ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance
DATE	3 February 2020
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Employee Mental Health Action Plan - Annual Progress Update
REPORT NUMBER	RES/20/031
DIRECTOR	Steven Whyte
CHIEF OFFICER	Isla Newcombe
REPORT AUTHOR	Neil Yacamini
TERMS OF REFERENCE	Purpose of Committee 1 Remit of Committee 1.3

1.   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   The purpose of this report is to provide an update in relation to the employee mental health action plan which was approved by Staff Governance Committee on 31st January 2019 with an instruction to report back on progress.

2.   RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee: -

2.1   notes the actions carried out so far to address and support positive employee mental health; and

2.2   approves the continuing work outlined to address and improve the same.

3.   BACKGROUND

3.1   A report to the Staff Governance Committee on 31 January 2019 outlined the actions which would be undertaken in Aberdeen City Councils mental health action plan.

3.2   The Mental Health Action Plan was approved at Staff Governance Committee in January 2019 **(See Appendix 1)** and is linked to the Wellbeing Plan. It shows the organisations commitment and intent on key theme areas (as per the diagram below) to support a mentally healthy workplace. It is based on good

practice as outlined in the links under 'background papers' at 11 below; including Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) guidance and the independent review of mental health and employers undertaken by Stevenson and Farmer entitled 'Thriving at Work'.

A working group was formed which includes staff members with a passion and interest in improving workplace mental health alongside members of the People and Organisation team.

3.3   The plan is owned and monitored by People and Organisation, who ensure that the actions are progressed and that it will be ongoing and refreshed annually. Data relating to employee absence including psychological reasons will also continue to be reported to the Staff Governance Committee for monitoring to determine the effectiveness of the measures in the plan in addressing and improving employee absence.

4.   WHAT'S BEEN DELIVERED

4.1   Appendix 1 shows the progress which has been made against all actions in the Mental Health Action Plan. Key achievements arising from the plan are outlined below.

4.2   **Mental Health Awareness Week**

4.2.1 To mark World Mental Health Day 2019 which focussed on suicide prevention this year, we ran our inaugural Mental Health Awareness Week between Monday 7 and Friday 11 October 2019.

4.2.2 The week was established to highlight the value that we place on our employees mental health to reduce stigma and in creating a culture where employees can

talk about mental health. It was developed in partnership with our colleagues in the NHS, Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership and 3rd sector.

4.2.3   Sessions were attended by approximately 280 members of staff at 28 different locations across the City covering a wide variety of mental health topics ranging from suicide prevention training, talks from service professionals and individuals on their personal journeys and relaxation and meditation classes.

