

EMT – 4 AUGUST 2020

HR COMMITTEE – 17 SEPTEMBER 2020

WELLBEING ACTION PLAN

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to explain to members of the HR Committee the introduction of a Wellbeing Action Plan.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 The mental health of our employees is very important, and the pressure on our mental health has changed very much as a result of Covid-19 and having to work remotely.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 As a HR response to Covid-19 we have provided updated guidance on employment related issues from an employee and manager's perspective.

3.2 During Mental Health Awareness Week (18-24 May 2020) each day we offered guidance and support on various issues during lockdown eg, health and fitness, juggling work and home-schooling.

3.3. We offered 'managing mental health for managers' sessions, and 'managing working from home' which were 2-hour virtual sessions for employees.

3.4 It is also planned that the team will run twice yearly 'Managing Homeworking' brief bites sessions for managers together with a "Managing Mental Health for Managers", brief bite. These will be run via Skype.

4.0 THE WELLBEING ACTION PLAN

4.1 As a tool to encourage discussion between an employee and their manager the HSE Stress Questionnaire has been used by our managers to gain a perspective on how an employee is feeling by answering a series of questions. The questionnaire is attached as appendix 1.

4.2 In addition to the HSE questionnaire, and during lockdown we have adopted the use of the Wellbeing Action Plan (WAP) (attached as appendix 2). This has been developed with the expertise from the Mind mental health charity and will be promoting the use of this with managers and including it in the brief bite on Managing Mental Health for Managers.

4.3 The Action Plan is a personalised, practical tool that can be used whether an employee has a mental health problem or not. It will help to identify what things keep us well at work, what causes us to become unwell and the support we would like to receive from our manager to boost our wellbeing or aid recovery.

- 4.5 The WAP is not automatically initiated as part of a particular employment process, but can be used to assist in dealing with performance issues, sickness issues and general management of a team. For example, at an annual appraisal if issues are raised concerning mental health then the employee and manager could meet again to discuss, and use the WAP as a guide.
- 4.6 The existence of the action plan serves as a focus point to start a conversation and can be used as a working document and revisited on a regular basis. It will be for the manager and the employee to agree who this information is shared with remembering that the purpose is to support an employee.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 In addition to the training and information we have recently provided to managers and staff during the pandemic, it is important to highlight the umbrella of measures we have in place to support stress and mental health within the workplace. To clarify, these are:
- Employee Support Line, offering online, telephone and face to face support
 - Mental Health First Aiders
 - Occupational Health Team
 - Dedicated brief bites on homeworking and managing mental health
 - HSE Stress Questionnaire
 - Wellbeing Action Plan
 - Dedicated wellbeing webpages on Forest Net

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None.

7.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None.

8.0 CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None

9.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There is a range of tools available to support stress and mental health within the workplace, this will enable all our staff to access support.

10.0 EMT COMMENTS

- 10.1 EMT sought clarification on when this action plan would be used. This has now been addressed in the report.

11.0 EMPLOYEE SIDE COMMENTS

11.1 Unite the union commented and wanted to highlight that the Wellbeing Action Plan can also be used to manage wellbeing of those employees working out in the field and to ensure that managers of such staff are made aware of its existence.

12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 That EMT and the HR Committee notes the contents of the report.

For further information contact:

Name: Karen Warner

Title: HR Advisor

E-mail: karen.warner@nfdc.gov.uk

Tel: 023 8028 5671