



Subject:	Motion - Support for Mental Health
Date:	23rd October, 2020
Reporting Officer:	Christine Sheridan, Head of Human Resources
Contact Officer:	Catherine Christy, Human Resources Manager

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update members on existing and future work plans to challenge the taboo around mental health and suicide, in support of the issues highlighted in the Motion proposed by Councillor M. Kelly and seconded by Councillor Long at the Council meeting on 1 July 2020.
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The committee is requested to note the content of the report
3.0	Main Report
	Notice of Motion
3.1	In recognition of the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on the current mental health crisis, Councillor Kelly proposed a Notice of Motion to ensure continuing Council support to challenge the taboos of mental health and suicide and ensure people are aware of the signs

and understand the questions to ask someone we are worried about and what help they can get. At its meeting in August, the committee agreed that a report be prepared detailing how a programme of suicide awareness training for staff and elected members would be facilitated, resourced and managed.

Staff training and mental health champions

3.2 The Council has had in place a positive health and wellbeing training programme (including suicide awareness) in place for staff since 2012. It was developed in response to an initiative launched by the then Lord Mayor, to raise awareness of suicide in the city. Two specific training programmes were rolled out; Positive Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing and Stress Awareness Training for Managers, a programme specifically aimed at managers on how to recognise and manage stress related issues. Since 2012, 645 staff have received training on positive mental health and emotional wellbeing and 434 managers have been trained on stress awareness. The current Covid restrictions have prevented delivery of this programme since March however, Corporate HR, as part of its recovery process, is currently assessing how to deliver both training programmes remotely.

3.3 In addition in 2017, as part of the our employee Health and Wellbeing Strategy, we commissioned Action Mental Health to deliver Mental Health First Aid training for staff. The Mental Health First Aid training mirrors the aims and principles of the certified SafeTALK training and has similar outcomes in that it equips individuals to recognise the early warning signs of mental health problems; provide initial help and advice and guide a person towards appropriate sources of professional help.

3.4 To date a total of 30 staff have been trained and are recognised mental health first aiders and four additional programmes are planned to be delivered remotely between November and March 2021. Further classroom based programmes to facilitate those staff who do not have access to a PC will be organised as soon as current restrictions allow. It is proposed, with their permission, that the names of those staff who have attended the Mental Health First Aider training programme will be displayed on staff noticeboards and on Interlink for staff to contact as required.

3.5 The opportunity to undertake the online training and become recognised Mental Health First Aiders will be offered to elected members.

3.6 The general health and wellbeing programme is further supported by a dedicated employee counselling service, accessible to all employees, through the council's current employee

	<p>counselling contract with Apheido Associates. Line managers can make referrals to this service or employees can also self-refer on a confidential basis.</p> <p>The Mersey Care Trust Foundation video.</p> <p>3.7 This short, free online course in Suicide Awareness which is currently used widely by NI Health and Social Care Trusts, will be made available to staff and elected members and staff will be encouraged to take time to participate in the training. Managers will be asked to facilitate time for staff to do so.</p> <p>Additional support</p> <p>3.8 Additional support and guidance is available on the staff intranet site with a section on health and wellbeing which is updated on a continuing basis with helpful information and signposting to further mental health information and resources.</p> <p>3.9 The Local Government Staff Commission's, Health and Wellbeing Group, has recently launched a Mental Health Strategy for local government to assist councils to plan to address the mental health crisis through the provision of support for their staff. It will be used in conjunction with our own staff Health and Wellbeing Strategy to influence future work planning in this area.</p> <p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>3.10 The Mental Health First Aid training will be funded by the Local Government Training Group as part of its annual funding provision. Any other costs associated with delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy activity will be covered by the existing corporate Organisational Development budget.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>3.11 The recommendations in the report will assist the council to deliver on its section 75 duties and comply with the requirements set out in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. In addition it will help further the aims and priorities of the Council's Disability Action Plan and Equality Scheme.</p>
4.0	Documents Attached
	None associated with this report.