

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance Committee
DATE	29 September 2020
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Mental Health and Wellbeing Report
REPORT NUMBER	RES/20/154
DIRECTOR	Steven Whyte, Director of Resources
CHIEF OFFICER	Isla Newcombe, Organisational Development
REPORT AUTHOR	Neil Yacamini, Team Lead – Employee Transition
TERMS OF REFERENCE	2.7

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the work that has been undertaken during lockdown during the period March – August 2020 in respect of mental health and wellbeing, in line with the role of the Committee to monitor the wellbeing of employees

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Committee considers the content of the report and notes the actions carried out so far to address and support positive employee mental health.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Since the start of the pandemic, the People and Organisational Development Cluster, in partnership with Health and Safety and other colleagues, have undertaken mitigating actions recognising the potential for increased mental health concerns amongst employees during a period of increased stress and anxiety. We continue to work closely with trade union colleagues to support employees and to deliver a range of support which is related to mental health and wellbeing.
- 3.2 Details of these supportive measures put in place are contained within Appendix A.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There is a financial cost resulting from some of the areas highlighted in the appendix to the report. These costs have been funded through the Council's Flexible Working Development Fund application and through the corporate training budget, in line with our priorities set out the approved Workforce Plan seen at Staff Governance Committee in June 2019.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 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). Such intervention can result in potential prosecution (criminal) and employees (civil claims) are more likely to succeed following a successful HSE prosecution. Changes in the Sentencing and Fines Guidance for health and safety non-compliances are resulting in increased financial penalties. Fine starting points are based on an organisation's turnover. As Local Authorities do not have turnover; their Annual Revenue Budget is deemed to be the equivalent. This amount is then altered depending on the culpability of the organisation and harm factors to employees and members of the public.
- 5.2 Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, there is a legal requirement to ensure the health, safety and welfare at work of our employees. This includes minimising the risk of stress-related illness or injury to employees.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

- 6.1 The risks with the potential to impact the decision being sought from the Committee are categorised as:

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Strategic Risk	N/A	N/A	N/A
Compliance	Compliance with legal requirements ensures the health and safety of employees).	M	Actions outlined in the appendix provide additional support for employees.
Operational	N/A	N/A	N/A
Financial	If no action is taken to support individuals and address trends, then the organisation will incur both direct and indirect costs.	M	Implementation of the Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace Policy and supporting Stress Procedure. Effective management and maintenance of a mentally healthy workplace and provision of appropriate support.
Reputational	Without ensuring suitable employee support there is a risk of the organisation not being seen as an employer of choice and having	L	As above.

	recruitment and retention issues.		
Environment / Climate	N/A	N/A	N/A

7. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The Prosperous People theme in the LOIP indicates that all people in the City are entitled to feel safe, protected from harm and supported where necessary, which would include employees of the Council. Adopting the approach outlined in the report will support the workforce.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	Not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

10. APPENDICES

Appendix A - ACC Employees Mental Health and Wellbeing Initiatives in response to Covid-19 Outbreak 2020

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People and Organisational Development – ACC Employees Mental Health and Wellbeing Initiatives

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1. Introduction

During the Coronavirus outbreak, the People and Organisational Development Cluster in partnership with teams across the Council including Health and Safety, responded in a rapidly changing environment to put in place measures to support the workforce. A considerable quantity of information has been published on our People Anytime site and shared in regular communications targeting all employees or managers specifically, to keep the workforce as informed as possible during this time. Initiatives and temporary changes to practices, where required to respond to government guidance or to support the workforce, were rapidly put in place and benchmarking activity was conducted with other Local Authorities throughout the period.

Taking Mental Health as a particular area of focus during this turbulent time for our workforce; whilst face to face employee health and wellbeing initiatives were put on hold due to the Government's advice, alternative methods of delivery were sought and shared to ensure employees had access to all relevant information to help keep them safe and connected.

This paper outlines the range of workforce initiatives and actions taken over the period March 2020 to August 2020 to support mental health and wellbeing, or where there would be a positive or supportive impact on mental health and wellbeing indirectly.

2. Communications

To ensure that employees remained connected and informed during this potentially increasingly stressful time, online support, information and national campaigns were posted and included on our internal communications systems. This included a host of dedicated pages on our People Anytime site which is kept up to date with relevant information relating to the pandemic and on our intranet.

