

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance
DATE	26 June 2024
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Employee Mental Health Action Plan Annual Progress Update
REPORT NUMBER	CORS/24/184
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Andy MacDonald
CHIEF OFFICER	Isla Newcombe
REPORT AUTHOR	Sandie Scott
TERMS OF REFERENCE	3.2iii

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present committee with the updated Mental Health Action Plan for 2024, which aligns with our Workforce Delivery Plan and our approved approach to culture change.
- 1.2 To update Committee on progress and activity from January 2023 to December 2023, towards our Employee Mental Health Action Plan.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

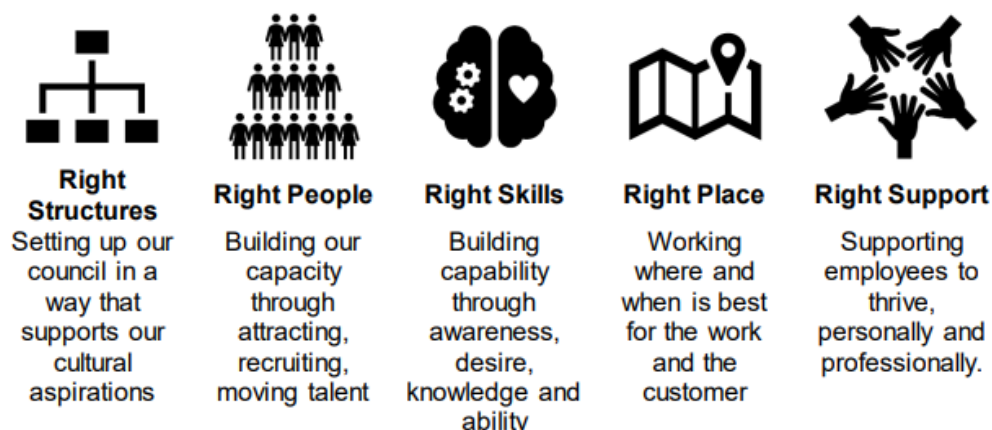
- 2.1 Notes the continuing progress made on our Mental Health Action Plan and the proactive actions taken to address and support positive employee mental health during the last 12 months.
- 2.2 Approves the updated Mental Health Action Plan for 2024.

3 CURRENT SITUATION

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 In [January 2019](#), Committee approved the Mental Health Action Plan.
- 3.1.2 Reports to the Staff Governance Committee in [February 2020](#), [June 2021](#), [February 2022](#) and [June 2023](#) provided updates on progress made towards the plan.
- 3.1.3 In January 2023, Committee approved the [Workforce Delivery Plan](#), which set out the detail for delivery of the workforce strategy aspect of the transformation programme.

3.1.4 The Workforce Delivery Plan identified five key levers that needed to be addressed in order to meet local and national challenges and deliver our workforce transformation.



3.1.5 This paper addresses the fifth lever, Right Support, and specifically presents a refreshed and updated Mental Health Action Plan to set out our priorities to deliver two of the strategic objectives listed in the Workforce Delivery Plan:

3.1.5.1 Aberdeen City Council is a supportive and caring employer that provides a range of mental health and wellbeing interventions and support; supports staff through the cost of living crisis; recognises and supports work/life balance.

3.1.5.2 Reduce absence levels across the organisation and ensure employees are supported through a range of resources and interventions to remain in work or return to work, whenever possible and that is beneficial to them; allowing support to be targeted to the areas of highest need.

3.1.6 Aberdeen City Council continues to hold mental health and wellbeing among its top priorities for the city and this can be seen outlined in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-2026. The value of mirroring this commitment internally for our employees is vital to ensuring the right support is in place to deliver the Council's vision for Aberdeen as a place where everyone can prosper.

3.1.7 These programmes of work are well underway, and this report provides an update on the ongoing progress made between January 2023 and December 2023.

3.2 National Context

3.2.1 The Scottish Government continue to place Mental Health and Wellbeing at the centre of their Programme for Government – and in November 2023 published their Mental Health and Wellbeing Delivery Plan 2023 – 25, which highlights the importance of local authorities in promoting mental health and wellbeing within their communities and implementing strategies and initiatives to address mental health stigma, provide support in educational and workplace settings, and enhance crisis support services.

3.2.2 To achieve the outcomes of the Government's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy the key areas of focus are to:

- **Promote** positive mental health and wellbeing for the whole population, improving understanding and tackling stigma, inequality and discrimination.
- **Prevent** mental health issues occurring or escalating and tackle underlying causes, adversities and inequalities wherever possible; and
- **Provide** mental health and wellbeing support and care, ensuring people and communities can access the right information, skills, services and opportunities in the right place at the right time, using a person-centred approach.

