalities or other issues that may be impacting on the employee's performance and provide appropriate support.
- 5.5 Managers will ensure that all employees know and understand the performance standards expected of them.
- 5.6 Reasonable efforts will be made to identify sustainable solutions to overcome individual performance difficulties. Whilst the Council will make all reasonable efforts to assist the employee, it cannot guarantee to maintain employment in cases where the employee is unable to sustain the performance standards required.

- 5.7 Every effort will be made to ensure that under performance is dealt with promptly and effectively, demonstrating clear outcomes at all stages.
- 5.8 Employees will be offered the opportunity to be accompanied by a trade union representative or work colleague of their choice at all stages of the procedure. The employee will not normally be permitted to be accompanied by a legal practitioner, partner, spouse or family member.

6. Risk

- **Compliance Risks** – This policy and supporting documentation will reduce the risk of non-compliance with delivery of statutory services by putting in place a process for supporting employees to deliver services to the standard required.
 - **Operational Risks** – The application of this policy will ensure that all services are delivered to the highest standard, and that employees are supported to meet the required standards of service delivery.
 - **Reputational Risks** - the policy reduces reputational risk to ACC by demonstrating our commitment to addressing issues of underperformance and to supporting our employees to meet the required standards.
 - There have been no unintended effects or consequences identified from the update of this policy.
- 6.1 The risks identified will be managed and mitigated through application of the policy across the Council. This will be undertaken by ensuring the policy and accompanying procedure are readily available to all and that support is provided from People and Organisational Development in the interpretation of the policy, where required.
- 6.2 Monitoring will be undertaken by the review of data relating to the application of the policy.

7. Environmental Implications

There are no environmental implications arising from this policy.

8. Policy Performance

- 8.1 The main factors determining the effectiveness of the policy are the usage of the policy by employees who identify that they are experiencing performance issues and seek support from the organization to overcome these, and the consistency in its application by managers. Whilst the majority of Council employees will not require to seek the support offered by the policy, it is important that the Council has in place a robust policy and accompanying procedure which is available for when the need arises.
- 8.2 The effectiveness of the policy will be measured through gathering data on the application of the policy and the staged support process. Feedback will be collected from users of the policy (employees and managers) and accompanying procedure.

- 8.3 The Employee Relations and Wellbeing Manager will report to Staff Governance Committee data relating to the application and effectiveness of the policy as part of the regular reports on case work. In all such reports confidentiality will be strictly maintained.

9. Design and Delivery

- 9.1 The policy links to the 'Workforce Design' principle of the Target Operating Model (TOM) in that it is concerned with organisational culture. The Council aims to apply high standards of performance. Having a Managing Performance policy and accompanying procedure in place where employees and workers are supported to perform to the standards required will contribute to a positive culture in the organisation. It also accords with the Council's Guiding Principles, particularly in relation to the commitment to valuing and supporting staff, and taking pride in our performance.

10. Housekeeping and Maintenance

- 10.1 The Policy updates the existing Managing Performance policy and will be reviewed biennially with any necessary updates made to it and the accompanying procedural document.

11. Communication and Distribution

- 11.1 This policy and accompanying procedure will be shared directly with the Extended Corporate Management Team to enable their communication and distribution in accordance with responsibilities set out in section 3.
- 11.2 The policy and accompanying procedure and guidance note will be available to view on the organisation's shared areas on the intranet.

12. Information Management

- 12.1 Information generated by the application of this policy and accompanying procedure will be managed in accordance with the Council's Corporate Information Policy and Supporting Procedures.

13. Definitions and Understanding this Policy

- 13.1 Under performance is defined as work performance which does not meet the standards set out in the Job Profile.

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance Committee
DATE	22 January 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Internal Comms and Employee Engagement – update
REPORT NUMBER	CUS/24/023
DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Lindsay MacInnes
REPORT AUTHOR	Sandie Scott, People Development Manager
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.4

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To update Committee on progress and activity on our approach to Internal Communications and Employee Engagement – and how this is applied to support employees through organisational change.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

- 2.1. Notes the continuing progress made on our approach to internal communications and employee engagement to support all employees through organisational change.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1. Organisational change can be unsettling to employees. Change often brings uncertainty and ambiguity, which can cause stress and anxiety. Employees may be concerned about how the change will affect their job security, roles, responsibilities, and relationships with colleagues. They may also feel a sense of loss for the way things used to be and may need time to adjust to new ways of working.
- 3.2. Our Occupational Health Report 2023 shows that change remains a significant cause of work-related stress for our employees, although it has decreased from 24% to 18% since 2022.
- 3.3. And yet change is inevitable in any organisation, whether it is due to internal factors, such as financial pressures, restructuring, changes in leadership; or external factors, such as market shifts, societal changes, customer demands, or technological innovations. Change can also be highly desirable for employees, but the means of delivery can negatively affect its reception if people feel that it has been poorly communicated, or ‘done to’ them.

- 3.4. Communication and engagement are therefore essential for employees during periods of change, as they can help them cope with uncertainty, build trust, foster collaboration, enhance performance, create a positive work culture, and facilitate change and innovation.
- 3.5. Aberdeen City Council is a large, complex and diverse organisation, delivering a huge array of services in locations across the city. Like any local authority, we have experienced challenges in communication and engagement with our workforce, particularly those in our Frontline Operational Services Job Family. We have over 1000 colleagues in a Frontline Operational role, who by the nature of their work have limited digital access and may work remotely without regular one-to-ones with their managers (for example Refuse Loaders, Cleaners, Gardeners).
- 3.6. To address the need and challenges for communication, engagement and support during organisational change, we are committed to a holistic approach to change which is inclusive and engaging for employees in all our job families. This approach, approved by the Committee in January 2023, as part of Workforce Delivery Plan to support Target Operating Model (TOM) 1.2, is based upon international best practice in change management from Prosci, ADKAR:

The Five Building Blocks for Successful Change



- A** Awareness

- D** Desire

- K** Knowledge

- A** Ability

- R** Reinforcement®

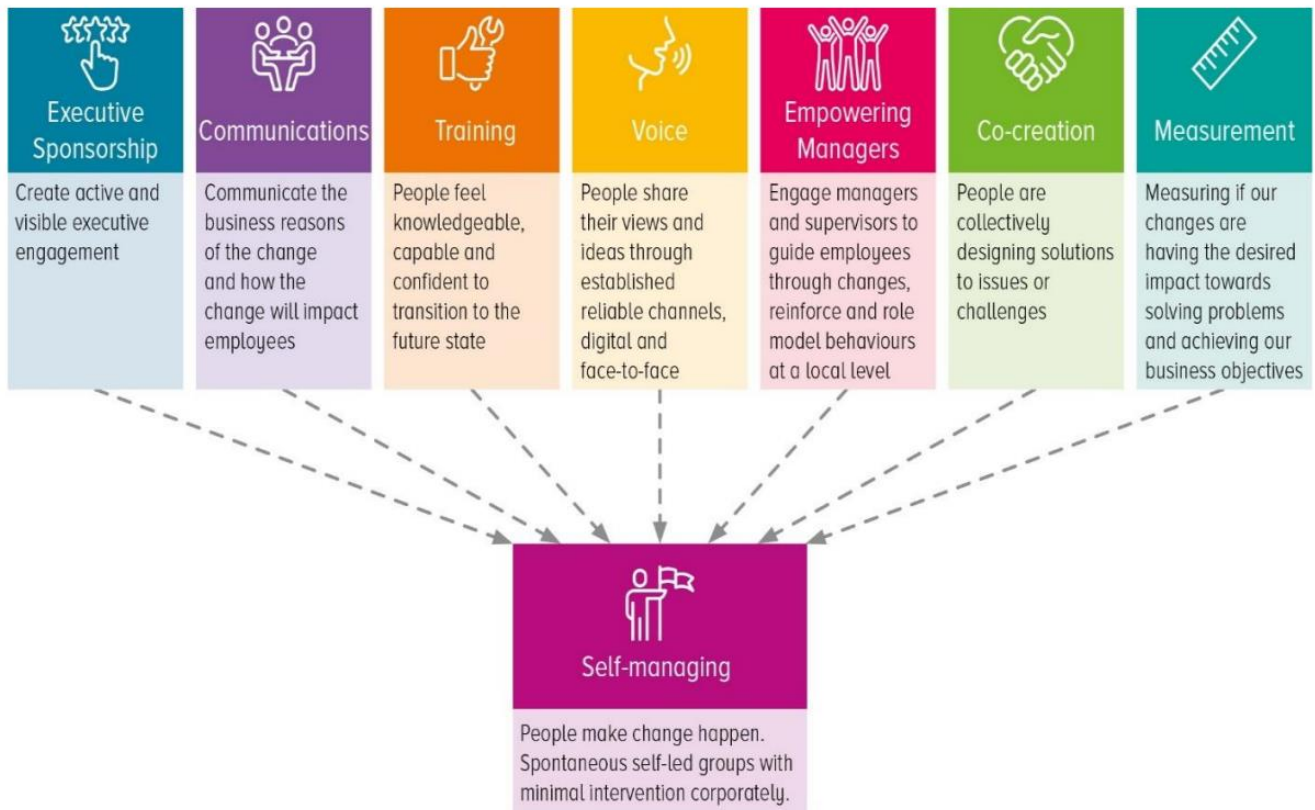
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Prosci

ADKAR

- **Awareness:** we ensure that employees are aware of the change
 - **Desire:** employees understand the business reasons for the change and feel a personal motivation to embrace the change
 - **Knowledge:** employees are equipped with the skills to work in the required new ways
 - **Ability:** employees are given the opportunity to put their skills in practice
 - **Reinforcement:** managers are role modelling, coaching and supporting their employees at a local level.
- 3.7. Our ACC Approach to Change Management therefore takes the theory of ADKAR to achieve culture change and provides practical resources under

seven key areas for leaders of changes to implement. These seven pillars are not sequential – they must all be used repeatedly and concurrently throughout a change programme, if the ultimate intention is to have self-managing employees, who no longer require any support or reinforcement to thrive in the new desired way of working.