Along with this, regular updates including those from our Chief Executive are published on the Intranet and direct updates are sent to managers through the Leadership Forum and by email. This is to help disseminate the information across the organisation to all employees to ensure they are fully informed with timely information and thereby reduce uncertainty and anxiety.

Regular video messages and webinars have also been organised, on topics relevant to the emergency response or as a support to working in a different way, providing updates or training in a more personable way to staff. These messages are recorded so that they can be watched by anyone unable to attend the live session.

A text messaging service was utilised in April to Council mobile numbers to highlight the link to the People Anytime pages, which are accessible on any device including personal devices. A **payslip alert** was also sent out to all employees who receive paper pay slips in the month of May to ensure that all of our employees had the opportunity to know where to go to find this regularly updated information relating to

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all matters relating to the Covid-19 pandemic including support for mental health and wellbeing and information relating to their employment.

A multi-faceted communications campaign is also planned in the coming weeks to ensure we reach all our employees, especially those on the frontline who may not necessarily have ready access to online resources and who have been crucial to the continuation of public services during this period.

2.1 Mental Health and Wellbeing Blogs

Regular mental health and wellbeing blogs based on the “5 ways to wellbeing” theme have been communicated to the organisation throughout the pandemic via the new Intranet. Emails have also been sent directly to Managers where employees don’t readily have access to the intranet to help with disseminating this information and messages.



2.2 Online Staff Magazine - ‘The Blether’

The Blether was launched in early April 2020. While not in direct response to the pandemic, the launch was brought forward because of a desire to connect members of staff who were working from home. The magazine is entirely employee-led. It supports positive mental health and wellbeing by valuing people, celebrating success and driving a positive and supportive culture across the organisation. This is in line with the first of the “five ways to wellbeing” themes, *Connect*.

The format of the magazine is informal and inclusive. Anyone can submit a story on a subject of their choice. As well as feature articles, the magazine is home to a weekly quiz, “Desk Jams” music section, Pet’s Corner and Cooking Club. These aim to encourage a sense of community and mutual support within the organisation. The magazine also promotes wider initiatives like Mental Health Week, The Star Awards and Aberdeen City in Bloom.

The Blether is found on the Intranet home page and uses Microsoft Teams where colleagues can get involved in informal conversations and online support. This enables colleagues to stay connected and included in the ACC community. The informal nature of *The Blether* has proven popular with readers and each news post

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is typically read by 300 – 400 unique viewers. To date, the magazine home page has had over 7,000 views since launch and there are 239 users registered with *The Blether* community on Microsoft Teams.

2.3 Operational Updates

Regular operational updates have been included on our People Anytime site to help keep the organisation abreast of changes in service delivery across the organisation. This ensures employees are kept up to date with any changes as quickly as they happen, and especially when some of these changes have been featured in external press reports, including when services were stood down at the start of lockdown and updates as services are reinstated.

2.4 Employee Frequently Asked Questions

There is a section for employees frequently asked questions that have been collated from various sources published on People Anytime including information about pay and leave. These are added to on the basis of feedback from staff.

2.5 Manager's Guidance

There's a full page dedicated to advice for managers including useful checklists and information on recording absence on CoreHR, advice from COSLA, symptoms and protecting vulnerable people, working from home and alternative arrangements, pay and leave, annual leave, temporary movement of employees, childcare, teachers information, agency workers and a vast list of frequently asked questions.

2.6 Supporting Your Teams - 1-2-1's and Regular Contact

Communications from the Chief Executive, People Anytime pages and Mental Health and Wellbeing blogs have been disseminated regularly to give managers the appropriate tools to support their teams' mental wellbeing during this time. The information includes good practices on having successful 1-2-1s, compassionate conversations and building open relationships within your teams. There's also various links to council policies to help managers support their employees during this time.

3 Staying Safe and Well

Reading credible sources of information can help to avoid the fear and anxiety that misinformation can cause. It is therefore very important for all our employees to be able find trustworthy information quickly and easily. To ensure they have the correct public health and Scottish Government information, we have created pages on our website with the most up to date information for example on how to identify

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coronavirus symptoms, what to do if you or a household member has symptoms, how to stay safe at work through to how to get tested, and all of our online pages are referred to in regular communications bulletins.

3.1 Symptoms and How to Stay Healthy

We have information available for employees with symptoms of coronavirus including what to do when it is suspected that a household member has symptoms. There is also information on the People Anytime site regarding how to stay healthy and links to the latest government advice on avoiding transmission.