3.2.3 Internally, we have aligned and embedded these three key areas of focus within our own Mental Health Action Plan as follows:

- **Promote** mental health and wellbeing for the whole organisation through a renewed focus on communications campaigns (including events) to raise awareness of these tools and a platform that is easily accessible (see **Workstream 2** of the Mental Health Action Plan 2024).
- **Prevent** mental health issues occurring or escalating through a focus on self-help tools and resources that empower employees to support their own health and wellbeing (see **Workstream 1**) and training for employees so that they have the skills to manage their own wellbeing and support their colleagues (see **Workstream 3**); and tackling underlying causes, adversities and inequalities wherever possible through data reporting to target interventions proactively to areas of highest need (**See Workstream 6**)
- **Provide** mental health and wellbeing support and care through our Managers supporting their teams confidently and appropriately (see **Workstream 5**); through a person-centred approach to mental health and wellbeing support by focusing on employee engagement, empowerment and co-creation (see **Workstream 4**).

3.2.4 [Audit Scotland's 2023 Local Government Overview](#) notes that councils have never faced such a challenging situation. Service demands have increased after the Covid-19 pandemic and funding is forecast to reduce in real terms. Workforce pressures have increased due to a competitive labour market, employee retention and high sickness absence levels are putting councils under continued pressure. They conclude that wellbeing initiatives must continue, and councils should monitor the impact of new ways of working such as hybrid working on both performance levels and staff wellbeing.

3.2.5 New figures revealed in November 2023 by a [Mental Health Foundation](#) poll of 5000 UK adults shows that 'cost-of-living is still causing widespread mental distress'.

- Almost one third (31%) of UK adults have felt anxious in the past month due to their personal financial situation.
- More than one quarter (27%) felt stressed in the past month due to their personal financial situation.

- Almost one in ten (9%) felt hopeless in the past month due to their personal financial situation.
- Adults in the lowest socioeconomic groups (DE) were much more likely than those in the highest (AB) to report feeling anxious (37% v 24%), stressed (33% v 21%) or hopeless (14% v 6%) about their financial situation.

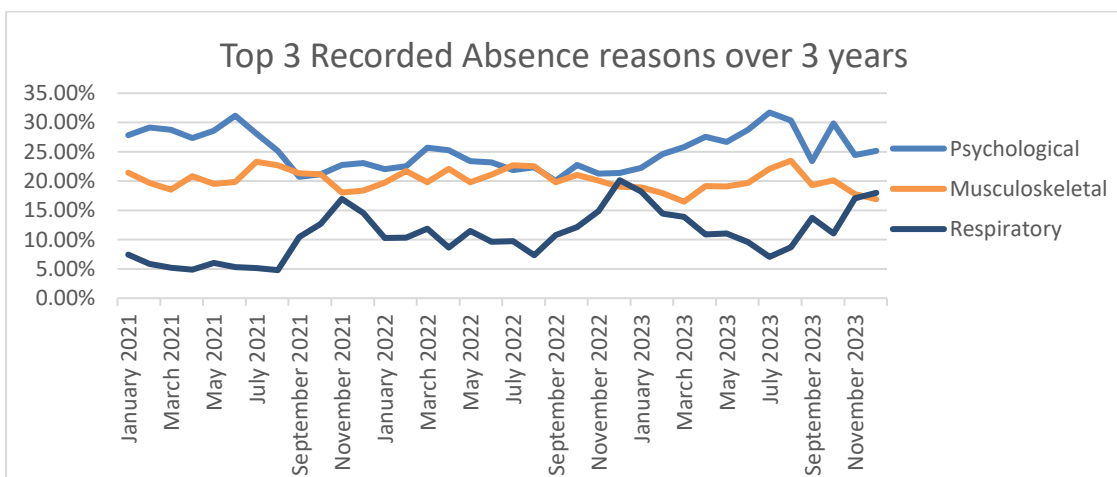
3.2.6 These figures have not changed significantly since November 2022 when the Mental Health Foundation surveyed the nation about the mental health impacts of the rising cost of living – and found financial strain and poverty to be key drivers of poor mental health.

3.2.7 A new survey by the CIPD and Simplyhealth, show that stress is found to be a significant factor for both short- and long-term absence, with over 76% of respondents reporting stress-related absence in their organisation in the past year. Heavy workloads remain by far the most common cause of stress-related absence (67%), followed by management style (37%).

3.2.8 [Personnel Today](#) stated that UK employees were absent for 7.8 days on average over the past year, the highest level reported in over a decade and two days more than the pre-pandemic sickness absence rate of 5.8 days.