- 3.8. It provides a structured approach to change management and is flexible so it can be scaled to meet the size and type of organisational change – and has successfully been implemented on a wide range of projects.
- 3.9. The approach has been developed through collaboration with international change management specialists in Prosci™ and employee engagement specialists from Engage for Success; and through in-depth engagement with employees to understand the barriers to communication and the best way to cascade information and so takes account of the different ways our job families work and need to be communicated with.
- 3.10. Aberdeen City Council’s approach to change is now well-established, and this report provides an update on the ongoing progress to support employees through organisational change, via the seven pillars.

Progress Update

Executive Sponsorship

- 3.11. Chief Officers play a crucial role in leading the organisation and their Cluster through change. They need to provide a compelling vision and narrative for

the change, remain visible and authentic through their communications, and inspire and empower their people to deliver it. To clarify the significance of this role and ensure acceptance and consistency of experience across the organisation, the required capabilities for Chief Officers are set out in the **Chief Officer Capability Framework** (appendix 1). There are a variety of capability indicators relating to a Chief Officer's role in change, with examples as follow.

- *Proactively leads transformation within the organisation, acting as an effective project sponsor when needed.*
- *Leads through active communication, motivates and inspires people to achieve shared outcomes for the organisation.*
- *Communicates clearly and in a structured way, persuading others effectively.*
- *Works effectively in partnership with Trade Unions and resolves conflict effectively.*
- *Values people voices which is demonstrated by engaging, encouraging them to share their perspectives, listens and takes action.*
- *Takes care of their people - takes active steps to promote health and wellbeing initiatives.*
- *Displays empathy and genuine concern - takes time to find out how challenges and pressures feel from the perspective of others.*

3.12. As part of **Extended Corporate Management Team (ECMT) Development**, all Chief Officers were required to undertake a self and team evaluation against their Capability Framework, including the indicators relevant to change set out above. From this a development programme was developed, tailored to their individual and collective needs, which includes the following development interventions:

- *Focusing on Resilience and Wellbeing (for self and others)*
- *Leading People Change and Transformation*

3.13. As part of their role as leaders of organisational change, a Chief Officer is named as sponsor for each project within our Transformation Programme. This provides a visible point of accountability for employees, and their profile is used to raise the profile and credibility of a project. The benefit is that they are seen as knowledgeable, approachable and trustworthy and acting in the best interests of the city. They also play a role in building pride by celebrating success and achievements within the project – appreciating and recognising the work of individuals and teams.

3.14. We are also preparing our senior leaders of the future to lead change effectively by equipping our **Aspiring Senior Leaders** with clarity on the capabilities required of them – and providing them with a development programme to achieve these capabilities. They were recruited for, and developed during, the programme using an adapted version of the Chief Officer Capability Framework (see appendix 2 for Aspiring Senior Leader

Capability Framework) with indicators relevant to leading change as follows:

- *Communicates clearly and in a structured way, persuading others effectively.*
 - *Connects and inspires others behind shared strategic outcomes.*
 - *Shows personal initiative in transformation and digital leadership.*
 - *Builds effective relationships with partners to achieve shared outcomes.*
 - *Takes a collaborative approach to problem-solving and decision making.*
 - *Displays empathy and genuine concern – takes time to find out how challenges and pressures feel from the perspective of others.*
- 3.15. To support and develop our Aspiring Senior Leaders to achieve these capabilities, they also undertake the following development interventions.
- *Leading people through change and service design*
 - *Effective Partnership Working with Trade Unions.*
- 3.16. In addition to their collective development programme, our leaders are also supported to play their role as Executive Sponsors of change through dedicated **one-to-one change management support** from People & Organisational Development Advisers to follow our Approach to Change, using best practice from Prosci on the role of a senior leader in change, undertaking the ABCs of change leadership:
- **Be Active and visible:** Chief Officers are supported to be highly visible to their Cluster and the wider organisation via intranet blogs, webinars, face-to-face events, and engagement sessions.
 - **Build a coalition:** Chief Officers are supported to work closely with their service managers to ensure that middle management are then able to play their role (see Engaging Managers below).
 - **Communicate about the change:** Chief Officers are supported to communicate regularly about the change with the people they lead, through a variety of means, for example emails, Teams messages and paper-based newsletters, depending on the communication needs of their services. Employees need to feel that their leaders and managers are honest, transparent, and dependable, especially during times of change. By communicating frequently and openly, leaders and managers can demonstrate their commitment and accountability, as well as their respect and appreciation for their employees. Communication also allows leaders and managers to acknowledge the challenges and the emotions that employees may face, and to offer support and guidance. See more in Communications below.

Communication

- 3.17. Communication is essential for employees during any periods of change. Employees need to know what is changing, why it is changing, how it will affect them, and what they need to do differently. By providing clear and consistent information, we can help employees understand the rationale and

benefits of the change, as well as the expectations and the roles they have to play.

- 3.18. It is critical therefore that we provide communication platforms for our employees that are accessible, regularly updated with relevant and useful information, and written in a way that is relatable for them.
- 3.19. Since the establishment of the Internal Communications and Employee Engagement team within People & Organisational Development in June 2019, great progress has been made in building a range of employee communications platforms that each serve a different function.
- 3.20. Our **SharePoint-based intranet** draws upon the latest Microsoft365 technology to provide a tailored, dynamic, integrated experience for employees. It has a hub-site, managed by the Internal Comms team, and is used to cascade corporate communications to all employees, including the Chief Executive's regular blog; but has a multitude of sub-sites which are owned by employee networks and subject matter experts to ensure a diversity of employee voice on the intranet, including:
- **Transformation Hub**: to inform and engage employees on our transformation programme to deliver TOM 1.2.
 - **Customer Academy**: to provide information, guidance and discussion points for all things relating to Customer Service.
 - **People Anytime**: information, resources, guides and more relating to employment with Aberdeen City Council and employee health and wellbeing.
 - **Digital Workplace**: to share news and training on our digital resources.
 - **Green Workplace**: to share knowledge, practical tips, ideas and opportunities to get involved in our Climate Change and Environment agenda.
 - **Elected Members**: for Elected Members' information and development.
 - **Leadership Forum**: to keep People Managers informed on key developments; provide a space for them to get actively involved in what is happening and to involve their teams; and facilitate collaboration, sharing and problem solving for leaders all over the council.
 - **Mental Health & Wellbeing**: To ensure that we are making resources for employees having a negative response to change as easily accessible and available as possible, we also have a dedicated SharePoint intranet site for Mental Health and Wellbeing. These pages accompany and are promoted whenever we publish a blog relating to organisational change.
- 3.21. **Viva Engage**: To ensure wide and direct dispersal of corporate communications and avoid the bottleneck associated with the traditional top-down email cascade, we have shifted our method of sharing urgent and important news bulletins to announcements via **Microsoft's Viva Engage** (previously known as Yammer). The significant advantage of this communication method over email is that it also reaches **all frontline employees** who have opted to use their own device and install the Viva Engage app. The 'All Company' community (shown below) consists of our entire workforce and has 9459 members, providing us with an effective and

direct means of cascading corporate communication with all employees. We can also measure how many employees a notification has reached, as can also be seen below:

Members • 9,459

This is the default group for everyone in the Aberdeen City Council network
Edit description

Info

This Yammer community is used to share important news and updates for all employees.

For more informal questions and information sharing, you may like to use:

- **Ask a Colleague:** Ask anything! Get your questions answered by colleagues from all across Aberdeen City Council
- **Digital Workplace:** For digital news, tips, training, questions and problems
- **People Anytime:** For HR related news and queries
- **We value each other:** For sharing a bit of praise, recognition and appreciation for your colleagues
- **Classifieds...**

More

Pinned

All Company Restricted

Conversations About Files Events

Share thoughts, ideas, or updates

Discussion Question Praise Poll

All conversations Recent posts

Suzie Watt Fri at 12:52 PM Seen by 3,233

The pay award information has been updated to include craft workers and chief officers. You can find out more on [Pay Award 2023/24 - Updated \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Paula Fullerton Nov 27 Seen by 3,996

Understanding our workforce diversity data is important to us. It lets us identify areas of the organisation where we might have diversity gaps and then we can then address this with targeted actions and initiatives. To help us understand this information better, we have updated the diversity questions on Core HR. Please take a minute to go in and update your information.

More information and instructions can be found on the intranet - [The way we capture diversity data has changed on CoreHR. Please check and update your information \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Like Comment Share Nazif Abdullah and 2 others

Write a comment

Announcement

Paula Fullerton Nov 24 Seen by 5,282

[Carry Forward Annual Leave - opens Monday 4th December \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

It is key that, in terms of mental health and wellbeing, we use our entitlement to annual leave for time away from work and the rest that we all need. As part of this, it is important that our annual leave is adequately spread across the calendar year to avoid workload

3.22. **Accessibility:** To meet our Public Sector Equality Duty and create equity in the experience of our internal communication platforms, we seek to continuously improve the design of the intranet to increase accessibility. This includes the use of alternative text on images, selective use of PDFs (which cannot be read by screen readers) and choice of graphics, images and colour. We also ensure heading text is set up correctly, adding plain text beside infographics for ease of reading, minimising the use of text over