3.2 Underlying Medical Conditions

For those who are at an increased risk of severe illness from coronavirus we have flagged and updated the Scottish Government guidance regarding physical distancing and shielding measures and ensured that there has been clarity around the leave arrangements allocated to the employees within these categories. We have ensured that there are links to the official guidance as well as links to specific advice for those required to take special leave during this time.

In line with this we made a temporary extension to our special leave policy to cover those with caring pressures during the Covid-19 pandemic and the school closures. This meant that employees who were struggling with the conflicting demands of caring/home schooling and work could make use of up to 14 days of paid special leave. The use of special leave in a flexible way can help to reduce stress and anxiety with having to juggle work and the role of carer during the pandemic.

3.3 Covid-19 Age Risk Assessment

We have also implemented the Scottish government process where employees are required to complete a Covid-19 age risk assessment which identifies the actual risk for every employee. Where the resultant age assessment lies within the high or very high category it requires a line manager to work with an employee to create an individual risk assessment which looks at the role and required controls. This requires sign off by both parties and is seen as a vital process to give these higher risk employees a heightened level of reassurance that they will be safe.

3.4 Self-Isolation

Employees may be required to self-isolate for several reasons which include: having symptoms themselves, living with someone with symptoms or being contacted by a contact tracer because they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for the virus. This information is available for all employees on the People Anytime pages.

Additional categories have been added to our HR/Payroll system, CoreHR, to allow for the recording of employees who are either absent due to Covid-19 or working from home with Covid-19 symptoms or as an alternative to normal working arrangements. In line with COSLA guidance on the reporting of Covid-19 those who

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are sick and unable to work are recorded as absent. Weekly returns on the impact on Covid-19 are shared with COSLA. Regular communications to managers providing advice and guidance has been shared regarding staying in regular contact with their employees. The list of categories can be seen below: -

Sick Leave - Symptoms
Special Leave (Paid) - Self-Isolation/ Symptoms
Special Leave (Paid) - Underlying Medical Condition
Special Leave (Paid) - Caring Responsibilities
Special Leave (Paid) - Service Closure
Special Leave (Paid) - Shielding
Covid Working from Home – Covid – Alternative to Normal Work

Sickness absence is recorded as a separate category where it is related to coronavirus. This ensures that the absence does not impact on an individual's overall absence record, as it is treated separately.

3.5 Test and Protect – Covid-19 Testing

We have worked with colleagues in NHS Grampian to ensure that we have a system in place to make testing of employees or their household members who require access to a Covid-19 test and a system in place to be notified of the outcome of testing. Information on Covid-19 testing for employees is on our People Anytime site and is regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that any changes to Scottish Government policy are implemented. Employees who have identified that they are self-isolating in CoreHR are contacted and advised about the process for testing. In addition to this we have registered for the Employers Portal which is utilised for the test of asymptomatic teachers. Currently 167 employees have been referred to NHS Grampian for testing and 2 asymptomatic teachers have been referred through the Employers Portal.

3.6 Home Working and Staying Healthy

As many employees are working from home and using temporary display screen equipment set ups in their homes, information relating to setting up your equipment safely and how to stretch and exercise throughout the day was shared with staff and included the guidance on workstation exercises and how to work from home and stay physically well.

There is further information and best practices on our People Anytime pages too to help employees get the most out of working from home during this time.

3.7 Staying Safe at Work

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There are many employees working in frontline services who have had to remain onsite during the coronavirus outbreak. Having to continue to go into the workplace during the pandemic could lead to employees feeling worried about their safety.

Risk assessments have been completed by all critical services since the outset of the pandemic. These have been completed with the advice and guidance of the Corporate Health and Safety Team (CHST) who have also been reviewing every completed risk assessment to ensure that they are suitable and sufficient and meet the requirements outlined within Scottish government guidance. Where guidance has changed managers have been identified, contacted to allow risk assessments and work processes to be changed to ensure that employees remain safe.

All of these risk assessments are available to be viewed by all ACC employees and managers requested to share them and the outcomes of them with impacted employees directly and this and all other relevant information has been shared in the regular communications programme which has been established and followed throughout the whole period.

Proactive support is also being delivered by our People and Organisational Development Advisors who have been contacting managers directly around risk assessments as well as assessing if they have all the guidance they need generally to support their team and themselves.

