

Workforce Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2020



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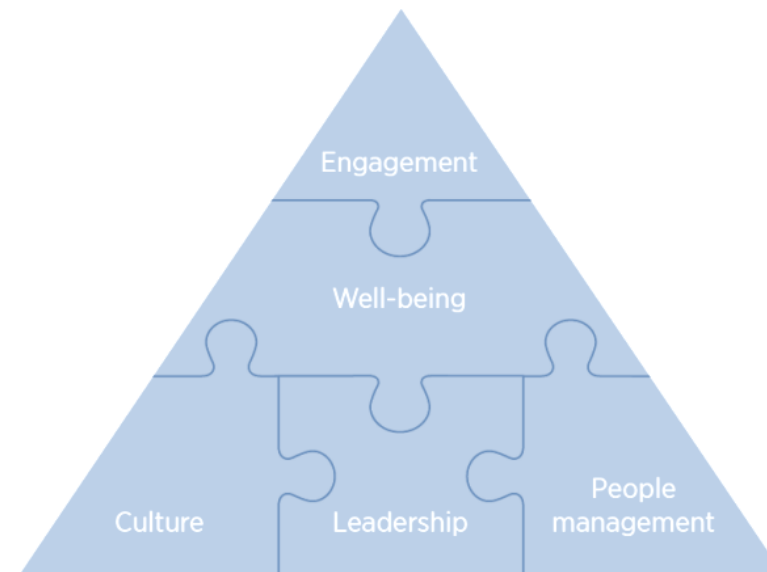
Introduction

We know that our employees are our most important resource. We also know that we are facing increasingly challenging times, where budgets are being reduced but the demand for services is increasing. To help us succeed in this environment and deliver the required changes, we therefore need to support our employees to be as happy, healthy, resilient and motivated as possible.

Workforce wellbeing is a most definitely a 'must have' and not a 'nice to do'!

However, workforce wellbeing cannot be achieved by one-off initiatives. Instead, we recognise that a proactive workforce wellbeing strategy is essential for safeguarding the health of our employees and the long term sustainability of the Council. It needs to be based upon good people management, leadership and culture, and be central to service delivery (CIPD, 2016).

This Strategy sets out our commitment to enhancing the wellbeing of our workforce, and explains what actions we intend to take to achieve this.



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Context

What is workforce wellbeing?

Workforce wellbeing is not only about supporting employees to be fit, healthy, and motivated ... it is also recognising that doing so is key to the success of any organisation. Failure to protect the physical and emotional health of employees at work may mean:

- placing an organisation at risk
- affecting employees' ability to do their job
- affecting an organisation's productivity and effectiveness

Who is this strategy for?

This Strategy applies to all employees and elected members of Bury Council.

What are the benefits of workforce wellbeing?

Benefits for the Council: Fitter, happier employees are generally found to be more resilient and able to deal with change. Furthermore, workforce wellbeing helps to support sustainable organisational performance by:

- Increasing employee engagement
- Reducing absenteeism
- Reducing staff turnover
- Reducing presenteeism
- Improving efficiency and productivity
- Improving morale

Benefits for our employees: Improved workforce wellbeing enables employees to:

- Be better able to manage the conflicting demands of home and work life,
- feel less stressed,
- have greater job satisfaction,
- have higher self-esteem and a sense of wellbeing,



- have improved morale, and
- ultimately, to live longer.

Benefits for the Borough: Almost three quarters of our staff are also residents of Bury. By improving the health of our staff we will enable them to positively influence family members and friends, and also promote the health and wellbeing of our customers. This will make a significant contribution to the Council's overall Health and Wellbeing Strategy and our ambition to be the healthiest Borough in the North West.

Where are we now?