4.2.4   A breakdown of attendance at the events can be seen below.
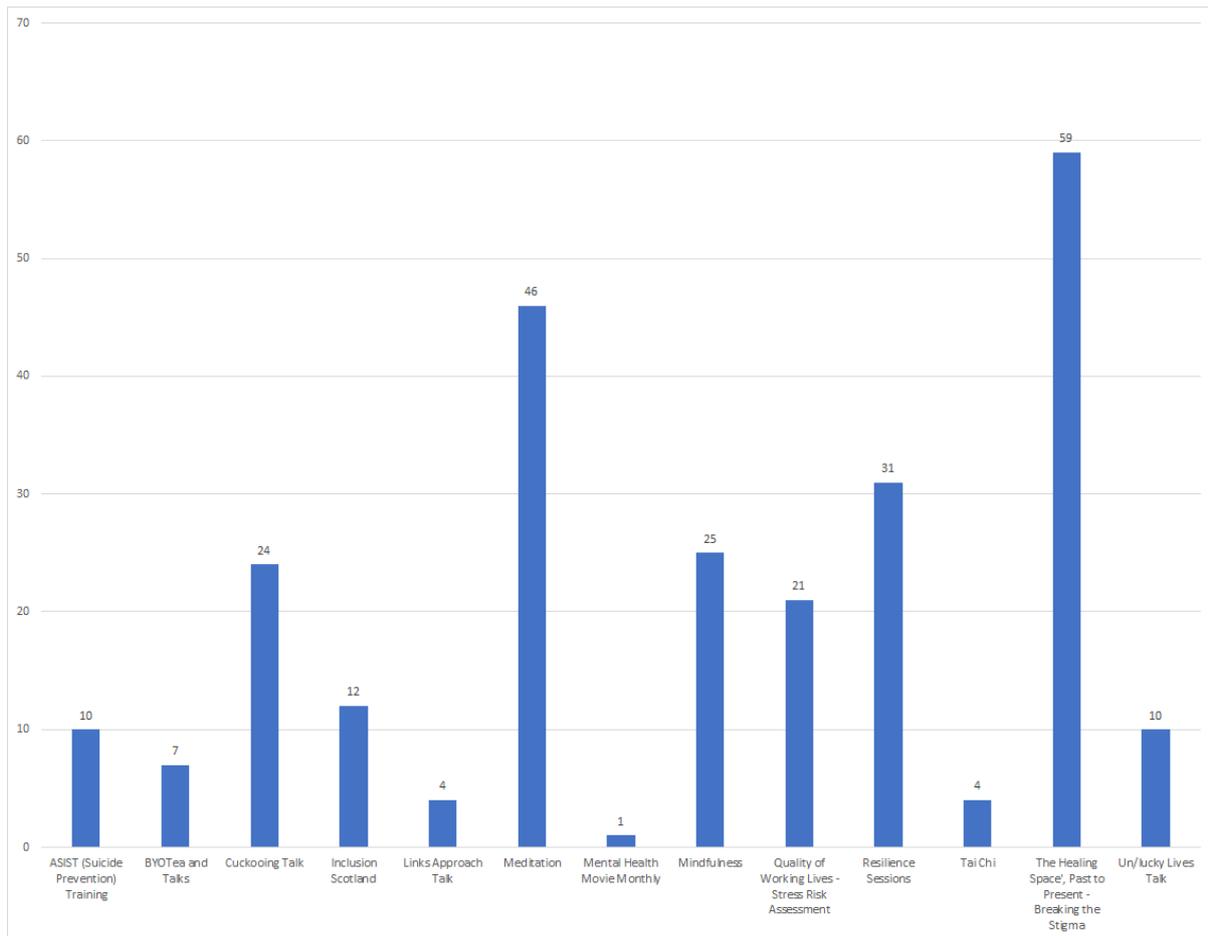
4.2.5   The event committee also conducted roadshows and brought a virtual bus tour to another 11 external premises and depots including schools to ensure as many staff as possible had an opportunity to find more information about support that is available.

- West Tullos Depot (Roads)
- Kittybrewster Depot
- Len Ironside Centre
- Harlaw Academy
- Dyce Academy
- St Machar Academy
- Altens East Depot
- Duthie Park
- Bucksburn Academy

- Aberdeen Grammar School
- Oldmachar Academy

4.3 Mental Health First Aid Network

4.3.1 Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA) act as a trained point of contact for employees who require support and provide guidance on resources available. They are all trained volunteers, independent of Line Management and offer support confidentially.

Personnel Today (an HR reference website on employment law and best HR practice) identifies the potential benefits of having Mental Health First Aiders as being:-

- First line support to individuals experiencing a problem.
- Spotting the early signs of a mental health problem potentially prevent someone from hurting themselves or others.
- Helping to stop a mental illness from becoming worse.
- Helping someone recover faster from periods of mental ill-health

4.3.2 Mental Health First Aiders are required to be interviewed about the role and provide references. Following the Mental Health First Aid training which is provided by the North East of Scotland College they are provided with support from the Mental Health Co-ordinator and there is a mechanism in place to capture interactions with employees anonymously. This information is utilised to ensure the effectiveness of the Service and provide any relevant additional training to the Mental Health First Aiders.

