
Report To: Policy & Resources Committee **Date:** 22 September 2009

Report By: Head of Organisational Development and Human Resources **Report No:** HR/19/09/AH

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Subject: Mental Health First Aid Policy

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to recommend to Committee the introduction of a Mental Health First Aid Policy.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The introduction of the Mental Health First Aid Policy (Appendix 1) will introduce Mental Health First Aiders within the Council. To become a mental health first aider, employees need to undertake a two day Scottish Mental Health First Aid training course.
- 2.2 The Council is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of all employees and the introduction of this policy will assist this aim.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Committee are recommended to agree the Mental Health First Aid Policy (Appendix 1).
- 3.2 The Committee are recommended to agree that no recording system of employees who utilise the service is kept.

Head of Organisational Development
and Human Resources

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 On the 17th April 2008 the Council agreed a report on the introduction of the Single Status agreement. Included within the report was the proposal to introduce Mental Health First Aiders for the Council.
- 4.2 Inverclyde Council are committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of all employees by promoting a healthy and supportive working environment. To facilitate this, the Council will provide Mental Health First Aiders to provide a first aid approach to mental health.
- 4.3 The Council have adopted the Scottish Mental Health First Aid approach for council employees, and have put two members of Human Resources through a 7 day intensive 'Train the Trainer' course. These steps were taken to improve the mental as well as physical health of employees in conjunction with developments in the Council's Managing Attendance Strategy and the Stress, Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy.

The Mental Health First Aid Policy outlines our commitment to the well-being of our employees. The policy aims to:

- Explain what Mental Health First Aid is.
 - Identify the requirements for becoming a Mental Health First Aider
 - Identify the resources required for Mental Health First Aid.
 - Provide guidance for Mental Health First Aiders
 - To preserve life where a person may be a danger to themselves or others.
 - To provide help to prevent mental health problems developing into a more serious state
 - To promote the recovery of good mental health
 - To provide comfort to a person experiencing a mental health problem.
- 4.4 At this time three Scottish Mental Health First Aiders have been trained and are in place. The report to the Council on the 17 April 2009 agreed that Mental Health First Aiders receive the same premium as First Aiders of £356 per annum.
 - 4.5 The measurement of such a policy usually depends upon whether a record is kept of contact with employees, the advantages of keeping a record system shows the value of the policy however a record keeping system will deter employees from using the service as it will be seen as not being totally private and confidential.
 - 4.6 To ensure that the correct numbers of employees are trained, a ratio of 1 first aider to 300 employees has been set and the introduction of the policy will plan how many first aiders will be required by location/service.

5.0 PROPOSALS

- 5.1 To assist employees at times where mental health issues occur, it is proposed that the Mental Health policy (Appendix 1) is introduced.
- 5.2 To ensure anonymity it is proposed that no recording system is held of employees who use the system.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Finance: Each qualified and approved Mental Health First Aider will be paid an annual payment of £356. Costs will be met by Services in the same way as First Aiders are paid.

Financial Implications

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Year	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments

Financial Implications – Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (if Applicable)	Other Comments
			£6052		Annual cost for 17 Mental Health First Aiders (£356 x 17) Funded by Service

6.2 Human Resources: None.

6.3 Legal: None.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 The Mental Health First Aid policy has been subject to discussions with the trades unions and the Services on how it should be introduced.

Organisational Development & Human Resources

Mental Health First Aid Policy

Version 0.1

Produced by:

OD&HR

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Inverclyde Council are committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of all employees by promoting a healthy and supportive working environment. To facilitate this the Council will provide Mental Health First Aiders to provide a first aid approach to mental health.
- 1.2 The World Health Organisation (WHO) states “mental health is a state of well being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. Generally speaking, mental health is the positive sense of well being which allows us to enjoy life and to survive pain, disappointment and sadness.

2 STATEMENT OF POLICY

2.1 Mental Health and Work

- 2.1.1 Inverclyde Council is committed to sustaining and improving the working lives of our employees. The organisation’s core principle is that working should have a positive affect on people’s mental health. Working provides a number of benefits to an individual. These include financial benefits, support via social and information networks, and a source of purpose and personal identity. Factors which influence mental health in the workplace include the workplace culture, management practice, stress at work, the physical environment, work/life balance, communication and opportunities for career progression. Factors outside the workplace, for example bereavement, relationship breakdown or a medical condition, can also impact on an individual’s mental health.

2.2 Promoting a Positive Working Environment

- 2.2.1 The promotion of mental health within the workplace will not just focus on mental illness but will encompass the promotion of mental health and well-being. A positive working environment and appropriate support at work can prevent illness and have a significant impact on reducing sickness absence and improving long term outcomes for employees.
- 2.2.2 The Council have adopted the Mental Health First Aid approach for council employees, and have put two members of OD & HR through a 7 day intensive ‘Train the Trainer’ course. These steps were taken to improve the mental as well as physical health of employees in conjunction with developments in the council’s Managing Attendance Strategy and the Stress, Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy. As a result we are committed to promoting a positive working environment for all staff. We believe a positive working environment is essentially about good management practices characterised by respect and value for staff, meaningful consultation, staff involvement and participation in decision-making. This policy outlines our commitment to the well-being of our employees.