Where the Scottish government route map phases have allowed, Services have been reinstated and to support this a step by step risk assessment process has been required to be followed by managers with these again being reviewed by the CHST. Each reinstatement was/is required to be reviewed by the Service Reinstatement Working Group and to receive approval, they have to evidence that they have taken all the steps to comply with the route map and relevant guidance.

A major part of this whole process has been engagement and communication with Trade Unions. During reinstatement of any Service there is a requirement that Service managers engage with all Trade Unions including the sharing of all risk assessments and Gateway questionnaires. This collaborative process has assisted in giving assurance that all of ACC employees will be safe when carrying out any work required within their roles.

3.8 Domestic Abuse Guidance

In line with Scottish Government Guidance, all those who can work from home are continuing to do so. We currently have a high number of employees working from home. This does however create specific challenges and potential risks for any members of employees who are experiencing domestic abuse in the home setting not only for themselves but also for their children and young people.

We have introduced new guidance to help support employees during this time which includes creating a safe phrase to use with your managers and colleagues should they be in imminent danger and need support to leave the home and have communicated and advertised this information directly to employees and managers

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and on our People Anytime site. This is particularly important when there are restrictions on travel either nationally or locally, as there are exemptions in place in these scenarios.

3.9 Annual Leave

It's important for employees to take annual leave during this time to help maintain good resilience and improve mental wellbeing and work-life balance. We have issued information to encourage and remind employees to do this and asked managers to be proactively encouraging employees to take a break. The government has announced a temporary amendment to the Working Time Directive in relation to COVID-19, to give employees an entitlement to carry over up to 20 days of annual leave into the next 2 years where it has not been possible to take leave as a result of COVID-19.

This is accompanied by the current scenario of staff unable to travel for booked or planned holidays as well as largely working from home and an increased potential therefore of annual leave not being utilised. This compounds risks to the health and wellbeing of staff as well as the potential operational issue to the organisation later in the year, or during 2021, due to the building up of annual leave.

Additional information about the changes to legislation regarding the carry forward of annual leave due to the Covid-19 outbreak has also been communicated to managers and guidance covering Annual Leave during Covid has been published to help managers and employees plan out their leave across the year as well as highlighting the importance of using leave for mental health and general wellbeing. The document also lays out the implications of the change in legislation in terms of those who qualify and how this will be applied.

3.10 Financial Support

It is important for our overall mental wellbeing to have as much support available to employees during this time on financial matters. We have created a page signposting employees to relevant sites for anyone who might find themselves or their families struggling with financial hardship.

On 17th April COSLA Leaders signed off circular SJC-62, Guidance for Covid-19 Casual Worker Compensation for Lost Pay Guidance for Covid-19 Casual Worker Compensation for Lost Pay. This circular sets out the pay arrangements for Casual workers (also referred to as Relief or Supply workers) who undertook casual work for the Council in the period January – March 2020 and remain available for work.

Arrangements were established to ensure that the necessary payments were made for casual worker payments for those who would otherwise have expected to have been providing casual cover had the pandemic not occurred

4. Mental Health Support for Employees



As well as the usual forms of health and wellbeing support being in place, additional initiatives have been added to support employee's overall wellbeing during this time. These have included:

4.1 Mental Health Awareness Webinars and Training

Our partnership with SAMH will help us to deliver 4 online interactive sessions on raising Mental Health awareness with employees and managers. The 4 webinar style sessions commenced on 19 August and will run through to 9 September to complement and promote World Suicide Prevention Day on Thursday 10 September 2020. The sessions will cover:

Session 1 – Mental Health Awareness

19 August 2020 - 206 attended live event with 55 watching recorded session so far

Session 2 – An introduction to Suicide Prevention

26 August 2020 – 154 attended live event with 13 watching recorded session so far

Session 3 – Having Effective Conversations

2 September 2020 – 135 attended live event – recorded session to be posted

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Session 4 – Mentally Health Workplaces with practical tools

9 September 2020

Furthermore, in depth online training courses will be delivered to small groups of employees to support their own mental health and wellbeing. These two courses will both be run as pilots with full evaluation of the benefits of undertaking before considering rolling out further to the organisation. The subject of these two training courses are:

Course 1 – Maintaining Wellbeing

Course 2 – Building Resilience

4.2 Time for Talking – Employee Assistance Service

Online and Telephone Counselling Sessions were introduced due to the coronavirus lockdown which meant face to face sessions had to be suspended. These online and over the phone consultations are open to all employees and their families within the household to access, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

4.3 Mental Health First Aid Network

We currently have 64 Mental Health First Aiders across the organisation providing a support service to employees who may be struggling during the lockdown. Contact details were updated on the People Anytime site so that employees could continue to use this service via Teams/Email or telephone.