4.3.3 Trade Union Colleagues continue to play an active role in the area of Mental Health and have been supportive in the implementation of Mental Health First Aiders. Regular meetings have been established to look at the issue of Mental Health in the workplace and identify areas where we can collaborate for improved outcomes.

4.3.4 Communication is being cascaded across the organisation and employees will be able to find MHFA contact details physically alongside First Aider contact details in the workplace. A full list of all Mental Health First Aiders will be available on our Mental Health and Wellbeing pages.

4.3.5 A service recording tool has been created to record the interactions of MHFA's with employees who are accessing the service. This will allow us to make sure we have enough cover and support across the whole organisation and assist us in supporting the Mental Health First Aiders in their role. The tool will not collect any personal data, but the information collected will assist in identifying any issues, trends and hotspots allowing proactive interventions.

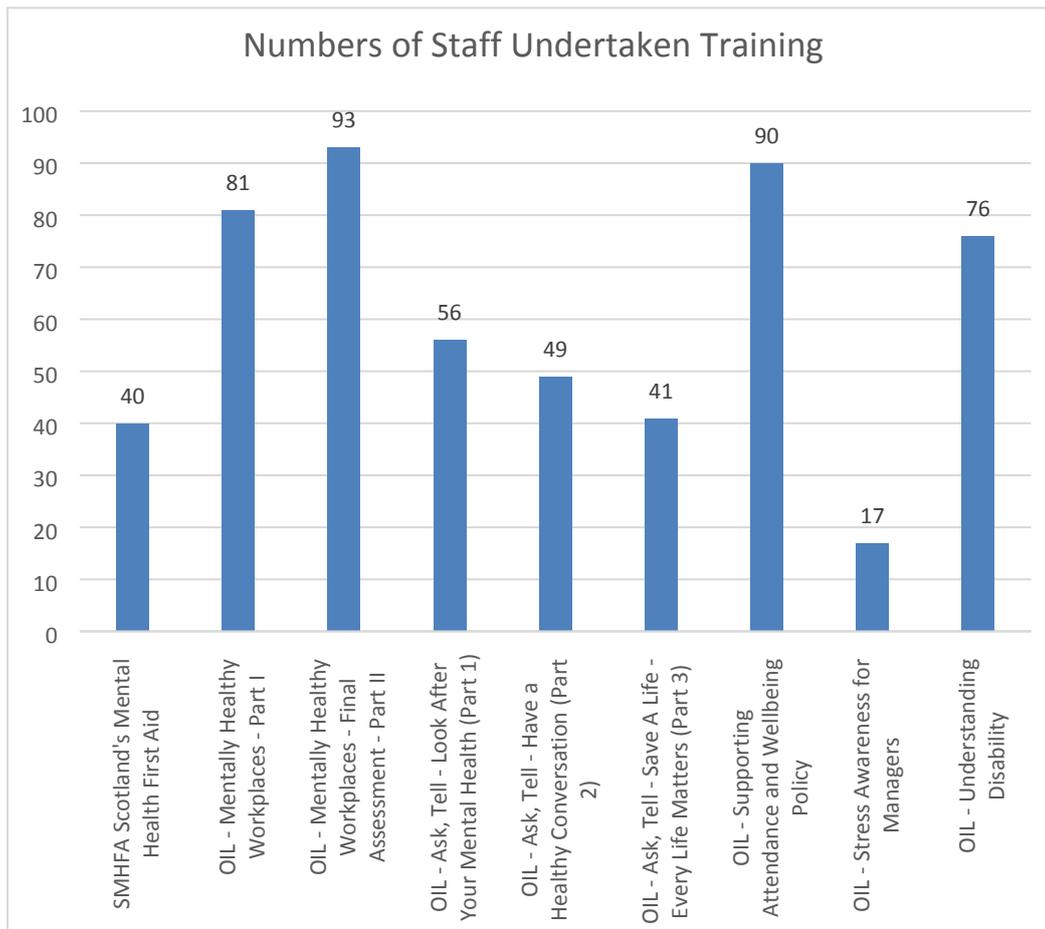### 4.3.6 Current coverage of trained MHFA's