3 AIMS

3.1 This policy aims to:

- Explain what Mental Health First Aid is.
- Identify the requirements for becoming a Mental Health First Aider.
- Identify the resources required for Mental Health First Aid.
- Provide guidance for Mental Health First Aiders.
- To preserve life where a person may be a danger to themselves or others.
- To provide help to prevent mental health problems developing into a more serious state.
- To promote the recovery of good mental health.
- To provide comfort to a person experiencing a mental health problem.

4 SCOPE

4.1 This policy applies equally to all employees regardless of grade, experience or role within the organisation. The policy also applies to contracted staff as far as is reasonably practicable.

5 CONSULTATION & IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 Inverclyde Council recognises the importance of employee consultation and is committed to involving all employees in the development of policies and procedures. The following groups are formally consulted:

- Trade Union Representatives through the Corporate Health and Safety Committee.
- All Chief Officers.
- Employees via the Council Intranet.

5.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment was carried out using the Council's Equalities Impact Assessment Template. It is considered that implementation of this policy will have a positive impact for employees.

6 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The following legislation underpins this policy.

6.1 Every organisation has a duty to ensure employees are not made ill by their work under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. This covers risks to physical and mental health.

6.2 The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (1999) require employers to assess the nature and scale of risks to physical and mental health in the workplace and put adequate control measures in place to reduce or control those risks.

6.3 The common law duty of care implies in every employee's contract of employment, that a failure to take reasonable care of an employee's health could potentially constitute a breach of contract.

6.4 In relation to the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) the definition of "disability" under the Act is wide in scope. It covers illness which has lasted or is likely to last 12 months or more and has substantial and adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out day-to-day activities. The Act prohibits discrimination for any reason related to a person's disability during employment. Recruitment, promotion, transfers, training and general treatment at work are therefore covered. Employers also have a duty under the Act to make reasonable adjustments to their working arrangements, practices and premises in order to assist a person with a disability to do their job. In relation to this act, employees who fit these criteria are asked to make their line manager aware so that any reasonable adjustments required can be made at the earliest possible time.

7 ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to the health and safety responsibilities laid out in the Corporate Health and Safety Policy the following roles and responsibilities are laid out in relation to the Mental Health First Aid Policy.

7.1 Chief Executive, Senior Management Team and Chief Officers

- 7.1.1 The Chief Executive and Senior Management Team are responsible for the overall implementation of this Policy.
- 7.1.2 Heads of Service and Chief Officers are responsible for the implementation of the Policy within their Service Areas.
- 7.1.3 Ensure that resources are available to appoint Mental Health First Aiders.
- 7.1.4 Ensure arrangements for Mental Health First Aid provision are in place in all areas of operation for which they are responsible. Ensure Mental Health First Aiders have the necessary training and refresher training to discharge their duties.
- 7.1.5 Ensure that there is good communication of organisational and procedural change.

7.2 Managers and Team Leaders

- 7.2.1 Implement the recommendations to have the numbers of Mental Health First Aiders within their area of responsibility.
- 7.2.2 Ensure that there is good communication between management and employees particularly where there are organisational or procedural changes taking place.
- 7.2.4 Ensure Mental Health First Aiders are given adequate protected time to carry out their duties. Mental Health First Aiders shall also be granted time-off with pay to attend meetings connected to undertaking mental health duties.
- 7.2.5 Identify suitable persons to become mental health first aiders, in agreement with OD & HR.
- 7.2.6 Be vigilant and offer additional support to an employee who is experiencing stress outside of work e.g., bereavement or separation.
- 7.2.7 Assist and support employees with mental health problems.

7.3 Organisational Development and Human Resources

The Head of OD & HR, in conjunction with Occupational Health and individual line managers, will be responsible for undertaking regular reviews of Mental Health First Aid training and the supporting of mental health first aiders within directorates. This will be done by:

- 7.3.1 Ensuring Mental Health First Aid Trainers are available.
- 7.3.2 Making training available and supporting Mental Health First Aiders
- 7.3.3 Ensure that there is a system to monitor mental health first aider qualifications and to ensure that they undergo re-training within the three year period.
- 7.3.4 Providing specialist advice on Mental Health First Aid.
- 7.3.5 Monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of the Mental Health First Aiders.
- 7.3.6 Informing the CMT and the Health and Safety Committee of any changes and developments in the field of Mental Health First Aid.
- 7.3.7 Providing awareness training on Mental Health Issues.
- 7.3.8 Supporting individuals who have been off sick with Mental Health issues and advising them and their management on a planned return to work.
- 7.3.9 Referring to workplace counsellors or specialist agencies as required.
- 7.3.10 Monitoring the effectiveness of measures to reduce mental health related absence by collating corporate sickness absence statistics.
- 7.3.11 Providing continuing support to managers and individuals in a changing environment and encouraging referral to the Council's Occupational Health Advisor where appropriate.

