Staff Mental Health Policy

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Date agreed in Personnel Committee	Date discussed in Organisation meeting	Date in Gilberts Gossip	Date circulated to SCC Distribution list

<u>Distribution</u>
Internal: All SCC Staff
External (if requested): Website/Councillors/Partners

Communication:

1. Organisation meeting
2. Highlight in Gilberts Gossip
3. Request Managers raise in Team Meetings
4. Email to SCC Distribution advising of policy reference number

Staff Mental Health Policy

1. **Aim**
   1.1. Mental health problems are believed to be experienced by one in six adults, with mental health concerns being the second most prevalent reason for employee absence. This policy uses the term 'mental health problem' to include signs of stress and anxiety, and mental health conditions that have been diagnosed by a medical professional, such as depression or PTSD.

   1.2. The Council understands the role it has in ensuring that health and safety legislation is adhered to. The Council undertakes to create a safe workplace where risks to mental health and wellbeing are limited as far as possible. Additionally, the Council understands the protection employees with a disability have against discrimination under the Equality Act 2010, including the obligation for employers to introduce reasonable adjustments for disabled employees.

   1.3. This policy is not intended to be contractual but is intended to provide guidance on the Council's approach to Mental Health

2. **Indicators of mental health problems:**
   2.1. To prevent mental health problems escalating, early intervention is important. In many cases, obvious indicators that an employee is suffering from a mental health problem may not be present, however, early signs can include:
   2.1.1. behavioural, mood or temperament changes, especially when communicating with others
   2.1.2. decrease in productivity and focus
   2.1.3. inability to make decisions and problem solving
   2.1.4. showing signs of tiredness or being withdrawn and unable to take part in hobbies they usually participate in
   2.1.5. reducing intake of food or increasing intake of alcohol, cigarettes etc.

3. **Line Managers Responsibilities**
   3.1. When dealing with an employee with mental health concerns, line managers should be open, welcoming and friendly. They should invite the employee to regular private meetings and ask them to talk openly about their mental health problems, if they wish to share this information.
   3.2. The line manager should not make presumptions about how the mental health problem is impacting on the employee personally and professionally.
   3.3. Initial action should be to check how the employee is getting on at work, in the same manner as if the employee was suffering from a known physical health problem.

4. Employees Responsibilities

4.1. Any support required by the employee is likely to be known by the employee themselves.

4.2. The Council actively encourages employees to be open and honest about their mental health and to inform their line manager of any issues at an early opportunity to allow these to be addressed.

4.3. There is also an expectation on all Council employees to conduct themselves in a helpful and open-minded manner towards colleagues who have mental health problems.

5. Action planning

5.1. Mind (a mental health charity) recommends that, where a line manager identifies a mental health issue, they should work alongside the employee to create a personal wellness action plan that provides for proactive management of their mental health.

5.2. This will support ongoing open communication between line managers and employees and will result in mutually agreed steps being set in place that can be monitored on an ongoing basis.

5.3. A wellness action plan should cover:

    5.3.1. actions and measures that can support the employee's mental health

    5.3.2. symptoms and triggers for poor mental health

    5.3.3. the impact mental health problems have, or could have, on the employee's performances

    5.3.4. any workplace supported required from their line manager or colleagues

    5.3.5. any positive actions the employee can take when suffering from poor mental health

    5.3.6. a review process to ensure the workplace support is having the required effect.

5.4. To ensure the plan meets the employee's requirements, it should be drafted by the employee themselves, with medical support as necessary, and then set in place with their line manager.

5.5. Any information in the plan, and the plan itself, should be kept confidential and reviewed on an ongoing basis by both the employee and their line manager. The plan will be uploaded to PeopleHR for reference which is accessible by the City Clerk, HR Manager, Line Manager and Employee

6. Workplace Adjustments

6.1. A disability is defined as "a mental or physical impairment that has a substantial long-term adverse effect on an individual's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities".

6.2. The Council is legally obliged to make reasonable adjustments to an employee's role or workplace if they have a disability that places them at a disadvantage when performing their role.

6.3. The Council will endeavour to consider all reasonable workplace adjustments for any employee who is suffering from a mental health issue.

6.4. Examples of adjustments include:

6.4.1. adjusting hours of work or the location of work, including within the building itself

6.4.2. adjusting or reallocating duties of the job role

6.4.3. making amendments to the workplace environment, for example adjusting lighting in the employee's office

6.4.4. amending absence triggers before disciplinary action is triggered.

6.5. Once the adjustments are agreed, they will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure they are having the required effect.

7. Managing return to work

7.1. Where the employee is absent by reason of their mental health concerns, their line manager will communicate with the employee on a regular basis during their absence.

7.2. The employee returning to work may help with their recovery, so early intervention and support from the Council is important.

7.3. The Council's sickness absence policy will apply to the employee's absence as normal, subject to any reasonable adjustments in place for the employee.

8. Confidentiality

8.1. Information concerning an employee's mental health is classed as a special category of personal data. This information will only be disclosed to others in line with the Council's policies on data protection which are available on EDMS.

8.2. To ensure that plans are effectively supported, this information will be stored on PeopleHR, this information can be accessed by City Clerk, HR Manager, Line Manager and Employee.