Following two Mental Health First Aid training courses in October and November we currently have 40 mental health first aiders trained. There are three further courses scheduled for the first quarter of 2020 which will result in

approx. 90 Mental Health First Aiders being trained by the end of the financial year. The existing first aiders are located at:

- Altens East Depot
- Archibald Simpson House
- Central Library
- Balnagask Court
- Central Procurement Unit
- Harlaw Academy
- KaimCourt
- Kincorth
- Kittybrewster
- Len Ironside Centre
- Marischal College
- Maritime Museum/Art Gallery
- Mastrick
- Royal Cornhill Hospital
- Tillydrone
- Town House
- Woodhill House

4.4   **Training Programme**

4.4.1 A training programme has been made available for all staff to undertake to gain an understanding and raise awareness of mental health in the workplace. A breakdown of numbers can be seen below with a total of 543 employees having completed training since January 2019.

Numbers of Staff Undertaken Training

A bar chart titled "Numbers of Staff Undertaken Training" showing the following values:

Category	Number
SMHFA Scotland's Mental Health First Aid	40
OIL - Mentally Healthy Workplaces - Part I	81
OIL - Mentally Healthy Workplaces - Final Assessment - Part II	93
OIL - Ask, Tell - Look After Your Mental Health (Part 1)	56
OIL - Ask, Tell - Have a Healthy Conversation (Part 2)	49
OIL - Ask, Tell - Save A Life - Every Life Matters (Part 3)	41
OIL - Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing Policy	90
OIL - Stress Awareness for Managers	17
OIL - Understanding Disability	76

4.4.1 eLearning

A suite of mental health eLearning training is now available for all employees to undertake including:
- Mentally Healthy Workplaces
- Ask, Tell, Save a life – online learning clips on Suicide Prevention
- Alcohol and Drugs in the Workplace

and for managers:
- Stress Awareness for Managers

and other external eLearning training is available on our Mental Health and Wellbeing pages:
- Mental Health eLearning for Teachers
- See Me in Work
- Understanding Sleep

4.4.2 Face to Face Training

A programme of face to face training for all employees includes:
- Personal Resilience
- Promoting Resilience
- Mindfulness

and for managers:
- Mentally Healthy Workplaces for Managers (Mandatory)
- Alcohol and Drugs in the Workplace for Managers

- Quality of Working Lives – Stress Risk Assessment

and for Mental Health First Aid Network:
- ASIST Suicide Prevention Training
- Scotland's Mental Health First Aid Training

We will monitor and report on completion rates of mandatory training for Managers to CMT.

5. NEXT STEPS

5.1 Mental Health First Aid Network

5.1.1 The next steps at this stage of the project are to:
- Shift from the delivery of the action plan to focus on data led interventions to support areas of the organisation where a mental health intervention would be appropriate. This will be done by analysing data gathered from Mental Health First Aiders, Aberdeen City Council absence information and usage information from the Employee Assistance provider;
- Measurement of the impact of the data led interventions and the impact on absence levels in those areas;
- Focus enrolling MHFA's in the locations and Clusters where current cover is lower;
- Delivery of Mental Health First Aid Training in January, February and March 2020.
- Increase the number of managers who are trained to raise awareness to support employees experiencing mental health issues
- Analyse feedback to identify hotspots and expressly target with training and other wellbeing initiatives
- Provide mechanisms for MHFA's to receive appropriate support and supervision and review interventions being provided and also to have a peer support network in place to share knowledge and experience. This mechanism will also provide the opportunity to identify development needs for the Mental Health First Aiders.