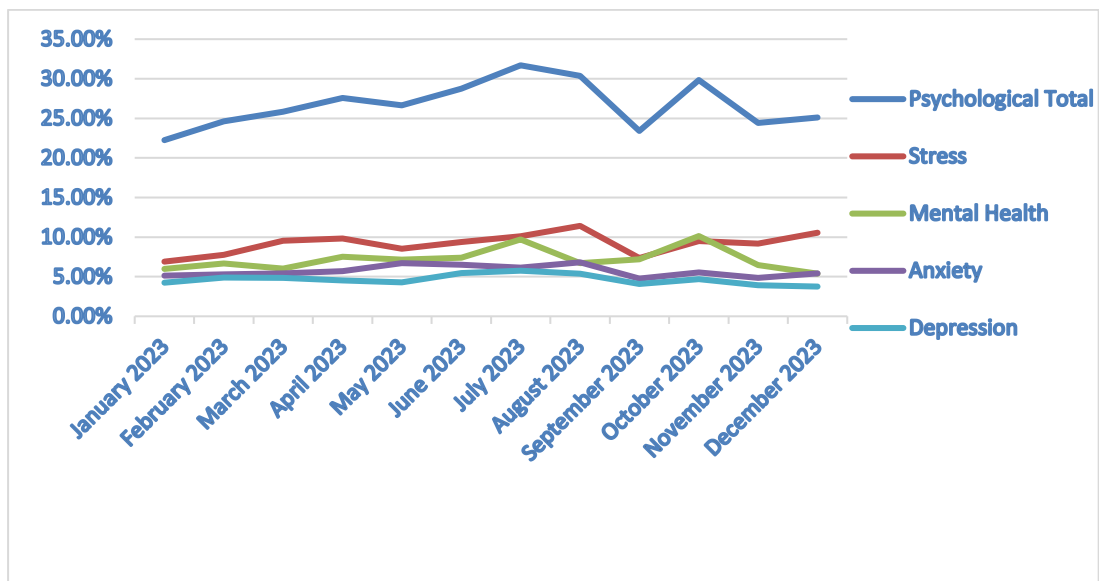
3.3 Local Context: Absence Data

3.3.1 The data on employee absences from January 2023 to December 2023 shows that psychological absence - which includes anxiety, depression, mental health, work-related stress and personal stress - is still one of the three most common reasons for absence reported - and this has not changed in the past 3 years (the others being musculoskeletal and respiratory illnesses).



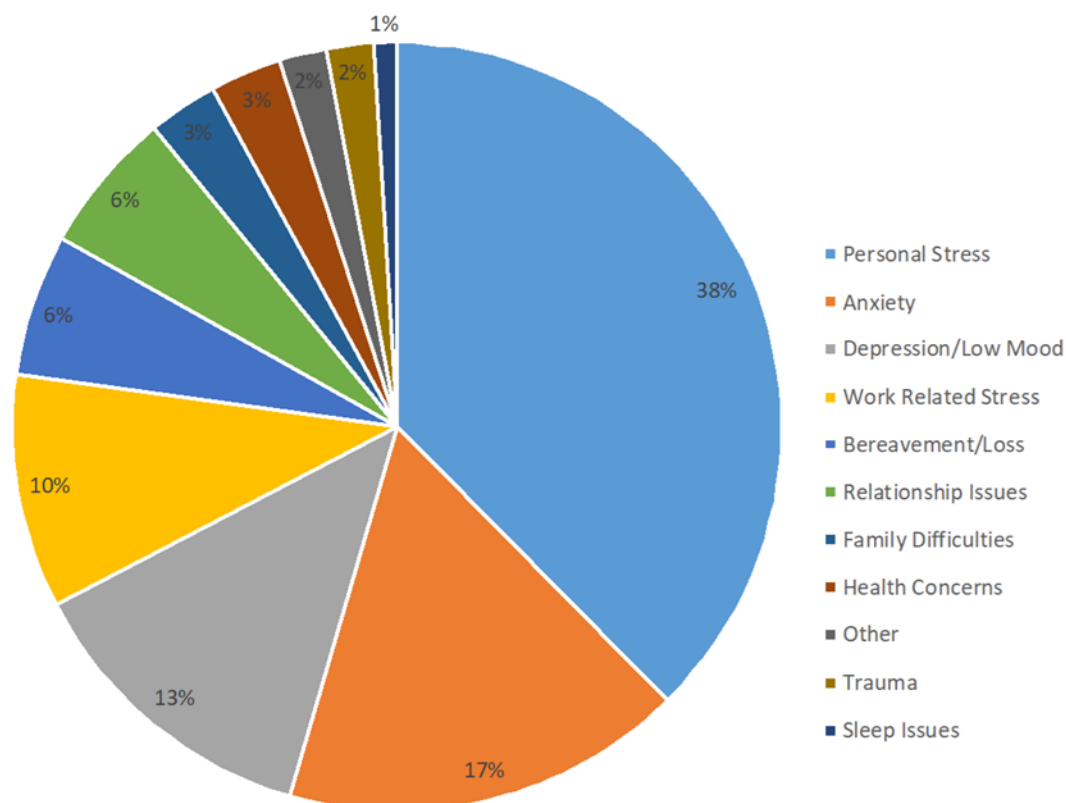
3.3.2 Psychological absence accounts for an average of 26.71% of all absences in 2023. This is an increase from 22.64% in 2022 and a return to the average of 26.14% in the pandemic year of 2021. This is consistent with national findings.