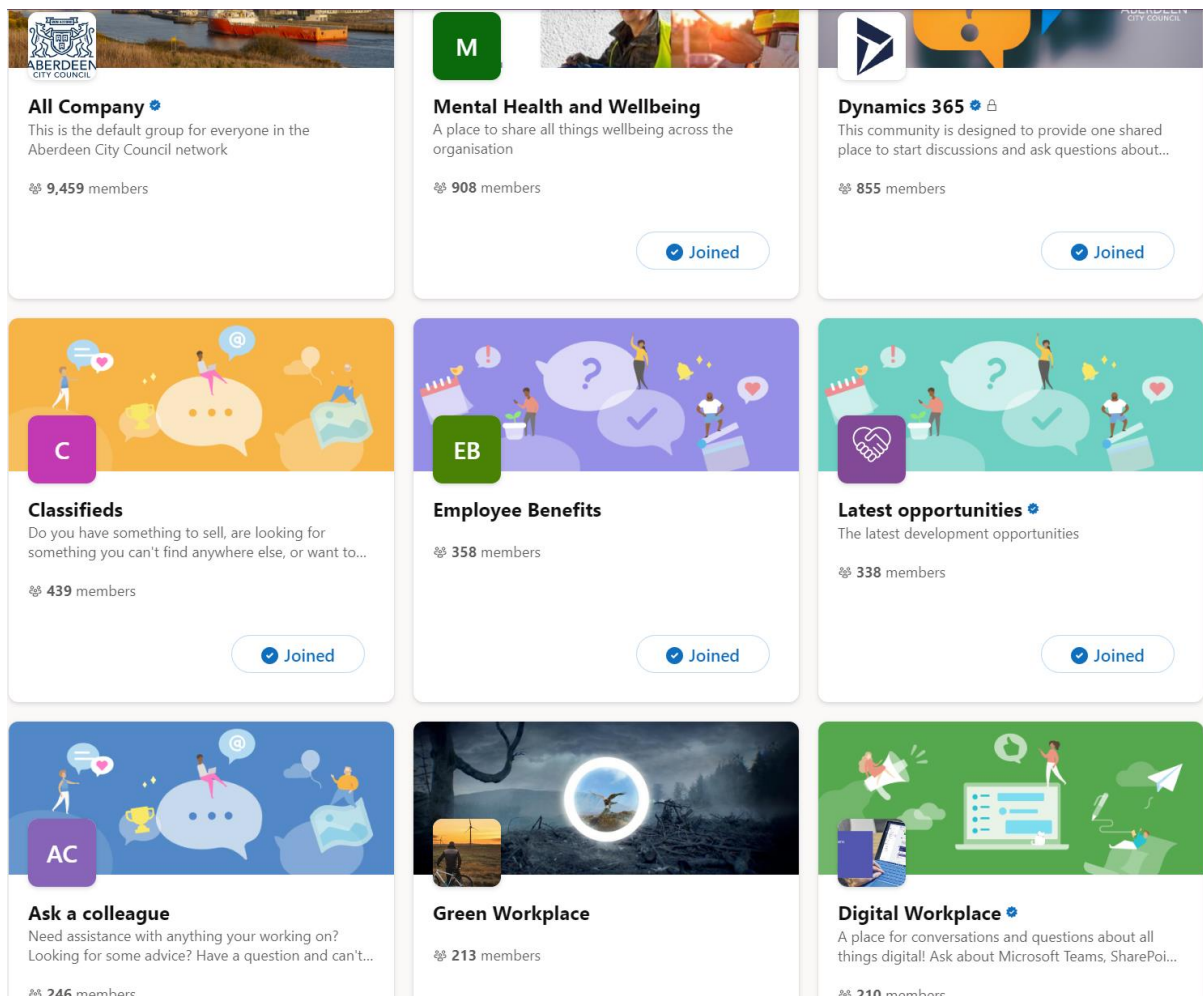
images and using clear fonts with high colour contrasts. Additionally, videos and recordings include closed captions and the option to download transcripts.

- 3.23. We are creating an accessibility hub on the intranet. This is a single area of information that covers all accessibility features that exist on our intranet, website and within all the Microsoft programmes we use.
- 3.24. **Paper Newsletter:** whilst Viva Engage enables us to increase the speed and measure the impact of communications, the paper-based newsletter continues to play a useful role in communication and engagement with our frontline colleagues. Feedback from union colleagues has identified that this remains a popular and effective means of communication with frontline colleagues. So, the content for frontline newsletters is co-designed with the services to ensure a useful and relevant combination of service-specific good news stories, and corporately available resources, such as wellbeing support, development opportunities and council-wide news. These are available digitally and in print at depots. A 'Transformation Special' newsletter was also made available to communicate and engage with frontline employees on the proposed organisation redesign.

Voice

- 3.25. Employee voice is the facility for employees to express their opinions, concerns, suggestions, or feedback to the organisation about issues or decisions that affect them. Employee voice is important during organisational change because:
- It can help to identify and address gaps, risks, and opportunities in the change process and outcomes by tapping into the collective wisdom and experience of the workforce.
 - It can improve the quality of change decisions by providing diverse and relevant perspectives, insights, and ideas from frontline staff.
 - It can reduce negative emotions and help to manage reactions of employees to the change by allowing them to express their feelings, concerns, and needs at each stage.
 - It can increase the acceptance and commitment of employees to the change by giving them a sense of ownership, involvement, and empowerment.
 - It can foster a culture of continuous improvement and innovation by stimulating creativity, learning, and collaboration among employees.
 - It can support the well-being and resilience of employees by creating a positive and supportive work environment where they feel valued, respected, and heard. It can also help to reduce stress, burnout, and turnover by addressing the root causes of dissatisfaction, frustration, and resistance to the change.
- 3.26. It is equally important that, when employees take the time to share their feedback, there is acknowledgement of this through a personalised response where possible, or a playback of the findings from the engagement – and transparency about what will be done or has been done as a result of their input.

- 3.27. We have a wide variety of established and well-used corporate employee voice mechanisms at Aberdeen City Council – formal and informal, open and anonymous - so that employees can raise issues, questions or concerns at any time in a way that is safe, direct, transparent and participative with any and many employees able to join the discussion.
- 3.28. **Viva Engage** is our most open employee voice platform, with over 60 employee communities. The ‘All Company’ community is our main corporate communication channel and not only enables us to communicate directly with all employees – it also facilitates two-way communication, where employees can ask any follow up questions for clarifications. It provides us the opportunity to gain a temperature check on how employees are reacting to news posts, as they can use emojis to indicate their response to a news post. Where an employee asks a question or provides feedback on any of our corporate channels, the Internal Communications team will always collaborate across the council to seek an informative response, before responding openly on Viva Engage to facilitate group learning to the question.
- 3.29. The majority of Viva Engage communities are very much employee-owned and provide an unfiltered forum for employee voice and opinion. This facilitates collective problem solving, self-help from employees reducing demand on our service desks, and builds cohesion and sense of community across our diverse and dispersed workforce. It creates a culture and climate of trust, respect, and openness that encourages and values employee voice.



3.30. **Employee Surveys:** to ensure that employees also have a safe and secure platform to share more confidential feedback, there are also targeted employee surveys to support specific change interventions – and also wider corporate initiatives. Irrespective of the scale of the survey, summarised feedback is always presented back to the leaders of the change (for example Chief Officers) to agree actions and next steps, and then to the group surveyed, so that they know that they have been heard, their feedback considered, and what actions are being taken as a result.

3.31. For an organisation-wide survey, the intranet is used to present results so that everyone can see how their views fit into the bigger picture. Rather than take a traditional, ‘you said, we did’ approach to presenting results– we seek to empower employees to take action through ‘Me, We and us’ – which sets out for all employees:

- Me: the things I can control
- We: the things we work together to achieve
- Us: The things that enable us to do our jobs.

3.32. By presenting the results of employee voice interventions in this way, it means that we can inspire employees to take action at an individual level during a change process (‘Me’), provide ideas and opportunities for them to collaborate with each other to make change happen (‘We’), and provide

clarity on the aspects of their working life that they may have less direct control over or input into, or which may require committee decisions, business cases, funding or approval from others.

3.33. The 'Me, We, Us' approach to presenting employee voice results to employees at a corporate level can be seen demonstrated in [the results of our 'Future of Work' survey](#), which was undertaken in 2020/21 to understand the employee reaction to the enforced changes to the way we work, as a result of the pandemic.

3.34. **Employee Networks:** play a key role in many of the pillars in our approach to change:

- Communication: Networks can do peer-cascade of messages in a way that is more relatable than corporate communications.
- Training: People trained up become champions that can then deliver training to their cluster and service area
- Empowering Managers: For Networks to flourish, they need members with supportive managers who endorse time away from work to support corporate initiatives. But in return, they can support their managers to rollout initiatives.
- Co-creation: They play a role in collaboration and building new ideas.
- Voice: They provide a forum for feedback – more established employee networks can have a sense of trust and developed relationships, so they can be a highly valuable forum for gathering honest and thoughtful feedback. They also collect, provide and return feedback on behalf of their cluster or service.

3.35. Highly successful examples of employee networks at Aberdeen City Council include:

- **Digital Champions**
- **Equality Ambassadors**
- **Green Champions**
- **Leadership Forum**
- **Mental Health First Aiders**

3.36. These employee networks are frequently, though not always, facilitated by a member of People & Organisational Development – to ensure alignment with corporate initiatives and so that ideas and feedback can be taken forward to improve these. They are often a hybrid of face-to-face meetings, Teams meetings and ongoing digital communities on **Microsoft Teams**, to enable ongoing communication and collaboration between meetings.

3.37. A more formal way of gathering employee voice is through consultation. Our **Consultation Protocol** has been developed in consultation with all recognised trade unions to ensure consistency of approach and ensure the Council has an organisation-wide consultation framework as part of its transparent and open ways of working and it is this that underpins our approach to formal consultation when undertaking organisational change.