Our Mental Health First Aiders have been taking a proactive role to keep in touch with their colleagues and have been sharing information regarding staying well during the pandemic outbreak.

Face to face training commenced at Aberdeen College in September 2020. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, a reduced number of 5 attendees were allowed to attend this first training at the beginning of September. A further course is scheduled to take place in October during Mental Health Awareness Week and this will allow a further 8 MHFA's to join, growing the network to 77 across the organisation. We will continue to grow this service across the organisation over the coming year.

4.4 Mental Health Specialists

Links for employees to easily find professional advice and support services are available on People Anytime and includes the following:

[Breathing Space](#) - is a free, confidential phone and web-based service for people in Scotland experiencing low mood, depression or anxiety.

[Psychological Resilience Hub](#) - offers a support mechanism for any member of employees or the public who may feel overwhelmed, upset or personally affected by the current situation.

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[Ready Scotland](#) - has lots of sources of useful information to help you stay safe and well during the outbreak.

[Samaritans](#) – created a coronavirus hub with practical information and advice on how people can look after their wellbeing and support one another during this time.

[SamH](#) - created additional pages on their website dedicated to COVID-19 and mental wellbeing.

[NHS Inform](#) – mental wellbeing top tips to keep you well.

4.5 Campaign Alerts

The team has kept abreast on all the various campaigns that have been coming out during the pandemic to ensure employees are aware of these. They have been communicated across the organisation using regular blog updates, adverts on the People Anytime site and direct emails. The campaigns included are:



<https://clearyourhead.scot/>

Scottish Governments Mental Health Campaign - <https://clearyourhead.scot/>

Gov.UK – [mental health and wellbeing advice during coronavirus outbreak](#)

Grampian Coronavirus Assistance Hub - <https://gcah.org.uk/>

**Mental Health Awareness Week Campaign –18 – 24
May 2020 – Theme: *Kindness Matters***



<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/campaigns/mental-health-awareness-week>

4.6 Online Apps to Help Reduce Anxiety

We realise that it's not a "one size fits all" when it comes to looking after your wellbeing so we've sourced several free useful apps to help employees relax and stay calm during the pandemic and these can be found advertised on our People Anytime pages.

4.7 Suicide Prevention

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World Suicide Prevention day is on Thursday 10 September 2020 and the theme this year is “Working together to Prevent Suicide”. The statistics tell us that at any time 1 in 20 people could be having suicidal thoughts. We’ve therefore partnered with SAMH to deliver an awareness raising campaign on this subject.

A webinar session took place on Wednesday 26 August 2020 with over 150 attendees and staff continuing to watch the webinar after the event. The focus of the session was the signs to look out for and how to have open conversations with employees who might be displaying signs of suicidal thoughts.

The webinar and a series of short videos provided by the NHS (**Ask, Tell, Save a Life**) are hosted on our People Anytime Mental Health Skills and Training page for employees to undertake to gain an understanding of the signs to look out for and how to have courageous conversations on the subject of suicide prevention.

We also have further information on our People Anytime Mental Health pages on this subject as well as signposting to the Preventing Suicide North East Scotland app which can be accessed by clicking on the icon.



We’re also currently working on making the App accessible on all Council devices to provide a tool for anyone supporting someone who may be struggling.

5. Additional Employee Wellbeing Support

5.1 Alcohol and Substance Advice

Information campaigns and services to educate employees to stay aware of moderation and abstinence during the lockdown.

[Alcohol Advice](#)

[Drug Advice](#)

[Tobacco Advice](#)

[One Year No Beer](#) – access to free introductory offer to use full resources for a limited time



ADVICE DURING COVID-19

SCOTTISH FAMILIES AFFECTED BY ALCOHOL & DRUGS

Offers support for anyone concerned about someone else's alcohol or drug use

- You can chat to someone at **08080 101 011**
- Monday-Friday 9am-11pm
- Visit sfad.org.uk for more information

5.2 NHS Online Exercise Tutorials

Exercise sessions sourced from NHS Inform which included, Yoga and Pilates were posted on People Anytime to encourage employees to try out these gentle forms of stretching exercises to keep fit at home during the lockdown:

[NHS Inform](#) – advice on keeping active



5.3 Pilates – Tutor led sessions

Our onsite Pilates instructor has continued to run her classes online during lockdown with many of its regular attendees signing up and continuing to attend. Details about the online classes and how to get access to these sessions can be found on our People Anytime pages.