3.3.3 The graph below shows a breakdown of the different subcategories of psychological absences in 2023. This shows that stress was the main reason for psychological absences in 2023, while depression was the least common reason.



3.3.4 In addition to our absence data showing that stress is the most common reason for psychological absence in 2023, we also find that stress is the most common reason for referrals to our Employee Assistance Programme. As reported in EAS Annual Progress Update Occupational Health and Absence Annual Update January 2023 – December 2023 – stress accounts for 38% of referrals, anxiety accounts for 17% of referrals, and depression accounts for 13%.

Referral Reason to Employee Assistance Provider January 2023 - December 2024



Please note the figures above total 101% due to numbers being rounded up.

3.3.5 This local picture is consistent with the national findings and concurs that stress is currently the top cause of absence across the country, which has been exacerbated by the cost of living crisis and financial worries.

3.4 Local Context: Employee Voice

3.4.1 In winter 2023 a council-wide 'Wellbeing Pulse Check' survey was trialled. The purpose of this survey was to build on previous feedback gathered through focus groups in 2022, gain insights into the mental health and wellbeing of our workforce, and identify hot spots and trends to inform priority areas for the Mental Health Action Plan in the year ahead.

3.4.2 The results of this were comprehensively reported in a report to [Staff Governance Committee in January 2024](#) – with a commitment to repeat the survey with further communications and engagement later in Spring 2024. To allow time for the new priority actions set out in the refreshed Mental Health Action Plan 2024 to fully embed and have an impact, it is now planned to undertake this follow-up survey annually, with the results informing the Mental Health Action Plan update for 2025. Therefore, the next all employee Wellbeing Pulse Check will take place in November/December 2024.

3.4.3 A summary of the key findings from the survey are as follows:

- 52.5% of respondents feel comfortable talking about mental health at work.
- 63% feel that their manager supports them to maintain positive wellbeing.
- 66% are aware of the Employee Assistance Programme and know how to access this.
- 58.4% are aware of the Mental Health First Aiders network and know how to access it.
- 62.1% of respondents were unaware of the 'Your Care' proactive wellbeing platform and how to access it.

3.4.4 The response rate for this survey was low compared to other similar staff surveys - at only 2% of the workforce, but that there was a wide range of responses from across all our Job Families and Clusters. It is positive to note the encouraging trend of these results, whilst also acknowledging that there is still a significant distance to travel to achieve our strategic outcomes. And if the results show that even one employee was not aware of mental health and wellbeing support freely available, then this means that additional communication and promotion is required. Our intended outcome is for our programme of support and tools to be easily accessible to **all staff**. This aligns to the wider Scottish Government initiative for resources to be easily available to all.

3.4.5 Regular consultation and open dialogue with our Trade Union colleagues has supported us to improve our communication and engagement campaigns and deliver on several major wellbeing initiatives over the period January 2023 to December 2023. This includes the implementation and delivery of our wellbeing roadshows for frontline employees and the rollout of our corporate approach to Reasonable Adjustment Passports. This close working partnership is key to us delivering targeted support exactly where it is required.

3.4.6 It is evident from surveys undertaken by our trade union colleagues that there is a need for increased awareness raising campaigns in Housing around the service available from our Mental Health First Aiders and the Employee Assistance Programme.

3.4.7 It is important for us to take action to reduce levels of psychological absence because of its impact on the quality and continuity of service delivery, and the morale and productivity of staff. It can also lead to significant increased costs for the council, such as sick pay, overtime, agency use, training, and legal fees, at a time when that could be invested in other areas of service delivery or staff development.

3.4.8 Therefore, a renewed focus on the mental health and wellbeing of staff, and the need to reduce the level of psychological absence, remains a top priority for the year ahead. This can be achieved by implementing effective policies and interventions that aim to address the causes and consequences of stress and other psychological conditions; and a proactive and holistic approach to

wellbeing, inclusive of financial wellbeing. This is reflected and presented in our updated Mental Health Action Plan for 2024.

3.5 Refreshed Mental Health Action Plan

3.5.1 To address the two strategic objectives set out in the Workforce Delivery Plan under 'Right Support' and 3.1.5 above, six updated workstreams are proposed for our refreshed Mental Health Action Plan for 2024. Based on the findings identified through the local context data set out above, a new set of priorities are identified for 2024. A detailed report of the activity undertaken and delivered during 2023 under the workstreams is available in Appendix 1.