5.2 Mental Health Awareness Week 2020

World Mental Health Day is on Saturday 10 October 2020. To mark this event, activities will be planned around this year's theme 'Mental Health in the Workplace'

5.3 Training Programme

Continue to add to, advertise and encourage all staff to undertake the mental health awareness training available. Further training will be added to this in 2020.
- Face to Face - Compassionate Conversations Pilot – Samaritans
- Asist Suicide prevention

5.4   **Communication Plan**

- Poster campaigns in all locations identifying MHFA's and how to contact them
- Regular campaign updates sent out through the Leadership Forum
- Regular email updates sent out to all staff
- News posts on the new Intranet
- All information available on People Anytime Wellbeing pages
- Wellbeing noticeboards established in all locations with information regarding training, support and how to get involved

6.   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1   Mental health and wellbeing is increasingly being seen as a core component of service delivery, linked to both staff retention and customer satisfaction. There is the potential to reduce direct and indirect costs in relation to sickness absence, low morale/engagement and increased turnover by supporting and promoting positive mental health. This can have a significant impact on Function / Cluster budgets.

6.2   There are savings to be realised through early intervention to support employees in the workplace. The longer an employee is off work the more challenging it becomes to manage mental health problems and less likely that they will return to work. Long-term absence is costly. There is mutual benefit if we can proactively support employees in the workplace by providing a mentally healthy environment.

7.   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1   Under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 etc there is a legal requirement to ensure the health safety and welfare at work of our employees and assess and address all risks that might cause harm. It may not be possible to prevent all causes of mental health, although as an employer steps can be taken to reduce work-related causes.

7.2   Where an employee's mental ill health amounts to a disability, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, reasonable adjustments must be considered to allow the employee to carry out their job.

7.3   Failure to comply with legislation in ensuring a safe and healthy workplace has the potential to result in enforcement action by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). This includes fines, imprisonment and remedial orders. There is also the possibility of employee civil claims, which are more likely to succeed following a successful HSE prosecution. Equality breaches can also result in potential claims and employment tribunal action.

8.   MANAGEMENT OF RISK

	Risk	Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)	Mitigation
Financial	If no action is taken, then there is the potential to incur direct and indirect costs.	M	Implementation of an employee Mental Health Action Plan will provide a holistic approach to improving employee mental health. Such a proactive approach to improving awareness and supporting employees with reasonable adjustments will reduce direct and indirect costs and improve compliance with legislation.
Legal	If no action is taken, then there is limited mitigation to potential challenge and subsequent claims. Poor management of mental health has the potential to attract tribunal and enforcement action (Criminal and Civil), fines and claims.	M	As above.
Employee	If no action is taken to support employee mental health and address trends, then the organisation may incur both direct and indirect costs.	M	As above. Supported employees are more likely to be able to stay in work or return to work after a period of absence, reducing long term absence. Benefits to employees include improved quality of workplace experience, improved wellbeing, employees feeling more valued, increased morale and engagement. This should help to reduce the incidence of psychological related sickness absence, the number of occupational health referrals and use of

			the employee counselling service.
Customer	If no action is taken to support a mentally healthy workplace this will result in reduced quality of service delivery owing to the lack of resource.	M	Implementation of a Mental Health Action Plan will improve service delivery owing to happier, healthier and more engaged employees.
Environment	There is no environmental risk.	N/A	N/A
Technology	There is no technological risk.	N/A	N/A
Reputational	If no action is taken to support a mentally healthy workplace there is a risk of the organisation not being seen as an employer of choice and having recruitment and retention issues.	M	Implementation of a Mental Health Action Plan demonstrates a commitment by the employer in providing a mentally healthy workplace.

9. OUTCOMES

Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes	
	Impact of Report
Prosperous Economy	Having a Mental Health Action Plan in place should assist with employee morale and engagement demonstrating the Council as a caring employer applying good employment practices in relation to equality and diversity. With levels of employee morale and engagement linked to productivity and resource efficiency, having a plan in place should assist the Council in delivering services as cost effectively as it can. Given the role that the Council plays in fostering an environment where the local economy can thrive, having an engaged workforce delivering efficient cost-effective services is a key element of achieving this.
Prosperous People	As an organisation the Council considers the health of its workforce to be paramount and a key element in service delivery. This focus is important in having

	an engaged workforce and all the additional benefits associated with this.