5.4 Online Learning – Personal Development

Many of our colleagues had been sent home due to their service not being able to perform their regular duties during the lockdown in line with Scottish Government Guidance and this presented a great opportunity for employees to do a little self-development during this time. Several online courses were sourced to specifically help employees adjust to the new ways of working from home as well as to help raise awareness of mental health issues, reduce anxiety and build personal resilience.

5.5 Virtual Internal Training Courses

The People Development Team have delivered online virtual training to employees during Covid-19 on the following subjects:

Personal Impact with Confidence (Jigsaw) - 25 people trained
Dealing with Difficult Situations Training - 29 people trained
The Coach Approach to Managing - 19 people trained

5.6 eLearning From North East Scotland College:

Part I – Awareness

- What is mental health?
- Causes, effects and impact
- What is stress?
- Resilience
- Understanding anxiety and depression

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Part II – Proactive Approach

- Listening Skills
- Resources

Part III – Self-Help

- Help to deal with stress, anxiety and depression

5.7 eLearning Modules provided by SamH:

[Adapt and Evolve eLearning Module
Coronavirus and Your Mental Wellbeing \(SAMH\)](#)

5.8 Online Learning From Other Sources:

		
Free online courses available	A range of professional learning resources you can access from home – most are free and some come with certification	Is coronavirus affecting your education or work? Explore online courses to continue studying, build professional skills, and connect with experts.

There are also other online learning materials around mental health awareness available on our People Anytime pages covering the following subjects:

- [Mental Health eLearning for Teachers](#) – developed by SamH
- [See Me in Work eLearning training](#) – developed by See Me Scotland
- [Understanding Sleep eLearning Training](#) developed by the Royal Society of Public Health

And further courses hosted on our Learning Management System covering the following subjects:

- Mentally Healthy Workplaces eLearning
- Ask, Tell, Save a Life – online learning clips on Suicide Prevention
- Alcohol and Drugs in the Workplace eLearning
- Stress Awareness for Managers eLearning

A full range of other training is also available on our People Development pages on People Anytime.

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5.9 Financial Support

It is important for our overall mental wellbeing to have as much support available to employees during this time on financial matters. We have created a page signposting employees to relevant sites for anyone who might find themselves or their families struggling with financial hardship.

On 17th April COSLA Leaders signed off circular SJC-62, Guidance for Covid-19 Casual Worker Compensation for Lost Pay Guidance for Covid-19 Casual Worker Compensation for Lost Pay. This circular sets out the pay arrangements for Casual workers (also referred to as Relief or Supply workers) who undertook casual work for the Council in the period January – March 2020 and remain available for work.

Arrangements were established to ensure that the necessary payments were made for casual worker payments for those who would otherwise have expected to have been providing casual cover had the pandemic not occurred.

6. What's Next

6.1 Frontline Workers Awareness and Support Campaign

We're working to come up with some key messaging for our frontline employees (waste, grounds, roads, cleaning/catering etc.) who don't normally have access to online communications to ensure that the information and vital support available reaches this crucial sector of the workforce. This will take the form of a physical campaign and will include information relating to financial wellbeing and where to find the right support if you are struggling.

6.2 Mental Health First Aid Training

Our face to face training programme for Mental Health First Aiders resumed in September 2020 with a further 5 employees being trained to join the network to build on the numbers we currently have and to ensure there is adequate cover of this service in all areas across the organisation.

6.3 Mental Health Champions Network

We're looking into rolling out a network of mental health champions across the organisation to take forward and promote good mental health practices across the organisation. The champions will be key to disseminating and displaying relevant information about initiatives and support that is available to employees across the organisation. Champions will receive appropriate specific training on the subject and will form a branch of the Mental Health Action Group.

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6.4 World Mental Health Day 2020

World Mental Health Day 2020 is our most important one yet. This year has been tough on us all and the months of lockdown and loss have had a huge impact on our mental health. The [World Health Organisation](#) recognises World Mental Health Day on 10 October every year and this year's theme set by the [World Federation for Mental Health](#) is **Mental Health for All - Greater Investment – Greater Access**.

We'll be running events during the week commencing 5 October 2020 to raise awareness including Scottish Mental Health First Aider, Maintaining Wellbeing and Building Resilience training, online campaigns and signposting to key services.