3.5.2 Mental Health Action Plan 2024 – The Workstreams

Workstream	Priorities for the year ahead
1: Self-help tools and resources that empower employees to support their own health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch the YourCare portal available through VIVUP and deliver awareness raising campaign. • Review and evaluate partnership with SportAberdeen to explore next steps for scaling out physical wellbeing health checks.
2: Communications campaigns (inc. events) that raise awareness of these tools and a platform that is easily accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure coverage of all communications campaigns includes physical campaigns and Viva Engage to be inclusive and accessible for frontline colleagues and break down the stigma of mental health. • 95% of employees are aware of the ACC Employee Assistance Provider Vivup – and how to access it. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 50% of employees are aware of the YourCare platform available as part of Vivup. • 95% of employees are aware of Mental Health First Aiders • 75% of employees are aware of Reasonable Adjustment Passports • 75% of employees are aware of Able Futures to help employees living with mental health to stay in work. • 75% of employees are aware of Wellness Action Plans. • Support staff through cost of living crisis by developing closer working partnership with Financial Inclusion team to promote information and advice to the organisation internally. • Increase awareness of Employee Benefits opportunities and promote potential savings, focus on financial wellbeing to support people through the cost of living crisis. • Deliver a communications campaign to raise awareness of proposed Zero Tolerance campaign – to support frontline colleagues facing violence and aggression in the workplace, ensure they are aware of policies and procedures to support them and report incidents. • Deliver communication campaign that raises awareness of Mental Health & Wellbeing Hub and resources, aligns with national wellbeing campaigns, and normalises talking about mental health at work. • Increase focus on physical health and wellbeing to address post-pandemic home-working culture. • Information to signpost employees to various bereavement support services, policies and external organisations to better support the workforce in times of grief.
3: Training for employees so that they have the skills to manage their own wellbeing and support their colleagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training for frontline employees in preventing violence and aggression – including how to de-escalate possible disputes, manage their emotions and keep themselves and others safe. • Provide training for employees on how to manage their own resilience and wellbeing. • Provide employees with the skills to support their peers colleagues with their mental health, tackle the stigma of mental health, and build confidence to have conversations around suicide. • Provide employees with skills to support women at work going through the menopause. • Provide employees with the skills to support their colleagues experiencing domestic abuse.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure employees are ‘Trauma Informed’ so that they know how to support their colleagues and customers who have experienced trauma.
<p>4: Employee engagement, empowerment and co-creation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with frontline employees to co-create the new Zero Tolerance policy and guidance – ensuring steps are in place to protect their wellbeing during and after violent or aggressive incidents. • Undertake employee engagement with Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs) and other Equality Working Groups to understand needs of protected groups and improve accessibility and shape future wellbeing initiatives. • Increase number of Mental Health First Aiders to reach target of 2.5% coverage across organisation. • Deliver additional Continuous Professional Development and support for Mental Health First Aiders • Introduce a more formal method of supervision by way of 1-2-1 meetings with MHFAs across the organisation. • Upskill, develop and motivate current support MHFA through peer sessions and one-to one for debriefing and sharing best practice. • Employee engagement and inclusive groups to drive and shape initiatives - focus groups and networks to gather additional anecdotal feedback and needs and priorities.
<p>5: Managers support their teams confidently and appropriately</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procure and/or deliver training for managers in frontline areas to upskill them in debriefing individuals and teams after incidents of violence, aggression or trauma. • 100% of managers are aware of Wellness Action Plans as part of their absence management practice. • 100% of managers are aware of Reasonable Adjustment Passports • 100% of managers are aware of Stress Risk Assessments for individuals and teams. • 100% of managers have completed the mandatory Mental Health eLearning. • 100% of managers have a wellbeing conversation with their employees every year. • 100% of Service Managers have undertaken Mental Health and Wellbeing Awareness for managers and Supervisors. • Build an Employee Wellbeing section on templates for 1-2-1s as part of Continuous Review & Development conversations. • Upskill managers to have the confidence to support and have conversations with staff about their mental health and wellbeing. • Coach and support managers directly.
<p>6: Data reporting to understand underlying causes, adversities and inequalities and target</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat Wellbeing Pulse Check in Autumn 2024 to gather feedback on success of above initiatives. • Target initiatives based on the data gathered from various systems, surveys, Core HR, focus groups and anecdotal feedback gathered. • Continuous review of Mental Health First Aiders network to ensure wide coverage and target areas for increased representation.

interventions proactively to areas of highest need.