The national picture

- In 2015, the overall average level of employee absence is 6.9 days although the figure for local government employees is 8.0 days (CIPD, 2015).
- In total, it is estimated that about 27 million working days are lost each year as a result of work related illness (including stress) costing society an estimated £13 billion.
- Presenteeism is regarded as an increasing problem, although it is difficult to quantify what this is costing organisations.
- Most research agrees that there is a £3-6 return for every £1 spent on an effective workplace wellbeing programme.

Wellbeing at Bury Council

- In July 2014, we know that sickness absence had remained steady for over 18 months at just under 10 days per employee on average, with an annual cost of nearly £6 million. This is above the national local government average.
- In the 2015 staff survey, 64% of employees were satisfied with Bury Council as an employer, and 73% felt able to strike the right balance between home and work life. However, only 50% felt able to speak up and challenge their managers and 10% felt that they had been bullied in the last 18 months in the workplace. Additionally, 29% regarded themselves as physically inactive.



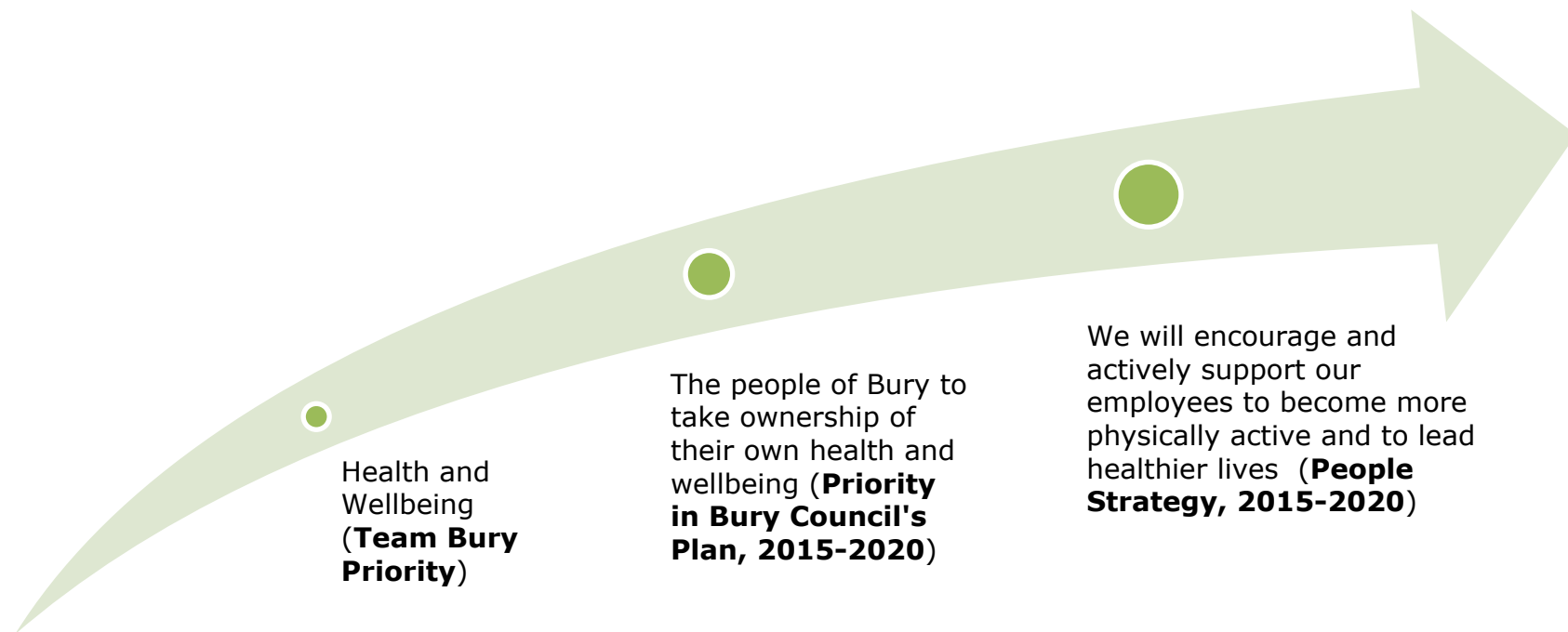
Progress to date

The Council has however already taken large strides forward in respect of health and wellbeing over recent years. This includes:

- Developing a comprehensive work life balance toolkit
- Making effective use of our own internal Occupational Health Service, to provide a wide range of support, guidance and therapies for employees and managers
- Participating in the 2015 Walk to Work week
- Supporting 187 staff in 27 teams to participate in the GCC Get The World Moving Campaign 2015
- Holding a number of employee health check sessions
- Organising various health and wellbeing related awareness raising events
- Arranging numerous wellbeing related staff benefits, including discounted membership of Council leisure facilities
- Promoting I Will If You Will Events to get more ladies to participate in sporting activities
- Opening Council leisure facilities up to staff for free for a week in November 2015
- Providing mindfulness training courses
- Promoting the Dignity at Work Policy, First Contact Officers, the mediation scheme and the #nobystanders campaign
- Carrying out regular staff surveys and acted upon the findings
- Incorporating the Public Health Team and Lifestyle Service into the Council
- Having a robust HR and Health and Safety framework
- Supporting employees via the equality related Employee Groups

Where do we want to be?

At Bury Council, we have already made a number of commitments in respect of health and wellbeing. Some of these relate directly to the workforce, whilst others relate more generally to the residents of Bury – however, as 73% of our employees live within the Borough, this means they also relate to the workforce:



These commitments now need to be turned into a reality, so that the health and wellbeing of employees is:

- Embedded into our culture and practices
- On senior leaders' agendas
- Viewed as a priority by line managers
- Taken into consideration when business decisions are being made

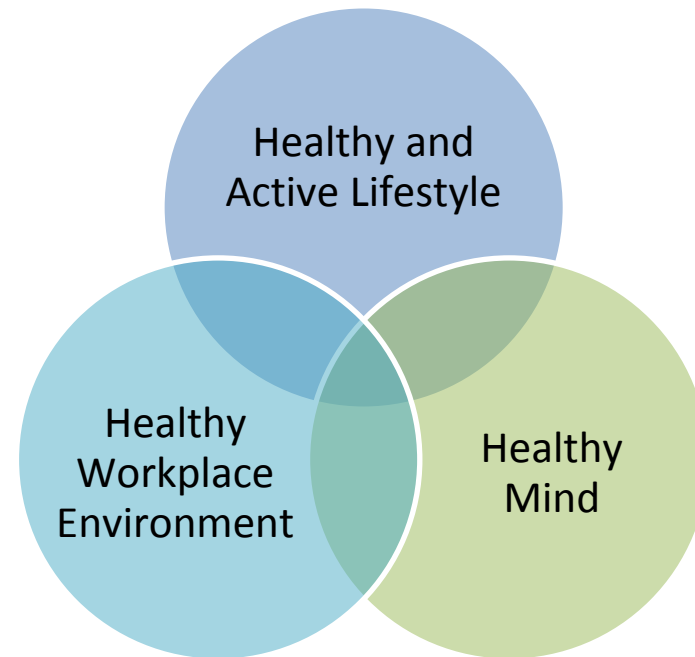
How will we get there?

In order for us to encourage and actively support our employees to become more physically active and to lead (physically and emotionally) healthier lives, we will take action across the following 3 key areas:

- **Healthy and active lifestyle**
- **Healthy workplace environment**
- **Healthy mind**

Responsibility for achieving this will rest primarily with the Organisational Development Team, however it is crucial that:

- **ALL** employees take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing
- Line managers recognise that they have a vital role in supporting and encouraging employees to improve their health and wellbeing by:
 - Recognising any early signs and symptoms of poor health and well-being
 - Modelling behaviours which support good health
 - Being prepared to have difficult conversations
 - Exercising developed people skills
 - Maintaining appropriate confidentiality
 - Being able to signpost employees effectively to obtain effective support
 - Not placing unreasonable demands (physical or emotional) on employees
- Senior leaders prioritise the health and wellbeing of employees, and take action where there are practices or procedures which are not aligned to this.



