

Communities Committee

Item No.

Report title:	Work and Health in Norfolk
Date of meeting:	4 July 2018
Responsible Chief Officer:	Tom McCabe - Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services
Strategic impact <i>Caring for our County</i> , the Council's vision for Norfolk in 2021, highlights economic growth, jobs and a healthy, skilled and productive workforce as important factors for the county's future. Norfolk Futures emphasises the need to offer help early to prevent and reduce demand for specialist services. Reflecting these, the Public Health strategy includes health and work as a priority with commitments to support businesses to be healthy workplaces and to improve the health of their workforces, to support Norfolk County Council to become a healthy employer, and to promote strategies and interventions to prevent long-term sickness.	

Executive summary

Good work is good for health – and good health is good for work and the economy. Compared to the national average, Norfolk has bigger gaps in the employment rates between those with a disability or long-term health condition and the population overall.

Public Health commissions a service which helps organisations to become healthy employers and facilitates a network of volunteer Workplace Health Champions. Public Health also organises Work and Health events to engage employers, works with NCC's HR department to help NCC become a healthy employer and has worked with the Economic Development Team to seek funding to support individuals with health conditions to get ready for work. Future plans include supporting public sector organisations to implement the Workplace Wellbeing Charter and extending areas of input on NCC's healthy employer initiatives.

Recommendations:

- 1. To note the Public Health approach to promoting health in the workplace, and the model of the Thriving Workplaces service.**
- 2. Support the strategy to promote the health of NCC employees.**
- 3. Agree that healthy eating, mental health and stopping smoking are the Public Health priorities to support NCC to become a healthy workplace.**

1. Context

1.1. Norfolk County Council Vision and Strategy

Norfolk County Council's vision for Norfolk is of a growing, productive and skilled workforce with access to new, high value jobs. Social mobility will be increased by helping people who are not in work to get the skills required for 21st century employment. People living independent, healthy, happy lives will have good access to opportunities, with the right skills and infrastructure to succeed. A more productive society and a growing economy lead to increased tax receipts to fund crucial public services for the most vulnerable.

Health is key to these aims. Good work is good for health – it can help to keep people both mentally and physical healthy and can help in their recovery from illness. Work can help to provide a sense of identity and social status, and sufficiently paid work can provide the economic means to secure resources necessary for good health such as adequate housing, warmth and diet. Those who are unemployed, conversely, are at higher risk of limiting long-term illness, mental illness, cardiovascular disease and suicide.

Good health is also good for work. Workplaces that help to maintain health and wellbeing, delay the onset of illness and manage conditions effectively enough to allow individuals to reach their full potential are vital to the local economy. On the other hand, poor health can lead to increased unemployment and sick leave, and decreased productivity. While rates of employment in Norfolk are in line with national averages, in November 2016 (latest national figures) there were around 32,000 people on Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and incapacity benefits. The main causes were mental health and musculoskeletal problems. Compared to the national average, there is a bigger gap in the employment rate between those with a long-term condition and the population overall.

1.2. Public Health Strategy

Reflecting the Council's vision and strategy, the Public Health Strategy includes health and work as a priority. Key commitments are to:

1. Support businesses in Norfolk to be healthy workplaces and to improve the health and wellbeing of their workforces
2. Work with colleagues in NCC's Human Resources team to promote the health of NCC employees
3. Promote strategies and interventions to prevent long-term sickness.

2. Proposals

2.1. Supporting businesses in Norfolk

Public Health have commissioned a new service – Thriving Workplaces – to empower businesses and other employers to create healthy workplaces that in turn support the health of their employees. The service uses evidence from staff surveys and the Norfolk Workplace Wellbeing Charter to help businesses to choose actions that will promote staff health. This new approach aims to help employers to help themselves by influencing organisational culture and commitment to employee health. The ambition is to create a sustainable change that will survive staff turnover.