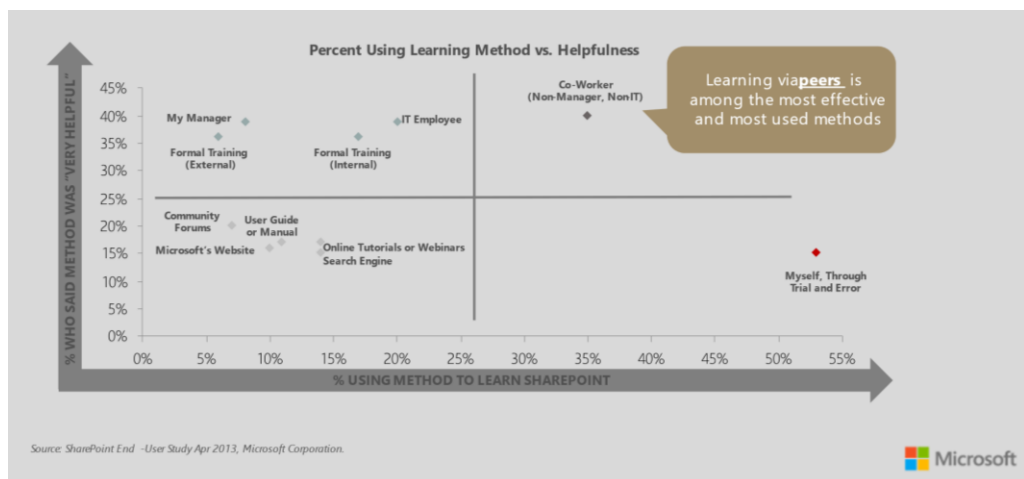
- 3.38. A full review of the Consultation Protocol was undertaken during 2022 in collaboration with trade union colleagues to ensure that this was up to date and provided clarity on expectations. An overview of the Adoption and Change Management (ACM) template and the 7 Pillars was shared with the trade unions at this time, providing assurance of the areas and activities to be considered and included to ensure successful change, with a focus on early involvement and engagement of employees prior to reaching the stage of formal consultation. An enhanced consultation resource pack, inclusive of manager checklist, How To guide and template letters, has also been introduced via a new [Consultation Protocol SharePoint page](#) launched in October 2023, which forms part of a wider suite of resources and tools on organisational change, of which includes our ACM Plan.
- 3.39. Trade Unions also provide a valuable means of elevating voice for their members and their reactions to proposed changes, through regular Director/Union Engagement (DUE) meetings. These happen once a week, and are attended by at least one director, the Chief Officer of People & Organisational Development, the Employee Relations & Wellbeing Manager, and Case Work Lead as well as representatives from all the trade unions. The Chief Executive will also attend at regular points across the year. The purpose of the meetings is to allow for information from both sides to be shared at an early stage, for informal discussions to take place on a wide variety of topics and for the directors to hear first-hand of any concerns the unions are finding their members are raising. They have proved extremely helpful in building mutual trust and respect and have been very well received by both the Corporate Management Team and Unions.

Training

- 3.40. Training is the fourth of the seven pillars in our approach to supporting employees through change. It is an essential and strategic component of landing change successfully and effectively. Training can enhance the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of employees and managers to cope with change, improve their performance, and increase their commitment and engagement. Training can also foster a culture of learning and innovation, which can facilitate continuous improvement and adaptation.
- 3.41. Training can help employees and managers understand the reasons, goals, and processes of change, and how it will affect them. Training can also provide them with the necessary skills and tools to deal with the challenges and opportunities of change, such as communication, problem-solving, decision-making, teamwork – or any specific new technical skills required by the change, for example in adoption of digital change. Training can also help them cope with the emotional and psychological aspects of change, such as fear, anger, frustration, and resistance.
- 3.42. The People Development team has developed a multi-faceted approach to training in support of organisational change.
- **People Development led training interventions:** for more advanced behaviour-change workshops that require coaching and facilitation, the People Development team deliver sessions directly to employees who

play a critical role in the change. They deliver the ACC Approach to Leading People through Change – this is both an open programme in our Inspiring Leadership programme for Service Managers and is also a targeted intervention for managers at all levels as part of a specific change project, so that managers are clear on their role in change and can carry it out effectively.

- **Subject-matter led:** where a change project requires employees to learn skills to adapt to new ways of working, then the People Development team work closely with our in-house experts to bring this expertise out into the organisation. We support them with this by enlisting them on our ‘Designing and Delivering Effective Presentations and Training’ course, coach them directly to build their skills and confidence in delivering training courses, and co-design engaging training interventions with them. Then co-ordinating and promoting their training intervention. Specific examples of this include Climate Literacy for Service Managers – designed and delivered by the Sustainability Team; Integrated Impact Assessments – our Public Sector Equality Duty – designed and delivered by the Equalities team and Legal colleagues. The added benefit of this is that it builds the skills of a wide range of colleagues in presenting and responding to challenge from course participants – which is in itself a form of engagement.
- **Peer led:** We have also established a highly successful model of training where colleagues across the organisation take responsibility for upskilling their colleagues in new ways of working. This has been identified by Microsoft as the most effective way of building skills during change, as employees rate ‘learning from their co-worker’ as their preferred way of learning.



3.43. This method involves either self or Chief Officer nominated champions spending time with the People Development team to gain their ‘learning’ for the week/month, then having a week/month to share their learning with their peers in the way that works best for them. In this way we have successfully upskilled substantial numbers of employees – far more than could be reached if only the People Development team were delivering training directly – in the following change projects:

- **Digital Super Champs** – for the Microsoft Teams Cloud Navigator Programme. This was recognised by the Scottish Government’s Digital

Office as best practice in upskilling a workforce to respond to change and was presented by Council Officers to an audience of public sector organisations throughout Scotland. It has also been recognised by Microsoft and has been presented by Council Officers to local authorities across the UK.

- **Dynamics 365 Coaches** – for the Dynamics 365 programme in Social Work.
- **Green Champions** – for the Council’s Climate Change Plan.

3.44. **Self-led:** we also curate learning resources to support people through change, that is accessible and available anytime, anywhere. This is available via our eLearning platform, ACC Learn:

- **Understanding Change:** This module is designed for anyone experiencing change – and provides practical steps to embrace change and uncertainty.
- **Supporting Staff to be Resilient:** This module is designed to help managers to support staff through uncertainty and conflict, whilst avoiding burnout.
- **Leading Change:** Aimed at third-tier managers, this digital learning resource supports learners to self-assess their approach to change; covers practical steps to lead through change and manage stress in teams.
- **Stress Awareness for Managers** – This course is to help managers understand and be aware of work-related stress and provide help and advice on how to avoid and minimise its negative impact on staff.
- **Building Resilience** – This course explores what we mean by resilience, stress and pressure. It allows managers and leaders to not only understand personal resilience and pressure but more importantly what these might mean for their teams and how to support those experiencing excess pressure and lower levels of resilience.

Empowering Managers

3.45. Managers are important during organisational change because they act as the link between the senior management and the frontline employees, and they have the authority, responsibility, and influence to facilitate change within their teams and departments. They are required to reinforce the change at a local level by role-modelling the required ways of working themselves, coaching employees directly, managing resistance and building resilience. Managers need to develop and demonstrate various skills and competencies that enable them to communicate, engage, motivate, support, monitor, evaluate, and model change effectively. By doing so, managers can contribute to the success and sustainability of the organisational change and enhance their own and their employees’ performance and satisfaction.

3.46. To support our managers to effectively undertake this role, we first clarify the expectation in the Capability Framework – where change management is a core capability for all People Managers with a range of indicators.

- 3.47. We then provide the means for them to develop these skills through the [Online Change Management Toolkit](#), to enable managers to follow best practice when conducting their own local changes.
- 3.48. ACC Approach to Leading People Through Change workshop: a training course, available face-to-face and virtually, is designed around our ACC Approach to Change and is aimed at people managers who manage teams affected by change and provides managers with the soft skills and practical tools and methodology required to support or lead change effectively.
- 3.49. Our 'Leader and Manager as Coach' workshop is also essential for all service managers and provides a structured model for managers to follow to manage the performance of their employees during change.
- 3.50. And to support them with their own resilience and to support others during change, there is Mental Health Awareness for Managers: a course designed for anyone who is responsible for staff, to provide guidance for supporting employees with their wellbeing, including common mental health problems, reducing stigma and bias, applying emotional intelligence, signposting appropriately, making reasonable adjustments, self-care and recovery.

Co-creation

- 3.51. Co-creating is a collaborative approach to designing and implementing change in an organisation. It involves engaging and empowering multiple stakeholders, such as employees, customers, partners, and leaders, to co-create solutions that address their needs and aspirations.
- 3.52. It is an important tool in supporting employees through change because it provides them ownership over collectively designing solutions to issues or challenges.
- 3.53. It ensures that the 'future state' is designed with employees in mind. This not only improves the quality and efficiency of services, but increases employee engagement, builds pride in the end product and increases the sustainability of a change.
- 3.54. Recent examples of this in practice are:
 - **Dynamics365 for Social Work:** this project to digitalise processes within and across social work was very much led by a coalition of social workers who stepped up to become 'Product Owners'. These Product Owners worked closely with colleagues from Microsoft to bring their own expertise and insights about the way social workers work – and design the online platform around their needs, and also build into the product checkpoints to ensure compliance with legislation.
 - **Service Design Champions:** officers from across the council are being trained in the Scottish Government's 'Scottish Approach to Service Design,' which seeks to ensure that 'the people of Scotland are supported and empowered to actively participate in the definition, design and delivery of

their public services (from policy making to live service improvement)’. This approach has already been used internally to reform services across Customer Experience and Housing – with plans to extend this in the new year. By upskilling council officers with hands-on experience of delivering services in the Scottish Approach to Service Design, we actively engage them in the change process, give them ownership over the new ways of working – but also critically engage citizens in the redesign too, ensuring that the public services we provide are better focused on meeting their needs.

- **Organisational Redesign 2023:** In response to the instruction from Full Council to the Chief Executive to report back with the recommended TOM 1.2 amended structure, Service Managers have participated throughout 2023 through face-to-face events in co-creating a new organisational structure, considering the lived experiences of the needs of our services and the challenges within the current structure.

Measurement

3.55. To ensure that our initiatives to support employees through change are successful and sustainable, it is essential to measure their impact, outcomes and effectiveness. So ‘Measurement’ is the final pillar in our approach to change management. This measurement can be either quantitative – such as through collecting and analysing performance and productivity data; or qualitative – such as through sentiment surveys and pulse checks. Measurement can help us to:

- Assess readiness for change of a group of employees.
- Use [ADKAR](#) to understand and identify what aspect of change is a barrier or risk.
- Monitor and track the progress and results of change initiatives and compare them with the baseline and the targets.
- Target or improve communications, support, training etc to specific teams or groups of employees.
- Learn from the feedback and data and make adjustments and improvements as needed.