A mentally healthy workplace can support employees which can have a positive ripple effect in the local community. This should substantially reduce the negative impact of mental health on employee productivity, efficiency and overall behaviour at work resulting in better service delivery. |
| **Prosperous Place** | The Council requires to keep employees healthy and safe whilst in work and manage any risks in the workplace that are likely to give rise to work-related ill health. Through a proactive approach to mental health, this will create a positive workplace and a healthier workforce, which will also protect and enhance our image and reputation as a good employer. Any detrimental effects caused through poor health of employees impacts on the provision of public services. An engaged workforce is best placed to provide good service delivery to the residents of the city. This would result in good public opinion, which would benefit the city, which can extend outwardly to visitors and businesses seeking to inwardly invest. Through proactive intervention in relation to employee mental health this can have a positive impact on the local economy and reduce the drain on other public-sector services. |

Design Principles of Target Operating Model	
	Impact of Report
Workforce	This report links to the 'Workforce' design principle in that having an employee mental health action plan in place will assist with the promotion of equality in the workplace; with many mental health issues being classed as a disability. The plan should assist in the retention of disabled employees, helping to ensure that the Council has a diverse workforce.
Partnerships and Alliances	Approval of the recommendation would assist in reducing the risk of lost resource through for example absence, enforcement action and potential claims. Early address of issues has the potential to reduce impact on employees and the wider community reducing demands on other public-sector organisations.

10. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment	An Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment has been undertaken and has not identified any negative implications.
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty	Not applicable

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

ACAS Framework for positive mental health http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1900&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIuNDth6-m3wIVzrvtCh2E7QZyEAAYASAAEgLEHPD_BwE

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) page http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/mental-health.htm

'Thriving at Work' - Stevenson/Farmer independent review of mental health and employers https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/658145/thriving-at-work-stevenson-farmer-review.pdf

ACAS framework for positive mental health http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/r/i/Acas-framework-for-positive-mental-health-at-work.pdf

ACAS research paper http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/2/p/Mental_health_report_11_Nov_2016.pdf

ACAS guidance http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/s/j/Promoting_Mental_Health_Nov.pdf

Note: The content of the attached Employee Mental Health Action Plan is based on the documents under the above links; in particular the Stevenson/Farmer review 'Thriving at Work'. The circle diagram under 2.1 above contains elements within these papers.

10. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Mental Health Improvement Action Plan

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Appendix 1

Theme	Outcome	Improvement action areas	Detail	Next Steps
1.Tackle stigma	Visible commitment to positive mental heath	a. Participate in national proactive awareness raising campaigns through a calendar of events Include reference to creating a mentally healthy workplace in new Council Capability Framework ☑ b. Conduct focus groups with staff on the content and the delivery of this action plan ☑	ACC utilising all appropriate national campaigns rather than adopting a specific one ☑ Updated Action Plan added to People Anytime pages ☑ Mental Health First Aid Posters advertising network across entire organisation ☑	Continue to communicate mental health and wellbeing initiatives in line with national programmes and deliver training and information campaigns as appropriate Meeting scheduled with Caroline Hartley re NHS/Road Haulage mental health awareness
	Managers have mental health rapport with employees	a. Introduce a Standard Management objective for Performance Review and Development ☑ b. Open discussion of mental health and support to be held wherever possible and appropriate e.g. 1-2-1s, team meetings and induction	New CR&D process embeds guiding principles for all employees ☑ Wellbeing Welcomes introduced at start of team and	Encourage mangers to attend the 1 Day Mentally Health Workplaces for Managers training to raise mental health awareness. Roll out Compassionate Conversations pilot training with managers. A course designed by the Samaritans to help managers to start the conversation