More specifically, we intend to take the following actions:

Healthy and Active Lifestyle	Provide opportunities for our workforce to be physically active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investigate, then use or promote as appropriate, initiatives such as GCC Get the World Moving, StepJockey and the Switch It campaign
	Provide information relating to physical exercise, health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Utilise the Bury Directory to map and promote all local leisure activities ▪ Promote health and wellbeing through Occupational Health ▪ Investigate offering annual health checks for employees
	Further develop staff benefits, including discounted membership for Council leisure facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enhance the existing staff benefits relating to health and wellbeing, and promote effectively to all employees
Healthy Workplace Environment	Achieve the Workplace Wellbeing Charter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attain the Workplace Wellbeing Charter by the end of 2017
	Create environments which help make healthier choices the easy choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deliver an active travel scheme (TfGM Travel Choices) ▪ Investigate providing cheaper parking outside the town centre but within walking distance of Council buildings ▪ Actively encourage walking meetings ▪ Investigate healthier food provision in the workplace (including healthy lunchtime options and vending machine snacks)
	Promote a culture that values and supports both physical and emotional wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop a consistent communications plan for health and wellbeing initiatives ▪ Amplify the local public health campaigns calendar with staff ▪ Include health and wellbeing in the induction programme ▪ Develop consistent health and wellbeing branding
	Respect matters of work life balance, and enable employees to be proactive in enhancing their own health and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve ICT provision to support agile and flexible working patterns and locations ▪ Review email usage and promote healthier approaches

	wellbeing	to usage
	Develop the important role of line managers in supporting employees' health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Further develop and implement training to assist line managers to support the health and wellbeing of their employees ▪ Ensure managers are aware that health and wellbeing forms a core part of their role by including it in job descriptions, Bury Behaviours and employee reviews ▪ Promote the on-line 'Making Every Contact Count' training for staff
Healthy Mind	Enhance support options for emotional wellbeing and stress management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure awareness of and compliance with the HSE's management standards for work related stress ▪ Deliver appropriate training courses e.g. mindfulness ▪ Develop a set of workplace operating principles e.g. we don't mind if you make mistakes so long as you try your best ▪ Enhance access to relaxation spaces, classes and therapies ▪ Support teams with job and role design, in order to effectively manage the demands placed upon employees
	Promote positive working to avoid conflict, and tackle unfair treatment or unacceptable behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage use of the Dignity at Work Policy and mediation scheme wherever appropriate
	Actively listen to employees, and work to ensure they feel valued and trusted by the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to undertake regular employee surveys and act on any findings
	Encourage social interaction and mutual support between staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the development of staff interest groups e.g. workplace choir, sports teams, bicycle user group, book clubs ▪ Re-establish Health Champions within the workforce

Our measures of success will include:

- Improved responses in the Employee Survey
 - 64% of employees were satisfied overall with Bury Council as an employer (2015 survey)
 - 73% of employees felt able to strike the right balance between home and work life (2015 survey)
 - Only 50% felt able to speak up and challenge their managers (2015 survey)
 - 10% felt that they had been bullied in the last 18 months in the workplace (2015 survey)
 - The percentage of employees that felt able to cope with the demands placed upon them by work were:
 - ACS 73.1%
 - DCN 70.9%
 - CEs 75.4%
 - CS 79.2% (2013 survey)


- Reduced levels of sickness absence
 - The average days lost per full time equivalent employee per year (BV12) were 9.64 as at 31 December 2015

Progress and monitoring

An action plan, with appropriate performance measures, will be developed from the contents of this Strategy. Progress against the action plan will be monitored regularly by the Healthy Workforce Strategy Group, and will be reported upon formally each year.

For further information about the Workforce Wellbeing Strategy, please contact:

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