3.56. Measurement is not a one-time activity, but a continuous and iterative process that is embedded into our change projects.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Any training needs arising will be funded by the Corporate Training budget held within People and Organisational Development.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The approach to internal communications and employee engagement outlined in this Report assists the Council fulfil its statutory duties to inform and consult with its employees.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 No known environmental implications arising from this report.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	None		L	Yes
Compliance	None		L	Yes
Operational	None		L	Yes
Financial	None		L	Yes
Reputational	None		L	Yes
Environment / Climate	None		L	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2022-2023</u>	
	Impact of Report
<p>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</p> <p><u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u></p>	<p>Valuing our Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise that the Council depends upon its staff to deliver the services it provides and believe the Council must properly reward, train and support its staff. Engage regularly with staff and trade union representatives. <p>These proposals take forward the enabling strategies and transformation programme articulated within the TOM 1.2, and form part of the next steps for delivery of the outcomes and commitments.</p>
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	Our approach to Internal Communications and Employee Engagement supports all stretch outcomes through providing a platform and methodology for the communication and engagement with the workforce on the LOIP.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	As above.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	As above.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	It is confirmed by Interim Chief Officer, Lindsay MacInnes, that no integrated impact assessment is required for this report. This report does however link to the existing draft IIA of Organisational Redesign.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 [Workforce Delivery Plan](#)
- 10.2 [Job Families and the Capability Framework](#)
- 10.3 [Workforce Plan Progress Update](#)
- 10.4 [The Four Enablers - Engage for Success](#)
- 10.5 [The Scottish Approach to Service Design \(SAAtSD\) - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

11. APPENDICES

- A Chief Officer Capability Framework
- B Aspiring Senior Leaders Capability Framework

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Tel	Find me on Microsoft Teams 😊

Appendix A: Chief Officer Capability Framework

Core Capabilities: Chief Officers

1. Delivering outcomes for our customers	2. Change & Improvement	3. Working with Others	4. Accountability	5. Care
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates involvement in setting the strategic vision and outcomes for the organisation Effectively involves appropriate stakeholders internally and externally (multi -agency) when developing strategic programmes Demonstrates personal commitment to agreed organisational outcomes and role models this for others Communicates clearly and in a structured way, persuading others effectively Leads through active communication, motivates and inspires people to achieve shared outcomes for the organisation Reviews services, undertaking radical transformation when needed, applying the principles of Design Thinking to service redesign. Considers the wider context and the long term impact of a decision Consistently demonstrates exemplary standards of integrity, honesty and fairness, acts with moral courage and ensures the decent thing is done. Uses an understanding of the volume, nature and costs of demand on services, the council and its partners to manage demand and reduce costs. Operates with a strategic purpose, clearly linking personal and team activity to the agreed strategic aims and outcomes of the organisation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Leads and supports a culture of data driven decision making throughout the council and with partners Uses Improvement techniques to build a culture of continuous and sustained service delivery improvement Proactively leads transformation within the organisation, acting as an effective project sponsor when needed. Adopts and champions the latest technology to allow the organisation to move forward Actively engages with the market within which our council services operate, to develop its capability Harnesses a culture of innovation and positive disruption by encouraging original thought, radical solutions to break new ground in striving for opportunities to improve council performance. Sets the culture for risk appetite in which I and those I lead analyse and mitigate against risk when exploring opportunities and making decisions. Offers a leadership view on any topic that comes before ECMT, in service of shared agreed outcomes, regardless of professional background. Makes time to engage in activities which relate to their personal growth and resilience as a leader, encouraging constructive feedback from others. Works as a preventor of demand 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates system-wide collaboration to achieve improved outcomes for the people, place and economy Motivates and successfully manages multi-functional programme teams Takes a team-orientated approach to problem -solving and decision making - drawing internal and external stakeholders together to agree how they can most usefully contribute to achieving important goals Deals with the complexities, challenges and tensions that emerge in shared leadership - not shying away from tough conversations Works proactively and effectively across all elected members to support, challenge, advise and drive towards our LOIP outcomes Actively identifies "political issues" which Elected Members will wish to know about and to have input into, and facilitates effective engagement of Elected Members at all levels. Leads and facilitates effective negotiation with a diverse range of partners across private, public and third sectors Works effectively in partnership with Trade Unions and resolves conflict effectively Provides constructive feedback and uses radical candour to challenge and support others in service of agreed organisational outcomes Puts the needs of the organisation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Takes an active role in the commissioning cycle and the balancing of the budget including identifying budget balancing initiatives Demonstrates mutual accountability with partners for shared outcomes – holding others to task and demonstrating personal delivery shared outcomes Ensures the services for which I have responsibility are complying with data protection and information governance requirements Creates clear, comprehensive and outcomes -focused delivery plans Understands all elements of ACCs financial regulations and leads sound financial management My emergency planning responsibilities Reacts to issues as they arise and decisively deals with crisis situations Ensures clarity of expectation and holds to task individuals who are not delivering agreed outcomes, tackling poor performance and inappropriate or unproductive behaviours when needed. Makes environmental sustainability 'business as usual' Demonstrates accountability to Elected Members through effective use of governance structures 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Consistently acts and speaks in a way that is positive, motivating and encouraging. Takes time to notice, recognise and celebrate the good work of others - both in one -to-one chats and on an open forum, for own area and across the wider organisation Values people voices which is demonstrated by engaging, encouraging them to share their perspectives, listens and takes action . Understands the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion agenda and current best practice and actively champions this across the organisation and with partners Takes care of their people - takes active steps to promote health and wellbeing initiatives. Self-reflects and takes care of own wellbeing, so that they can take care of others. Displays empathy and genuine concern - takes time to find out how challenges and pressures feel from the perspective of others Empowers others, uses coaching techniques to increase the capability and confidence of team members Invests and cares about the individuals, development, work and collective leadership aims of ECMT Promotes successes across the organisation and regularly communicates the successes and

What are the capabilities of a potential Chief Officer?				
1. Delivering outcomes for our customers	2. Change & Improvement	3. Working with Others	4. Accountability	5. Care
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrates visionary and strategic thinking 2. Engages and influences stakeholders 3. Considers the wider context and the long term impact of a decision 4. Communicates clearly and in a structured way, persuading others effectively 5. Consistently demonstrates exemplary standards of integrity, honesty and fairness, acts with moral courage and ensures the decent thing is done. 6. Connects and inspires others behind shared strategic outcomes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shows personal initiative in transformation and digital leadership 2. Makes confident evidenced based decisions on data 3. Analyses and mitigates against risk when exploring opportunities and making decisions. 4. Demonstrates original thought, seeks and identifies opportunities for creative solutions, is willing to consider radical solutions to break new ground in striving for opportunities to improve council performance. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understands and adapts to the political environment in which they work 2. Builds effective relationships with partners to achieve shared outcomes 3. Takes a collaborative approach to problems-solving and decision making 4. Provides constructive feedback and uses radical candour to challenge and support others 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensures compliance with governance 2. Demonstrates sound financial management of balancing the budget 3. Reacts to issues as they arise and decisively deals with crisis situations 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Empowers and encourages others to increase their capability and confidence 2. Notices, recognises and celebrates the good work of the council and colleagues 3. Displays empathy and genuine concern- takes time to find out how challenges and pressures feel from the perspective of others 4. Shows self-awareness, is committed to their own personal development 5. Sets high personal goals and is ambitious for progression 6. Able to be resilient e.g. understanding and acceptance when things go against you

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance Committee
DATE	22 January 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Mental Health and Wellbeing Update
REPORT NUMBER	CUS/24/022
DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Lindsay MacInnes (interim)
REPORT AUTHOR	Kirsten Foley
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.7

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides an update on mental health and wellbeing across the organisation.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

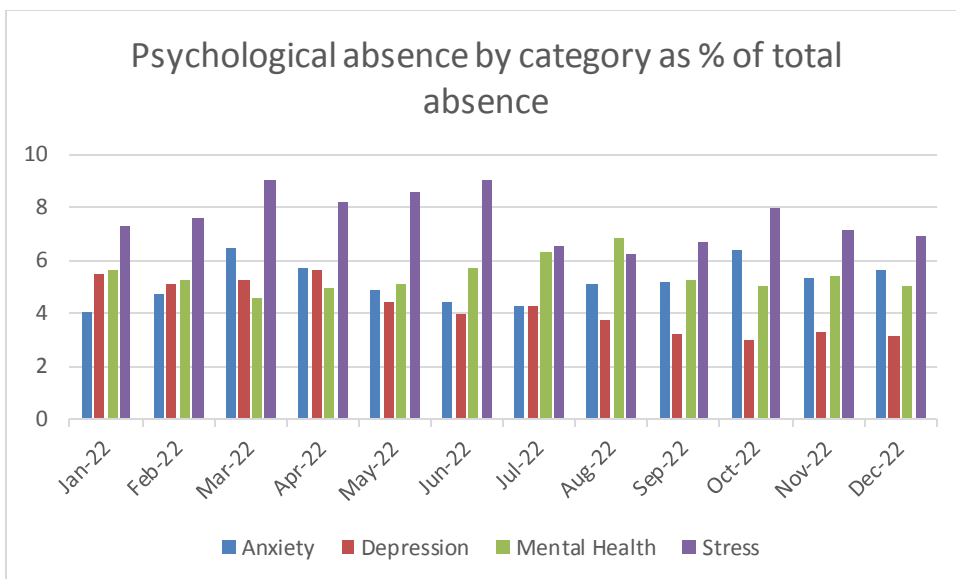
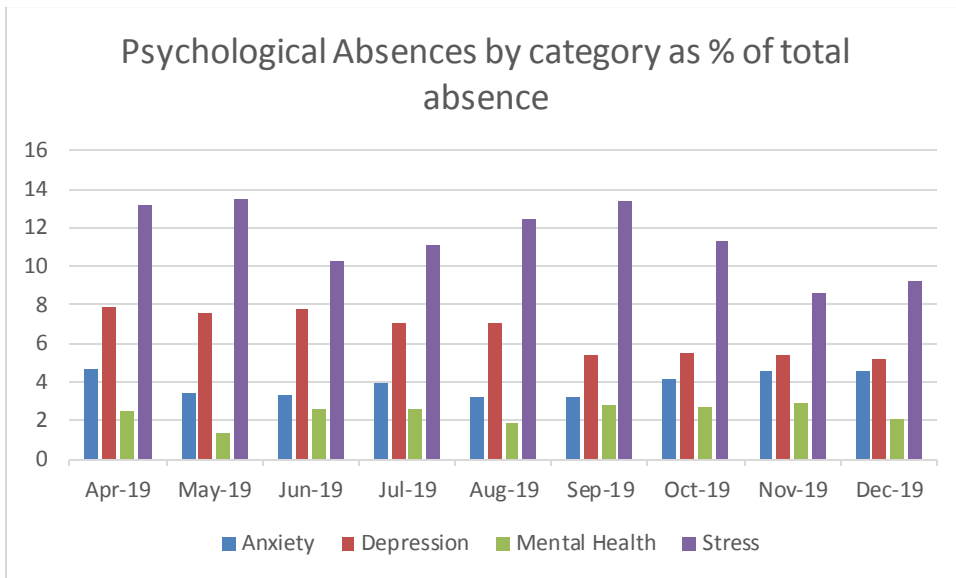
That the Committee:

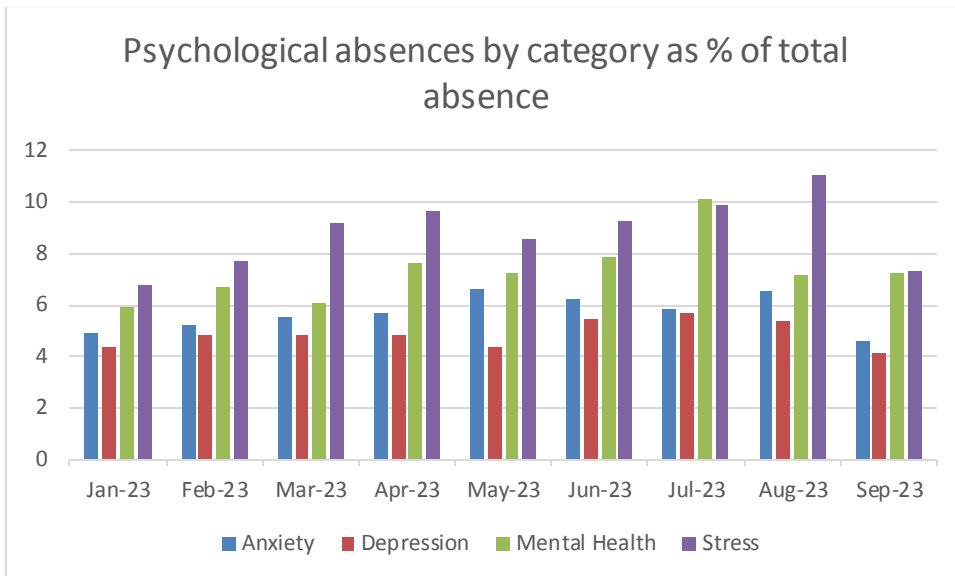
- 2.1 notes the data from the Employee Wellbeing Pulse Check and notes the support and initiatives currently available to staff;
- 2.2 instructs the interim Chief Officer – People and Organisational Development to ensure that the Wellbeing Pulse Check is repeated in the Spring of 2024 to allow the impact of interventions to be assessed; and
- 2.3 notes that a recommendation will be taken to the Extended Corporate Management Team (ECMT) on whether the Council should explore utilising the services of Salary Finance as an additional support for employees.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The most recent Health and Safety Executive data (for 2022/23) shows that 35.2 million working days were lost in the UK over the period due to work-related ill health, with stress, anxiety and depression accounting for 17 million of these days. [Statistics - Working days lost in Great Britain \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/workingdayslost.htm)
- 3.2 Research by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) for the same period identified that absence levels across the UK were the highest reported since 2008, with 76% of respondents reporting that they had suffered some degree of stress-related sickness. [Employee health and wellbeing | CIPD](https://www.cipd.co.uk/news/employee-health-and-wellbeing)
- 3.3 Over the same period (2022/23), psychological absences have accounted for an average of 22.5% of all absences reported each month across the Council.

3.4 The graphs below illustrate the breakdown of psychological absences by the 4 sub categories that are recorded for the periods April – Dec 2019 (to give a pre-pandemic comparison); Jan – Dec 2022 and Jan – Sept 2023 (the most recent month for which this analysis is available.)



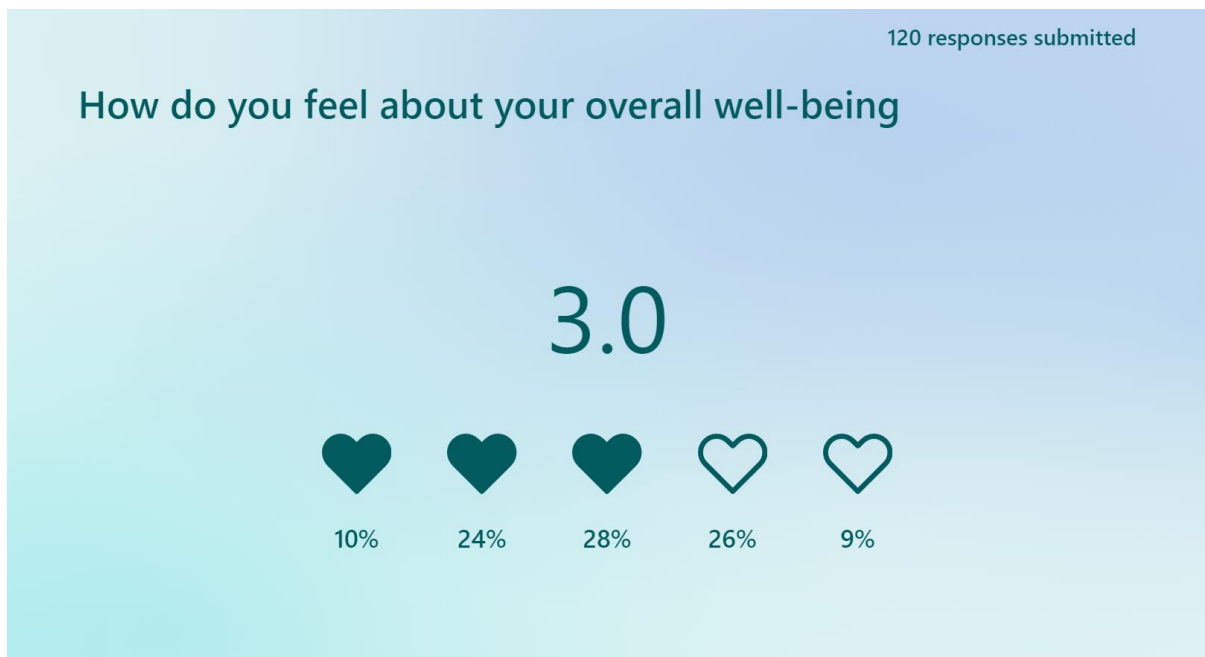


- 3.5 The graphs at 3.4 above show that the most prevalent sub category of psychological absence is stress, and this has been the case consistently across all 3 time periods. However, the figures over the past 2 years have shown a significant increase in the percentage of psychological absences which are recorded as being due to mental health conditions.
- 3.6 The reasons for the increase in absences attributed to mental health conditions could be due to an increase in the number of individuals being diagnosed as having an underlying mental health condition, and/or a greater willingness in individuals to be open regarding the reason for their absence due to a culture change around mental health issues in the workplace or a combination of the 2.
- 3.7 Sickness absence data can only provide part of the picture, however. Not all employees who are experiencing issues with their mental health and wellbeing take time away from the workplace. It is, therefore, equally important to seek to gather data regarding the mental wellbeing of employees who are attending work so that their concerns can be identified and supports put in place.

Wellbeing Pulse Check

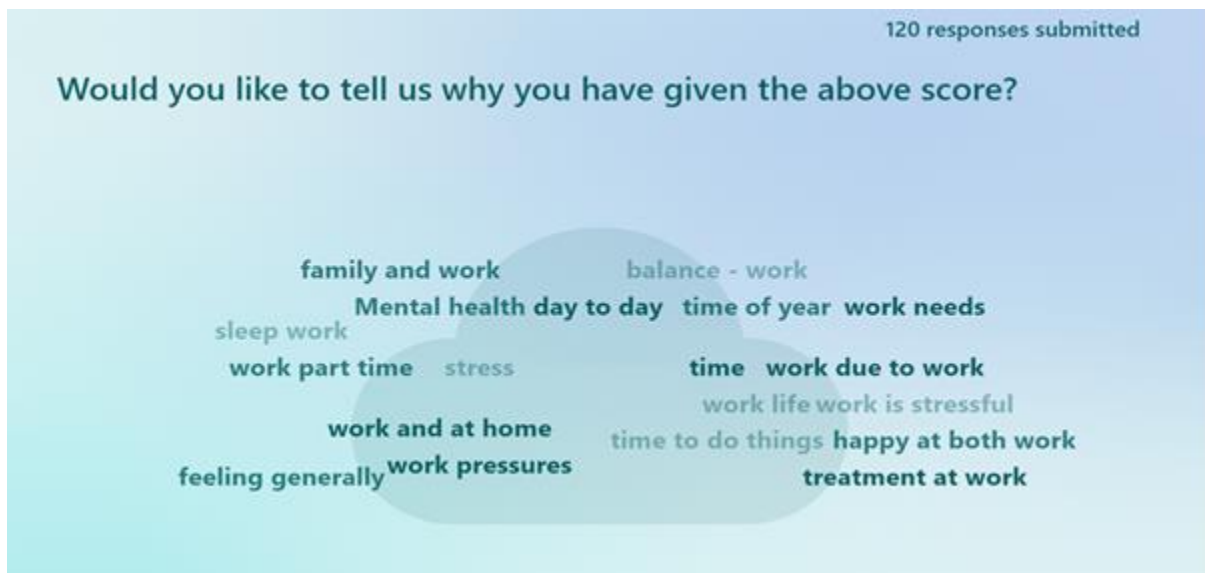
- 3.8 A wellbeing pulse check was shared on the Council intranet on November 10th 2023 [Wellbeing Pulse Check \(Page 1 of 3\) \(office.com\)](#)
- 3.9 This pulse check takes a few minutes to complete and asks employees to identify: how they feel about their mental wellbeing now and over the past 12 months, how aware they are of the support that is on offer and what they would find helpful going forward.
- 3.10 In the first month of the pulse check being open, 120 employees completed the survey.
- 3.11 The highest number of responses were recorded from Customer Experience (15%); Children’s Social Work (13%) and Adult Health and Social Care (12%).