		training. Chief Officers to role model an open approach. ☑	1-2-1 meetings ☑	
	Employees are self-aware and ask for help when needed	a. Raise mental health awareness through development of employee training and awareness raising sessions which include case stories from members of staff ☑ b. Use of "buddy system" (out with management) and link to national online support schemes ☑ c. Employees encouraged to share experiences, to access support and highlight improvement areas through focus groups and online discussion forums ☑	Suite of online and face to face training now available ☑ Mental Health First Aiders now trained and available to sign post staff to find support ☑ Mental Health First Aider network developed to share best practice ☑	Deliver 3 more training course for Mental Health First Aid in the first quarter of 2020. Continue to signpost employees to undertake the Mentally Healthy Workplaces online training Mental Health First Aider Network meetings to take place and identify improvements areas Create online discussion groups to highlight improvement areas on our new Intranet (SharePoint)
2.Empower employees	The organisation understands the impact personal issues can have on mental wellbeing	a. Review and improve available data relating to mental health and psychological reasons for absence to understand and act on improved information b. Develop and share personal stories of those impacted by mental health issues with managers ☑	Ongoing	Analyse absence data available and target initiatives and interventions where appropriate across the organisation Encourage volunteering initiatives

	Managers can handle difficult conversations effectively	a. Upskill managers in having sensitive conversations through development and promotion of training and awareness sessions and communications ☑ b. Improve manager skills in supporting people through change ☑	Regular webinars by Senior Management on mental health and wellbeing☑ Mental Health having difficult conversations training available on People Anytime and Learning Academy☑ Webinars on mental health from Samaritans, and Chief Officers delivered☑ Buddying with TU and managers to support long term absence?	Digital Age – managing workload guidance to be included on Learning Academy Pilot new Compassionate Conversations training with managers Further webinars on mental health and wellbeing subjects
	Employees can identify personal stress triggers	a. Through training, introduce employees to positive coping strategies, to recognise signs in themselves and others ☑	Mental Health First Aid Network launched☑	Deliver Personal Resilience Training through ACC and NELC

		b. Provide mechanisms for peer support to colleagues ☑ c. Create a safe environment/physical space, which employees can access to promote self-care during the working day	Mental Health Suite of training available for all staff☑	Continue discussions with Facilities to find suitable space for safe environments Continue discussions re tapping in to volunteering initiatives in our city's parks and gardens by joining 'Friends of …' groups
3.Improve awareness	Raise the profile of mental health issues and wellbeing in the workplace.	a. Focus on awareness raising and improved access to wellbeing initiatives and mental health support in remote locations, i.e. where computer access is limited. Develop a communications plan for Functions/Clusters to ensure all staff groups are equally covered including all non-networked groups e.g. teachers ☑ b. Review Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace Policy and develop Guidance (based on mental health core standards) ☑ c. Develop a communications plan to accompany the calendar of events and mental health pledge ☑	Skillsets included in Continuous Review and Development (CR&D) to support employee mental health and wellbeing☑ Mental Health Training and opportunities communicated through Equalities Newsletters☑ Mental Health Apps available on Mental Health pages on People Anytime☑	Work with Internal Communications and Engagement Team to develop a communications plan for all wellbeing initiatives to reach all venues and locations across the organisation Improve and encourage disclosure of mental health issues by staff through MHFA or Line Manager Mental Health and Wellbeing workplace guidance to be refreshed

		d. Improve disclosure by staff with mental health issues by developing options for employees to disclose in a way they feel comfortable	Webinar delivered by CE endorsing Mental Health Action Plan and our commitment to improvement☑ SamH eLearning for teachers and other staff working with young people available on Mental Health pages on People Anytime☑	
	Managers are informed and open to conversations with staff	a. Promote effective people management through the development of manager behavioural standards ☑ b. Promote the completion and application of the HSE Management Behaviours questionnaire ☑	Skillsets included in Continuous Review and Development (CR&D) to support employee mental health and wellbeing☑	Further promotion around training and HSE Management Behaviour Further dates to run QWL Risk Assessment training to be available for managers

