

KEY EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

EMPLOYEE INFORMATION BRIEFING

ISSUE 5: SEPTEMBER 2016



NEW POLICY



POLICY REVIEW



REGULAR REMINDER

EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

POLICY OVERVIEW

A key aim of the council's Employee Mental Well-being Policy is to promote a working environment in which employees can maximise their work performance without being exposed to excessive or sustained work pressure that can lead to stress and a variety of physical and mental health problems.

This policy is supported by Employee Mental Well-Being Guidance which focusses on preventing and managing stress in the workplace. The guidance also provides managers with information on how to support employees who are experiencing the effects of stress and mental well-being issues.

Access to a range of support mechanisms including early intervention, confidential counselling, physiotherapy and occupational health advice is also available through the provisions of the council's Policy and Procedure on Managing Sickness Absence.

KEY INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYEES

- All employees are obliged to look after their own health and safety in the workplace along with that of others. This means;
 - Being alert to symptoms of stress in themselves and others;
 - Supporting any colleague experiencing poor mental health by encouraging them to speak to their line manager;
 - Notifying your own line manager as early as possible if you recognise the symptoms of stress in yourself and discussing how this can be managed at work;
 - Seeking appropriate support at the earliest opportunity from your GP or other appropriate agencies if you experience health problems;
 - Recognising the importance of achieving a work-life balance;
 - Managing your workload in conjunction with your line manager to ensure that the demands placed upon you are appropriate and achievable;
- While the council cannot prevent or control the causes of stress out-with the workplace, early identification of the symptoms will allow employees to be supported in the workplace and assist in managing the circumstances which are causing them stress.
- Regular 'one to one' communication between you and your manager provides the opportunity for constructive discussion around manageable workloads as well as individual expectations and development needs.

- If you experience symptoms of poor mental well-being you are encouraged to alert your manager at the earliest opportunity so that the most appropriate means of help can be identified and offered to you. If you are uncomfortable approaching your manager or having done so, you feel that your concerns have not been adequately addressed you should seek advice from Human Resources. Additionally you may wish to seek advice from a Trade Union representative, and if appropriate, seek medical advice from your GP.
- Inadequate training, organisational change and breakdown in working relationships can all be triggers for poor mental well-being. The council has specific policies and processes in place to help address those issues namely;
 - Appraisal Development Review (ADR)
 - Workforce Management Policy and Procedure (Consultation and Communication)
 - Code of Practice – Promoting Appropriate Working Relationships and Behaviour

Further information on these processes is available at:

<http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/2200/Policies-Procedures-and-Guidance>

- The council's Learning and Development Team provides training that helps participants to understand the causes of poor mental wellbeing and the types of tools and coping strategies for dealing with the effects of stress – related conditions. Information on training interventions available can be found at <http://webwest1.app.westlothian.gov.uk/learningzone>
- The council offers free access to a qualified counsellor. This confidential service is available to all employees and includes support for non-work related problems. A self-referral form for the counselling service can be accessed at: <http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/2195/HR-Forms>
- Where appropriate, employees may be referred for Stress Control Classes provided by Lothian NHS. Further information can be found at: <http://www.nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk/Services/A-Z/StressControl>
- Further specialist advice from dedicated professionals within the council can be accessed as follows:
 - Human Resources 01506 282222
 - Health & Safety 01506 281414
 - Drug and Alcohol Service 01506 430225
 - Domestic and Sexual Assault Team 01506 281055
 - Advice Shop 01506 283000 (Welfare Rights, Debt, Benefits, Energy Advice)
 - Cancer Support MacmillanWestLothian@westlothian.gov.uk 01506 283053

ROLL OUT ARRANGEMENTS

- For audit purposes, Services should ensure that records are kept of the date that employee briefings were conducted and the employees who attended.
- Policies on Employee Mental Well-Being and Managing Sickness Absence are available on Mytoolkit and accessible from work and home at: <http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/2200/Policies-Procedures-and-Guidance>