3.12 The response to the question relating to current wellbeing is shown in the graphic below.



The figures show that 28% of respondents feel neutral regarding their overall wellbeing, with 34% expressing negative feelings (scoring less than a “neutral” score of 3) relating to their overall wellbeing and 35% expressing positive feelings (scoring more than a neutral 3).

3.13 The word cloud produced from the narrative responses to why respondents had selected their answer is shown below:

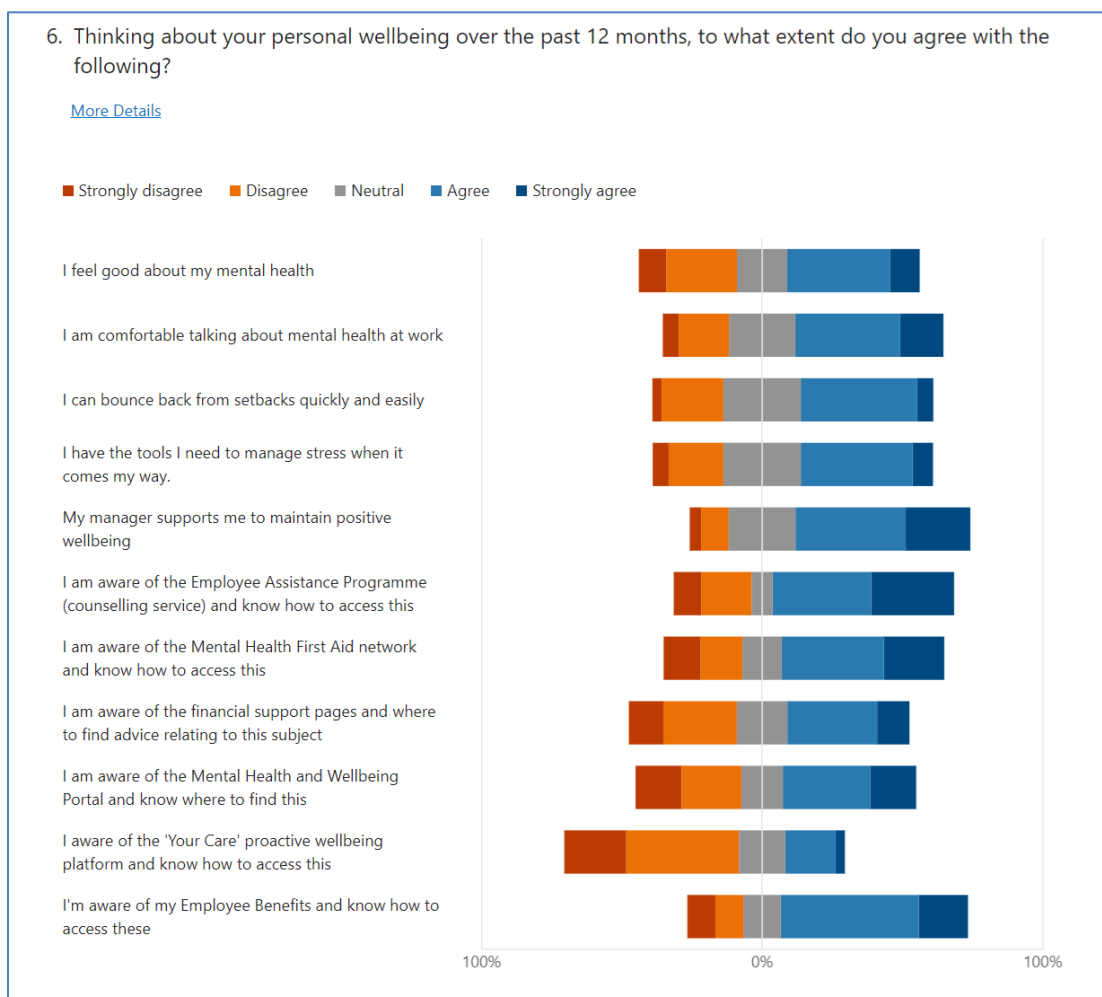


Whilst many of the responses make reference to work pressures and work/life balance, there are also responses relating to the “time of year”, which could refer to either the busy and expensive festive season and/or the long, dark days contributing to seasonal affective disorder (SAD) for some colleagues.

It is very rare that stress is purely related to a single cause, whether that be within or outwith the workplace, and we recognise that staff who are experiencing stress in their personal lives may find that stress impacting on them in the workplace also. It is for that reason that the support and resources we make available to staff through our employee assistance programme cover a very wide range of topics. It is important that employees are confident that regardless of the sources of their stress we will support both them and their immediate families; this is the reason that we make the employee assistance programme available to dependents as well as to employees.

Responses relating to “treatment at work” and ‘work pressures’, are concerning, and further analysis will be undertaken to see if support needs to be put in place. This will include providing advice to managers on how to address concerns such as work load and culture issues through one to one meetings with staff and using case work data relating to both formal and informal stages to identify any areas of the Council that may benefit from some bespoke support around culture change.

3.14 The graph below shows the extent to which employees are aware of the support that is available and feel supported around their mental wellbeing in the workplace.



- 3.15 The graph above gives some encouraging figures, with a total of 52.5% of staff agreeing/strongly agreeing that they feel comfortable talking about mental health at work; 63% agreeing or strongly agreeing that their manager supports them to maintain positive wellbeing; 66% agreeing or strongly agreeing that they are aware of the Employee Assistance Programme and know how to access this and 58.4% agree or strongly agree that they are aware of the Mental Health First Aiders network and know how to access it.
- 3.16 This graph also identifies areas for improvement, however. Whilst it is encouraging that a majority of respondents are aware of the support on offer- 34% were neutral or unaware of the Employee Assistance Programme and 41.6% were neutral or unaware of the Mental Health First Aider support on offer. In addition, 62.1% of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that they were aware of the 'Your Care' proactive wellbeing platform and how to access it.
- 3.17 As part of addressing the issues identified above, a poster has been developed giving full details and links to all the resources available, and to the Mental Health First Aider network. These posters will be displayed in all ACC workplaces and include a QR code so that employees can access the resources from a smart phone or a personal device should they wish. An exemplar of the poster is included at Appendix A.
- 3.18 Respondents were also asked what the Council could do or provide to assist with wellbeing, and the narrative responses are captured in the word cloud below:



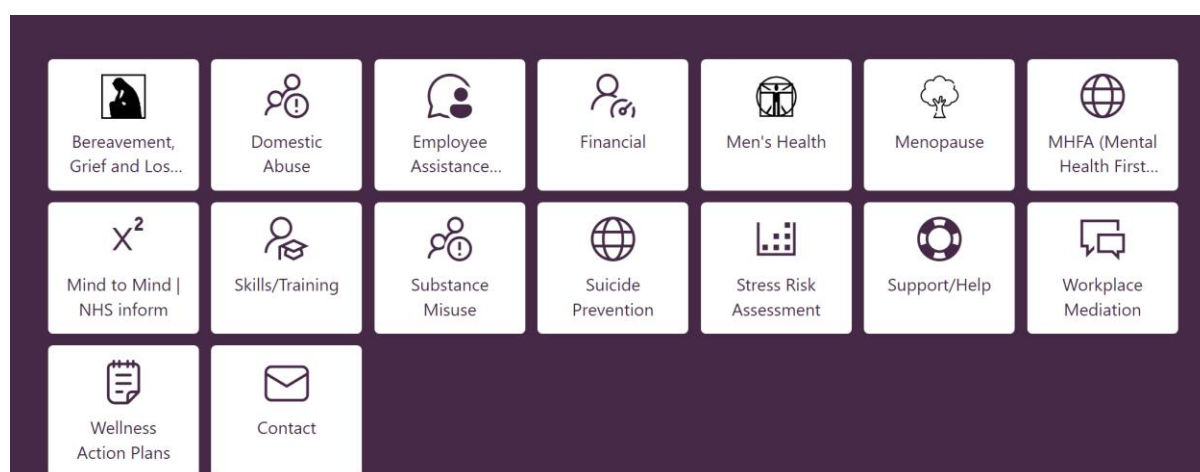
- 3.19 The responses provided will be fed into reviews of manager training, flexible working and future wellbeing initiatives.

3.20 The intention is to repeat the pulse check in the spring of 2024 in order to be able to make a comparison against the current results and to gauge the effectiveness of the poster campaign and other initiatives and any changes in employee wellbeing once the winter is past.

Recent and Upcoming Initiatives.

3.21 Mental health and wellbeing can be impacted by a variety of causes, and is rarely attributable to a single cause or incident. Whilst in some instance a single life event or situation can cause stress and anxiety, for many people stress and anxiety are the result of a combination of a number of different things. [Causes of stress - Mind](#)

3.22 In recognition of this, the Mental Health and Wellbeing support pages on the Aberdeen City Council intranet provide information and links to further support on a wide range of topics, as illustrated by the screenshot of the front page below.