As well as helping employers to develop their action plans, Thriving Workplaces have:

- delivered courses to managers on Mental Health First Aid, raising participants' knowledge and confidence in supporting others with mental health problems
- facilitated the Workplace Health Champions Network, which trains and brings together over 200 employee volunteer health champions from different organisations for joint learning and sharing of ideas. The health champions promote activities in their workplaces such as Active Norfolk's Corporate Games and interventions such as stop smoking services.

Appendix 1 contains a summary of the first year of the Thriving Workplaces programme.

In addition, Public Health organised a work and health conference in February 2018 to launch the Thriving Workplaces service to employers and to raise awareness of health issues in the workplace. Around 90 employers heard from the Local Enterprise Partnership, UEA and Public Health England and attended workshops on key issues such as mental health and musculoskeletal issues. They also had the chance to find out more about local employment schemes such as Norwich4jobs and apprenticeships.

Next steps:

- evaluate the Thriving Workplaces service, which is contracted until March 2020, to understand the impact the service is having
- support public sector organisations (which employ over 28% of Norfolk's workforce) to implement the Workplace Wellbeing Charter in their organisations in areas such as absence management, mental health, smoking and tobacco, physical activity, healthy eating and substance misuse.

2.2. Being a Healthy Employer

Staff absence costs NCC, conservatively, around £2m. NCC has therefore agreed a Healthy County Council plan – led by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team – which aims to improve health and wellbeing and reduce sickness absence. Public Health is supporting this initiative by funding Mental Health First Aid training for 300 managers, backing the delivery of NHS Health Checks to the Council's workforce and running joint campaigns, such as the recent Get Checked blood pressure campaign.

Next steps:

- Focus on healthy eating, stopping smoking and mental health.

2.3. Reducing health-related worklessness

Norfolk County Council's Economic Development Team, with input from Public Health, have submitted a bid to the European Social Fund for an Integrated Health and Employment Service (IHES) which would provide additional and complementary activity to those who are not able to access the national Work and Health Programme. The IHES will work with individuals one on one to support them to manage their health condition to get ready for work where possible. The bid has

got through to the second round, with any further progress being notified Aug / Sept 2018.

DWP are in the process of increasing the skills of their Disability Employment Advisors to support the Jobcentre Plus based work coaches with helping health-related benefit recipients re-enter employment. Norfolk Public Health arranged for the local Chronic Fatigue Service to deliver a session to the DEAs to increase awareness locally of this condition and have offered other support to the regional training as needed.

Next steps:

- Continue to seek funding for IHES
- Continue work with DWP as requested.

3. Background and Evidence

- 3.1. Over the last 12 years there has been increasing evidence and reviews which demonstrate the important relationship between work, health and wellbeing. Dame Carol Black's national review *Working for a Healthier Tomorrow* in 2008, commissioned by the DWP, set out for the first time the economic costs of ill health and its impact on work. Since then improving the health of the working age population has continued to be at the forefront of public health with a steady stream of reports aiming to influence policy and approaches to planning services for those in work.
- 3.2. In the last year workplace reports have continued to be a major focus for the government. The recent Stevenson and Farmer report *Thriving at Work* sets out core standards for employers to improve mental health in the workplace and seeks to address one of the major causes of sickness absence in the workplace. The recent Taylor Review *Good Work: Modern Working Practices* addresses the changing demands in workplaces and their implications for workers and employers.
- 3.3. Last year also saw the publishing of the government paper – Improving Lives: The Future of Work Health and Disability. This sets out plans to increase inclusivity in the workplace helping to retain and recruit skills from every person including those people with disabilities and long term conditions and aims to reduce the disability employment gap. This together with an ageing population and longer working lives, indicates that inclusive workplaces are crucial to the success of the economy and the individual. The right care and support must be in place to enable all to thrive in work throughout their working lives.