- MHFA Recording Tool – encourage recording of interactions to show the demand on the network and help build data trends on where staff are contacting from and the underlying reasons.
- Evaluate the impact of Mental Health & Wellbeing now being part of the employee capability framework and appraisal – evolve to respond to feedback.
- Attend Health and Safety Committee Groups and SMTs to discuss data and identify potential supports to be implements in targeted areas.
- Analyse and interrogate Power BI Absence data and use this information to target areas.
- Analyse data received from Employee Assistance Programme and use this to target areas of need.
- Analyse activity undertaken to support mental and physical health and wellbeing, and available data, to contribute towards Equality Outcomes Mainstreaming Report 2024.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Mental health and wellbeing is increasingly becoming 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.

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. 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 risks identified			
Compliance	Compliance with legal requirements ensures the health and safety of employees	Actions outlined in the appendix provide additional support for employees.	M	Yes

Operational	No risks identified			
Financial	If no action is taken to support individuals and address trends, then the organisation will incur both direct and indirect costs.	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.	M	Yes
Reputational	Without ensuring suitable employee support there is a risk of the organisation not becoming an employer of choice and having recruitment and retention issues.	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	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	No risks identified			

8. 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.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed
Data Protection Impact Assessment	not required
Other	N/A

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Stress Statistics UK | 2023 Data | Champion Health
- 10.2 [Mental Health Foundation Survey and Research](#)
- 10.3 [Scottish Government Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan.](#)
- 10.4 [Simply Health | CIPD - Health and Wellbeing at Work Report 2023](#)
- 10.5 [Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016 - 2026](#)
- 10.6 [Local government in Scotland: Overview 2023 \(audit.scot\)](#)

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix 1: Mental Health Action Plan Progress Report: January 2023 – December 2023

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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Appendix 1

Mental Health Action Plan Progress Report: January 2023 – December 2023

Workstream 1: Self-help tools and resources that empower employees to support their own health and wellbeing.

Improvement actions	Progress update - January 2023 – December 2023	Status
1. Establish and build new partnership with Able Futures to help employees living with mental health to stay in work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership established 2022 and continued to promote through 2023 - a great build on to the employee assistance service and good feedback received 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
2. Establish Wellness Action Plans for employees to share with managers before there's a crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wellness action plans have been launched and an ACC template shared with managers looking to additionally support staff 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
3. Embed Vivup as our new Employee Assistance Provider (EAP). Launch YourCare portal – a proactive wellbeing hub tailored to individual's experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vivup – new EAP – launched October 2022. Focus in 2023 was on a promotional campaign to raise awareness of new provider and the 24/7 service they provide to employees, including immediate crisis support. Intranet pages continually updated with regular reminders via blogs and Viva Engage posts. Poster campaign rolled out across entire council estate – including schools, depots, housing offices. All pigeonholes populated! Flyers and business cards promoting Vivup distributed to all desks within Marischal College. In-person roadshows delivered at Altens, at Cluster conferences. Virtual team meetings attended to promote services. Review progress and report uptake to Staff Governance Committee. YourCare portal launched – additional promotion required to embed in 2024. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
4. Establish partnership with Sport Aberdeen and Aberdeen Sports Village to support physical wellbeing initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procured 12 week physical wellbeing programme offered free to all employees across the organisation. Raised awareness through digital comms campaign and roadshows. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing

Improvement actions	Progress update - January 2023 – December 2023	Status
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SportAberdeen delivered physical wellbeing health checks for frontline operational colleagues in portcabins at Altens depot. Very well received and appreciated by colleagues. 	
5. Absence management letters to be amended so seen as more of a support than a punitive exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters amended as part of Absence Improvement Project. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered
6. Reasonable adjustment passports rolled out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched and communicated to support employees with a variety of issues. Additional communication needed. 	Continue into 2024.
7. Stress Risk Assessments – communicate and raise the awareness of the importance of these.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raised awareness and promoted Stress Risk Assessments via one-to-one coaching conversations with managers. Team Stress Risk Assessments utilised with Housing by Health & Safety team. Additional promotion required. 	Continue into 2024.
8. Embed Mental Health & Wellbeing within the employee capability framework and appraisal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborated with People Development to design suitable indicators for all Job Families. These are now embedded into all employee annual appraisals. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered

Workstream 2: Communications campaigns (inc. events) to raise awareness of these tools and a platform that is easily accessible.