			HSE Management Behaviours questionnaire added to the People Anytime Mental Health and Wellbeing pages☑	
	Employees look after their own wellbeing	a. Maintain personal wellbeing (physical and mental) and build personal resilience through training and calendar of events and through continued access to self-care wellbeing initiatives and increased promotion of health-related employee benefits ☑ b. Employees share details of mental health experiences, in ways they are comfortable with, as part of the calendar of events e.g. this could be through sharing anonymously via a blog	Pilates and Yoga classes available onsite for staff☑ Promotion of health related employee benefits☑ Personal Resilience training available for staff☑ Increased Suicide Awareness Training (delivered 1 ASIST– Applied Suicide Intervention	Further development of mental health and wellbeing initiatives to improve physical and mental wellbeing Development of interactive wellbeing pages on SharePoint where employees can post their own stories and comment on various initiatives available More training on resilience, mindfulness and meditation techniques to help employees build up own self-care Deliver further ASIST training

			Training) in October ☑ Advertised Self-Care apps, tea and talks, NHS pages Moodzone etc. on People Anytime Mental Health pages☑	
4.Joined up approach	Organisation tackles the causes of workplace stress	a. Develop a wellbeing plan (presented to SGC March 2019) to show holistic approach and reference mental health action plan ☑ b. Improve access and use of data relating to causes of psychological absence, improved benchmarking and learning from others c. Improve the consistency of completion of Quality of Working Lives risk assessments, in particular following Return to Work Discussions, through promotion, management training and joint working with	Quality of Working Lives Risk Assessment training delivered by Health and Safety Team☑ Ongoing	Training to be made available on Quality of Working Lives Risk Assessments for use in return to work discussions Work towards improving data recording reasons for absences and reporting on this Improvement project to identify triggers Metrics on return to work discussions

		the Health and Safety team (attach to any OHP referral) ☑ d. Explore triggers of stress which may occur through change or people processes and identify improvement actions to reduce stress		
	Plan work with "people in mind"	a. Explore the use of Wellness Action Plans / ALISS ☑	Presentation from Link Practitioner delivered to raise awareness of new Links Approach to improving Mental Health☑	Further exploration of wellness action plans
	Employees take notice and support colleagues	a. Development of a culture of peer support through the culture change programme b. Development of a buddy programme for staff and put in place on an ongoing basis c. Explore possibility of employees having an alternative person to speak to rather than own line manager. ☑ d. Also explore the potential of having an advocate for	Rollout of CR&D commenced in December to all staff including skillsets around looking after each other at work☑ Mental Health First Aider Network launched☑	More MHFA to be trained and advertised targeting areas where little or no cover

		those employees who may struggle to express how they feel	Advertise 7 cups of tea with support Forums☑	
5.Support managers	The organisation provides support and trains managers to identify, understand and address mental health factors in the workplace.	a. Develop mandatory online training for managers in supporting mental health in the workplace ☑ b. Train managers as Mental Health First Aiders in the workplace ☑ c. Upskill managers through additional development and awareness sessions, including peer support. Also, to ensure sharing of knowledge and experience between managers ☑	Mentally Health Workplaces eLearning training available on OIL☑ 2 x Mental Health First Aider courses delivered☑ Line Managers offered Mental Health First Aid training with 4 attending☑ Previously trained Mental Health First Aider staff offered refresher training☑	3 x Mental Health First Aid courses to run in beginning of 2020 Encourage update for managers on various mental health training available

	Employees engage with line managers	a. Employees encouraged to share experiences, to access support and highlight improvement areas via engagement activities promoted through line managers ☑	1st Mental Health Awareness Week ran successfully in October 2019 with approx. 280 employees attending 28 events across the organisation☑	Plan and organise our 2nd Mental Health Awareness Week in conjunction with NHS, AHSCP and 3rd Sector colleagues