3.23 There is a recognised link between menopause and mental health and wellbeing. [Menopause and your mental wellbeing \(nhsinform.scot\)](#) In recognition of the fact that around 28% of the Council's workforce are women aged between 45 and 55, a decision was taken by the Staff Governance Committee to sign up to the Menopause Workplace Pledge, and the Council became signatories to the pledge in November 2022.

3.24 As signatories to the Menopause Workplace Pledge the Council has committed to a number of actions as set out below:

- Recognising that the menopause can be an issue in the workplace and women need support.
- Talking openly, positively and respectfully about the menopause.
- Actively supporting and informing employees affected by the menopause.

3.25 Aberdeen City Council is also a signatory to the Pregnancy Loss Pledge run by the Miscarriage Association in recognition of the sensitive, empathetic and on going support those experiencing such a loss require in the workplace.

- 3.26 Another recent addition to the Mental Health and Wellbeing pages on the intranet is the page entitled Men's Health. This page provides information and links to support relating to health issues affecting men, including resources to support individuals experiencing issues arising from andropause (sometime referred to as male menopause).
- 3.27 Personal wellbeing data from the Office of National Statistics has shown that, despite an initial increase in individuals assessments of their personal wellbeing when pandemic restrictions were lifted, levels have continued to fall and remain lower than they were pre pandemic. [Personal well-being in the UK - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)
- 3.28 Research also shows that the pandemic has led to an increase in social anxiety [The Influence of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Social Anxiety: A Systematic Review - PMC \(nih.gov\)](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/)
- 3.29 The impact that the pandemic has had, and continues to have, on personal wellbeing and social anxiety has led to an increase in the number of challenging situations experienced by staff working in customer facing positions. In order to support staff, work is underway to review and relaunch the zero tolerance campaign and this will be reported to a future meeting of the Staff Governance Committee.

Roadshows for Front Line Staff

- 3.30 Frontline roadshows have been rolled out across the organisation with an initial pilot taking place on October 10th at our Altens East Depot for the Waste Teams.
- 3.31 The roadshow comprised of information relating to our Employee Assistance Programme and Benefits services delivered by Vivup and as well as information relating to mental wellbeing. Physical Wellbeing Assessments were undertaken onsite by Sport Aberdeen who we have been working with to deliver a coached approach for staff to access physical exercise. A wellbeing coordinator from Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership (AHSCP) was also onsite to deliver information relating to healthy eating and men's health in particular. The event was also supported by our Trade Union colleagues and managers at the site. The sessions were positively received by the staff and engagement was high with many staff undertaking the activities and requesting additional information and support where required.
- 3.32 The purpose of the roadshows is to reach our frontline workforce who do not necessarily have access to the information digitally about the various supports available to them from the organisation and they ensured that all staff were left with the knowledge and confidence about how to contact these valuable services if and when they need them.
- 3.33 Further roadshows have also been delivered to colleagues across Children's services and we will continue to build on these with more planned to take place in 2024.

Seasonal Affective Disorder

- 3.34 Research undertaken by York Test in 2021 identified that 1 in 3 people in the United Kingdom suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder, with the highest concentration of those affected being found in Scotland. [Mapping Seasonal Affective Disorder in the UK | yorktest](#)
- 3.35 The NHS recommend that the top 2 methods of combatting Seasonal Affective Disorder are to keep active and make the most of daylight hours. [Beating the winter blues \(nhsinform.scot\)](#)
- 3.36 A number of walking trails in the city have recently been published, and these are being promoted to staff as a resource to utilise in lunch breaks, days off or weekends. [Free walks and trails in Aberdeen | Aberdeen City Council](#)
- 3.37 Links have also been published providing information on physical and mental wellbeing during the winter months, and the links to these resources are also included in the poster that is being issued. [Looking after your mental health this winter and wellbeing pulse check \(sharepoint.com\)](#) [Winter is Coming - Keeping ourselves and our colleagues healthy this winter \(sharepoint.com\)](#). Further information on looking after yourself during the winter can be found on our employee wellbeing portal 'Your Care' with top tips and suggestions on how to look after yourself during this time.
- These links contain specific advice relating to seasonal affective disorder, including signposting to the MIND resources on this topic [What is seasonal affective disorder \(SAD\)? - Mind](#), and a link to a podcast provided by our Employee Assistance Programme [Seasonal Affective Disorder - EAP Podcasts on Vimeo](#)

Financial Wellbeing

- 3.38 The Money and Mental Health Policy Institute has identified links between financial problems and mental health. According to their research, 46% of people who are experiencing problem debt also suffer from mental health problems, with 86% of these individuals identifying that their mental health had suffered a further negative impact from their financial problems. [Money and mental health facts and statistics](#)
- 3.39 The research also showed that people who are experiencing mental health issues are three and a half times more likely to experience financial problems as a result of their mental health condition. This cycle is illustrated in the graphic below:



- 3.40 A range of advice and support relating to financial wellbeing is already available via Council services and Employee Assistance. [Financial Wellbeing – Cost of Living Support \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- 3.41 In addition to the support already available, we are currently exploring the services offered by Salary Finance, a company already working with public sector partners across Scotland including Aberdeenshire, Fife, East Renfrewshire, Argyll and Bute and Falkirk Councils, Edinburgh University, Edinburgh Napier University, Glasgow University and Scottish Fire and Rescue.
- 3.42 The Salary Finance platform is built around providing financial education and tailored financial solutions including payroll deducted savings, affordable borrowing and salary advance.
- 3.43 Once a full appraisal of the Salary Finance offer has been completed, including a presentation to Trade Union colleagues, a recommendation will be taken to ECMT on whether or not this is a service that Aberdeen City Council should consider adding to the support already in place for staff.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The biggest financial cost to the Council in relation to wellbeing of staff is in relation to occupational sick pay, provision of supply cover where this is required and the loss of productivity through absence.
- 4.2 Providing support to employees to maintain their wellbeing will minimise the cost of sickness absence.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council has a duty of care to employees under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and responsibilities to employees under the Equality Act 2010.
- 5.2 Providing support to employees around their wellbeing assists the Council's discharge its legal duties under these Acts.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

7. RISK

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	No significant risks identified			N/A
Compliance	Failure to provide appropriate support for employees who are experiencing issues with mental wellbeing could conflict with the council's duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974	Management support and training Provision of support to employees including occupational health, employee assistance and signposting to partner services.	L	Yes
Operational	Absence levels resulting from mental health and wellbeing can impact on service delivery. Employees who are experiencing mental health issues can suffer a temporary decrease in their standard of performance, thus putting service delivery at risk.	Management support and training Provision of support to employees including occupational health, employee assistance and signposting to partner services.	M	Yes
Financial	Cost of occupational sick pay for employees who are off sick.	Management support and training Provision of support to employees including	M	Yes

		occupational health, employee assistance and signposting to partner services.		
Reputational	The provision of high levels of support for employees who are experiencing mental health issues will enhance the council's reputation as an employer of choice	Management support and training Provision of support to employees including occupational health, employee assistance and signposting to partner services.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	No significant risks identified			N/A

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2023-2024</u>	
	Impact of Report
<p>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</p> <p><u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u></p>	<p>The provisions of this report support the Partnership commitments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to improve quality of life and support people with the cost of living • to recognise that the Council depends upon its staff to deliver the services it provides and believe the Council must properly reward, train and support its staff.
<u>Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26</u>	
Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	<p>The proposals within this report support stretch outcome number 1. <i>No one will suffer due to poverty by 2026.</i></p> <p>The link between mental wellbeing and financial issues is well researched and documented. Adopting a holistic approach to supporting the wellbeing of employees, by focusing not simply on physical and mental wellbeing, but also on financial wellbeing, will assist with the achievement of this stretch outcome.</p>
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	<p>The proposals within this report support stretch outcome 11. <i>Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026</i></p> <p>By ensuring that support is in place to support employees who are experiencing issues with their wellbeing, the Council is increasing the healthy life expectancy of staff.</p>

Regional and City Strategies	
Workforce Plan	As set out in the Workforce Plan, the emphasis on developing internal capacity and the need for flexibility and efficiency in our reducing workforce, there is a need to focus on supporting employee health and wellbeing.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Stage 1 assessment completed
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 [Statistics - Working days lost in Great Britain \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/working-days-lost-in-great-britain/)

10.2 [Employee health and wellbeing | CIPD](#)

10.3 [Mapping Seasonal Affective Disorder in the UK | yorktest](#)

10.4 [Beating the winter blues \(nhsinform.scot\)](#)

10.5 [Money and mental health facts and statistics](#)

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix A – Mental Health and Wellbeing Support at ACC poster

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Email Address	Kfoley@aberdeencity.gov.uk



Mental Health and Wellbeing Support at ACC

Find quick links easily below for some of our key support services.

Employee Assistance Programme (Counselling Service and Domestic Abuse Support)

**Anxiety | Bereavement | Stress | Depression | Workplace Issues
Trauma | Relationships | Finances | Addiction | Family Difficulties**

For all employees: <https://vivup.tercltd.co.uk/?CODE=107809>
For teachers: <https://vivup.tercltd.co.uk/?CODE=107810>

Other Support Services and Resources available:

 Mental Health First Aider Network: <https://shorturl.at/qxDM8> 

'Your Care 'Portal: <https://shorturl.at/jpOU7>

Self-Help Workbooks: <https://shorturl.at/iHO15>

Mental Health & Wellbeing on the Intranet: <https://shorturl.at/eopG7>

Join in with all the latest chat and initiatives on our Mental Health and Wellbeing  Yammer channel: <https://shorturl.at/eIOSZ>

If you need anything else, please contact flindsay@aberdeencity.gov.uk who will be happy to help you find the right support!



HEALTH
WELLBEING
HAPPINESS



Aberdeen City
Health & Social Care
Partnership
Working partnerships