Improvement actions	Progress update January 2023 – December 2023	Status
1 Create a single accessible online Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub – as a one-stop-shop for all resources.	Originally delivered 2019, significantly enhanced and promoted to support people during the pandemic in 2020, continuous improvement delivered to keep pace with evolutions in intranet.	Delivered and continuously improved
2 Raise awareness of Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub through a regular programme of blogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular communication campaigns around professional services available for support – see key topics for 2023 in table below. Viva Engage (previously Yammer) used to create Mental Health & Wellbeing community specifically to promote campaigns. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing

Improvement actions	Progress update January 2023 – December 2023	Status
3 Target Frontline Operational Areas for communication and engagement to break down the stigma of mental health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several roadshows delivered across frontline services including attending staff events and specifically organised wellbeing events. • Communications significantly increased this year using a variety of methods including poster and leaflet and social media campaigns to spread the word. • Significantly increased communication to frontline employees using their own Microsoft Teams sites and Viva Engage communities. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
4 Focus on financial wellbeing to support people through the cost of living crisis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information shared around Citizens Advice Bureau Debt Support team on Mental Health & Wellbeing Hub and via Viva Engage. • Financial Wellbeing intranet pages updated. • Additional work required in 2024 to support employees through continued cost of living crisis. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
5 Raise awareness of Mental Health First Aiders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical poster campaigns delivered to raise the profile of the MHFA and other support area and initiatives in outlying sites with details on how to get involved or contact. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
6 Align with national wellbeing campaigns (see list of campaigns below)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of messages have gone out this year using other platforms including social media for maximum reach. Mental Health and Wellbeing Adviser present at various public events. Year of Disabled Worker, Children's Services Development Day to increase awareness of support and initiatives available to staff 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
7 Increase focus on physical health and wellbeing to address post-pandemic home-working culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivered through partnership with SportAberdeen and physical wellbeing checks delivered at Altens. Potential for scaling out to other venues in 2024. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
8 Information to signpost employees to various bereavement support services, policies and external organisations to better support the workforce in times of grief.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In response to the loss of colleagues via tragic means in 2022-23, we increased focus on support available for employees affected by trauma and bereavement. Created specific, easy to find pages on the intranet relating to bereavement along with support services available, internal and external, with additional information signposting employees to external professional organisations. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing

Wellbeing Awareness Campaigns and Initiatives delivered – January 2023 – December 2023

Mental Health, Wellbeing and Inclusion Initiatives promoted across the organisation

Aberdeen Sports Village – Discount Offers and FREE taster sessions to activities and facility	Physical Activities Awareness and Opportunities
Alcohol Awareness Campaign – Sobering Thought and Alcohol Tips and support	Preventing Suicide
Breathing Space, knowledge and understanding awareness sessions	Sport Aberdeen Drop Ins and Access to Discount
Dementia Awareness	Stress Awareness Month – Risk Assessments, policies, materials, support
Domestic Abuse Training and Comms campaign	Suicide Prevention Campaigns, support, training and advice
Employee Assistance Programme – awareness campaign and poster comms plan	Therapet Service
Fibromyalgia Week Awareness Campaign	Time to Talk Day – Awareness Campaign and signposting to local support
Financial Wellbeing / Employee Benefits and Cost of Living Support	Tinnitus and Hearing Loss Awareness – creation of new Viva Engage Peer Support Group
Home Energy Advice and Awareness	World Health Day Campaign
Mental Health Awareness Week – Movement: Moving more	World Mental Health Day Awareness
Menopause Awareness Campaign	World Sleep Day – access to online training and support
Multiple Sclerosis Week	

Workstream 3: Training for employees so that they have the skills to manage their own wellbeing and support their colleagues.

Improvement actions	Progress update	
1. Provide training for employees on how to manage their own resilience and wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> eLearning modules available on Building Resilience and Psychological First Aid: Taking Care of Yourself. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
2. Provide employees with the skills to support their peers colleagues with their mental health, tackle the stigma of mental health, and build confidence to have conversations around suicide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> eLearning module made available to provide employees with awareness and skills to tackle stigma in work - Ask Tell, Save a Life short online learning. Mentally Healthy Workplaces eLearning available to all. This training is for anyone who wants to learn more about mental health in the workplace. Everyone has a role to play in creating a mentally healthy workplace and it can have benefits for you and your colleagues 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing

<p>3. Provide employees with skills to support women at work going through the menopause.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Menopause Awareness training available through ACC Learn and aimed at all employees to support women in the workplace 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
<p>4. Provide employees with the skills to support their colleagues experiencing domestic abuse.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intranet landing page created which includes information about how to support a colleague and links to the Aberdeen Protects website. Training also available for staff to undertake to find out more about coercive and controlling behaviours 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
<p>5. Ensure employees are 'Trauma Informed' so that they know how to support their colleagues and customers who have experienced trauma.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added to Capability Framework for relevant job families. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frontline Customer Services: I understand the impact that trauma can have on an individual and the positive difference I can make to the customer's experience. Social & Community Services: I know how to spot the signs and respond to people who are affected by trauma. People Manager: I know how to spot the signs and respond to people who are affected by trauma. Trauma Informed eLearning – developed by NHS Grampian - available for all staff 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing

Workstream 4: Employee engagement, empowerment and co-creation

Improvement actions	Progress update	Status
<p>1. Expand Mental health first aider network to increase coverage across the organisation to 2.5% and make finding support accessible to all</p>	<p>Continued to grow the Mental Health First Aid network for the organisation with a further 52 employees trained in 2023. Feedback suggests this is a vital frontline service used by many staff</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
<p>2. Upskill, develop and motivate current support MHFA through peer sessions and one-to one for debriefing and sharing best practice.</p>	<p>Sessions delivered to Mental Health First Aiders to upskill and increase knowledge around hot topics like Domestic Abuse, Wellness Action Plans, Bereavement Support</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
<p>3. Continuous review of MHFA list to ensure wide coverage</p>	<p>Increased reach of Mental Health First Aiders with many now trained throughout school settings with a total of 129 volunteers. This equates to 1.6% of employees trained across the whole organisation.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing

4. Target schools for recruitment and training of MHFAs	Training to be available to both primary and secondary schools	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
5. Employee engagement and inclusive groups to drive and shape initiatives - focus groups and networks to gather additional anecdotal feedback and needs and priorities.	Viva Engage used to create communities for peer support and discussion around various mental health and wellbeing topic. This enables employees to find and share resources for self-help	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing

Workstream 5: Managers support their teams confidently and appropriately

Improvement actions	Progress update	Status
1. Provide clarity for managers on their role in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People Manager Capability Framework now finalised – with ‘mental health’ indicators added to the core capability of ‘Care’: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) I self-reflect and take care of own wellbeing and others by actively promoting health and wellbeing initiatives. 2) I display empathy and genuine concern by taking time to find out how challenges and pressures feel from the perspective of others. 3) I understand my duty of care for my employees – to support them to stay healthy and well at work, both mentally and physically. • Mental Health & Wellbeing Adviser worked closely with People Development team to develop these indicators. • Capability Framework now embedded within appraisal. • Wellbeing check-in question added to End of Year appraisal. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered
2. Upskill managers so that they have greater awareness of Mental Health and how to support their employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health and Wellbeing Awareness for managers and Supervisors sessions procured through NESCol - 48 managers trained in Jan -Dec 2023 to support managers to have sensitive conversations positively. • Mental Health and Wellbeing resources readily available and made externally accessible for managers to share easily with staff. • eLearning is mandatory for managers: Mentally Healthy Workplaces. This training is for anyone who wants to learn more about mental health in the 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing

	workplace. Everyone has a role to play in creating a mentally healthy workplace and it can have benefits for you and your colleagues	
3. Ensure that managers are 'trauma informed' and understand how trauma can impact on mental health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The responsibility for managers to be 'trauma informed' is clarified through their People Manager Capability Framework: People Manager: I know how to spot the signs and respond to people who are affected by trauma. Trauma Informed training available for all employees through ACC Learn. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
4. Deliver new Quality of Working Lives Stress Risk Assessment training to managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborated with the Health and Safety Team and Employee Relations and Wellbeing to develop training available for individual managers and teams support to complete QWL Risk Assessment. This is now provided on a one-to-one basis by H&S Advisers to manager as required. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
5. Coach and support managers directly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mental Health and Wellbeing Adviser provides regular contact and support to managers across the organisation to provide 1-2-1 support and advice where needed. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
6. Ensure managers are having wellbeing conversations with employees at least once per year through CR&D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wellbeing check-in question added to End of Year appraisal in CoreHR – to be piloted during 2024. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered

Workstream 6: Data reporting to understand underlying causes, adversities and inequalities and target interventions proactively to areas of highest need.

Improvement actions	Progress update	
1. Continue work towards improving data recording reasons for absences and reporting on this	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work continuing to analyse the data and target initiatives according to where the data leads 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
2. Attend Health and Safety Committee Groups and SMTs to discuss data and identify potential supports to be implements in targeted areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular updates send to H&S groups. Current report will be distributed to groups. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
3. MHFA Recording Tool – encourage recording of interactions to show the demand on the network and help build	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to analyse the data gathered from the MHFA Recording Tool to help identify hot spots and trends and to help 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ongoing

data trends on where staff are contacting from	target initiatives and awareness raising campaigns across the organisation.	
4. Introduce Wellbeing Pulse Checks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further Wellbeing Pulse Check Surveys to be send out in 2024 and analyse data gathered to identify trends and target initiatives across the organisation 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Delivered and Ongoing
5. Analyse and interrogate Power BI Absence data and use this information to target areas	Continuing analysis of the data to identify trends and target initiatives across the organisation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
6. Analyse data received from Employee Assistance Programme and use this to target areas of need	Continuing analysis of the data to identify trends and target initiatives across the organisation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ongoing