

KEY EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

EMPLOYEE INFORMATION BRIEFING

ISSUE 17: JUNE 2016



NEW POLICY



POLICY REVIEW



REGULAR REMINDER

EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

POLICY OVERVIEW

The [Employee Mental Wellbeing Policy](#) commits the council to maintaining a healthy and safe working environment for its workforce. Good mental and physical health is fundamental to general wellbeing and by supporting and encouraging employees to achieve healthy working lives, the council believes that high levels of morale and productivity in the workplace can be achieved.

Mental health problems can be triggered by factors within or outwith the workplace. The key aim of the council's policy is to ensure that employees are not exposed to situations in the workplace that could cause stress or result in physical and/or mental health problems. In recognition of this, the council is committed to consulting with employees and keeping them fully informed and supported in their work particularly in times of organisational change.

It is further acknowledged that the wellbeing of employees can also be affected by factors external to the workplace and as such the council tries to ensure that its employment policies and the manner in which they are applied, is supportive of individuals who may need to deal with other pressures and challenges that arise from time to time within their personal lives.

KEY INFORMATION FOR EMPLOYEES

- As an employee you are responsible under the council's Employee Mental Well-Being Policy for:
 - Being alert to symptoms of stress in yourself and others;
 - Supporting any colleague experiencing poor mental health by encouraging them to speak to their line manager;
 - Notifying your line manager as early as possible if you recognise the symptoms of stress in yourself and discussing how this can be managed;
 - Seeking appropriate support at the earliest opportunity from your GP or other appropriate agencies if you have health problems;
 - Recognising the importance of achieving a work-life balance;
 - Managing your workload effectively in conjunction with your line manager to ensure that the demands placed upon you are appropriate and achievable;
 - Being pro-active by taking advantage of aids available to self-regulate work demands such as training in Project Management and Time Management available through the council's Learning and Development Team.
- The council cannot prevent or control the causes of stress out with the workplace. However if the symptoms of stress are identified early, you can be supported in the workplace to help manage the situation. Regular 'one to one' meetings and Appraisal Development Reviews (ADR) meetings provide the opportunity for you to raise issues that may be impacting on

your working life with a view to exploring the support that could be offered to you.

- If you are experiencing symptoms of stress, you are encouraged to advise your manager in order that the most appropriate means of help can be identified and offered. If you are not comfortable approaching your manager or having done so, 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 a medical view from your GP
- Regular and open communication between employee and line manager allows for constructive discussion in relation to manageable workload, demands placed on employees, expectations and development needs.
- The council has an [Employee Wellbeing Framework](#) which requires services to review employee wellbeing issues and risks and produce an annual Action Plan to address areas of concern as well as pro-actively anticipate and mitigate against anything that could have a detrimental impact on employee wellbeing.
- The council's Learning and Development Team provides training aimed at helping participants to understand the causes of stress and the types of tools and coping strategies for dealing with the effects of stress. 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: <https://intranet.westlothian.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=4302&p=0>
- 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

- Services should ensure that records are kept of the date that employee briefings were conducted and the employees who attended. Those records may be subject to internal audit at any given time to ensure that council employment policies are being properly disseminated throughout services.
- Employees should be encouraged to read the Policy on Employee Mental Well-Being along with the supporting Guidance in full as available on Mytoolkit and accessible from work and home at: <http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/2200/Policies-Procedures-and-Guidance>