3.4 Local context

In Norfolk, the structure of the economy is heavily weighted to smaller businesses - proportions are similar to the national averages. The highest proportion of micro-businesses is found in South Norfolk where 87% of business units employ fewer than ten people. The highest proportion of larger business units with more than 250 employees are found in Norwich. All of the Norfolk districts, with the exception of Norwich have fewer larger business units than the national average.

A major challenge in the Norfolk working age population is that work forces are ageing. Individuals are experiencing longer working lives as pensionable ages increase. This increasing working age brings with it the risk of developing a long

term condition (LTC). 1 in 3 working-age people in the UK have a long-term health condition which puts their participation in work at risk. Managing LTCs in the workforce can often be a challenge and can cause people to change the type and amount of work they do.

Currently employment levels are at an historic high but we still have 32,000 people in Norfolk off work due to illness or disability that affects their ability to work, who have valuable skills knowledge and expertise not being utilised. One of the key Public Health Outcome Framework indicators that Public Health wish to improve is the employment rate for people with long term health conditions. Norfolk is worse than the England average for gaps in the employment rate for those with long-term health conditions and learning disability compared to the overall employment rate (Table 1) and this trend isn't improving. Other indicators that can be influenced by workplace health include excess weight in adults, reduction in smoking prevalence and reduction in health inequalities.

Table 1: Employment related Public Health Indicators

PHOF Indicator	Year	England	EOE	Norfolk
1.08i Gap in employment rate between those with an LTC and the overall employment rate (%)	2016/17	29.4	34.4	38.8
1.08ii Gap in employment rate between those with a learning disability and the overall employment rate (%)	2016/17	68.7	70.1	73.5
1.08iii Gap in employment rate between those in contact with secondary mental health services and the overall employment rate (persons) (%)	2016/17	67.4	70.2	69.9

Data source: Public Health England

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. No new financial commitments are proposed. Around £200,000 of the Public Health budget is used for workplace health.

5. Issues, risks and innovation

5.1. Risks:

There is a risk that if we do not engage with workplaces, then we are losing a significant opportunity to affect health improvement, often in communities of people prone to suffer from health inequalities. We would also lose the opportunity to have a positive impact on the local economy. As an employer of 6,000 staff, NCC could lose the opportunity to become an exemplar healthy employer.

5.2. Innovations:

The new approach to the commissioned workplace health service is an innovative approach and so will be subject to a good quality evaluation to be conducted by UEA.

- 5.3. The IHES is also innovative in bringing together several agencies who can support change in individuals to enable condition management and employment activities to happen in tandem.

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper or want to see copies of any assessments, e.g. equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

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If you need this report in large print, audio, braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact 0344 800 8020 or 0344 800 8011 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.

Appendix 1 – Thriving Workplaces Year 1 Summary

thriving WORKPLACES YEAR 1

OVERALL SUMMARY

42 
Business engaged
across Norfolk

6945
Total number of **employee**
reach in Norfolk

67% of workforces
engaged had over
50% were from
a public health
priority background

TRAINING



42 
local staff trained in
Mental Health First Aid

35 
RSPH Health
Champions
Trained

(Average feedback score
4.65, 100% Pass Rate,
Average Pass **27/30**
– A Pass is 20/30)

58% 
of organisations
engaged undertook
Mental Health First
Aid Training

4 
Health Champion
Network meetings
provided.

Topics covered: 
Increasing workplace health and
wellbeing engagement, Sharing best
practice, Time for Change campaign
and Mental Health First Aid, Smoking
in the workplace and Active Working 

55% 
of organisations had
at least 1 new Health
Champion trained

SOCIAL MEDIA & DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

18
blog posts


220
mailing list
subscribers


30
Facebook
posts per month

An average
viewing
of **35 views**
per day


30
Twitter
posts per month

An average
viewing
of **136 views**
per day


27
Linkedin
posts per month

An average
viewing
of **265 views**
per day


4379
unique website hits
since April 2017

An average
viewing
of **336 views**
per month


121
active users
of our "Members
Only" area