7.4 Mental Health First Aiders

- 7.4.1 Attend training and refresher training as necessary.
- 7.4.2 Assess the risk of suicide or self harm.
- 7.4.3 Listen non judgementally.
- 7.4.4 Give reassurance and information.
- 7.4.5 Encourage the person to get appropriate professional help.
- 7.4.6 Encourage self help strategies.
- 7.4.7 Maintain the confidentiality of the person being helped unless you identify a risk to them or others.

7.5 Employees

- 7.5.1 Seeking support from mental health first aiders if required.
- 7.5.2 Report any risks to mental health within the workplace that might put yourselves or others at risk to your Union Safety Representative, line manager or a Health and Safety or Human Resources advisor.
- 7.5.3 Accept opportunities for counselling when recommended.
- 7.5.4 Encourage colleagues who are experiencing difficulties with their mental health to seek support from the mental health first aiders.

7.6 Trade Unions

- 7.6.1 Trade Unions have a responsibility for contributing to the development of the policy and ensuring that the views of their members are represented. This will be achieved by:
 - Ensuring they are consulted on any changes to work practices or work design that could affect mental health.
 - Allowing Safety Representatives to consult with members on the issue of mental wellbeing including conducting any workplace surveys.
 - Involving Safety Representatives in the risk assessment process.
 - Allowing Safety Representatives access to collective and anonymous data in relation to absence management, mental wellbeing etc.
 - Providing paid time away from normal duties to attend Trade Union training related to Mental Wellbeing.

7.7 Corporate Health and Safety Committee

- 7.7.1 The Corporate Health and Safety Committee will perform a pivotal role in ensuring that this policy is implemented.
- 7.7.2 The safety committee will oversee monitoring of the efficacy of the policy and other measures related to the Healthy Working Lives Award and the Mental Health Commendation Award.

8 IMPLEMENTATION

8.1 Mental Health First Aid

- 8.1.1 The National Programme for Improving Mental Health and Wellbeing was launched by Health Scotland in October 2001 as a part of the Scottish Government's commitment to improving the mental wellbeing of everyone living in Scotland and to improve the quality of life and social inclusion of people who experience mental health problems.

8.1.2 The National programme raises awareness and aims to:

- assist in trying to eliminate the stigma and discrimination around mental ill health
- help more people to prevent suicide and support people bereaved by suicide
- promote and support recovery from mental health problems

8.2 What is Mental Health First Aid

8.2.1 A Mental Health First Aid training programme was developed by Australia in order to provide assistance to people showing signs of mental ill health until professional health could be given. The subsequent two day training programme for laypersons, employers, unions, carers revolutionised the concept that people do not need to be specialists or experts to be able to provide basic first aid support to people showing signs of the onset of mental health difficulties.

8.2.2 The Scottish Mental Health First Aid (SMHFA) course adapted by Health Scotland provides this 2 day training to enable people to help someone experiencing a mental health problem before professional help is obtained.

8.2.3 The provision of mental health first aiders should not be based on numerical factors alone, instead it is essential that the risks associated with the area of operation are examined and an assessment made of the probabilities of mental health first aid issues occurring.

8.2.4 The assessment of the number of Mental Health First Aiders required should be based on the following assessment of risk of Mental Health First Aid issues:

- The requirement to deal with or provide support to non employees or employees who may be affected by mental health issues.
- Absence rates related to mental health or wellbeing issues.
- Employees/occupational groups at particular risk of experiencing Mental Health issues.
- Existing preventative measures.

8.2.6 In terms of provision of Mental Health First Aiders for employees, each directorate should ensure that there should be no less than 1 available for every 300 employees. However, where the council has a large amount of employees working for various services, only 1 Mental Health First Aider is required per building, per 300 employees. Examples are:

Building Name	Service/s	Number of Employees	M.H. First Aiders reqd.
Municipal Buildings	Various	405	1 to 2
Dalrymple House	Social Work	306	1

In the example above, each service in the Municipal Buildings does not require a Mental Health First Aider as only one or two is required to cover the whole building.

For Dalrymple House, only one Mental Health First Aider is required by Social Work although they may have more in other locations covering their service. School Support Managers would need one per 300 to cover their entire cluster. If their employee count was substantially less than 300, they may require to join another cluster.

8.3 Allowances

8.3.1 The annual mental health first aid allowance set out in the Conditions of Service will be paid to employees who are authorised by Directorates, via the appropriate form, to act as mental health first aiders to employees of Inverclyde Council.

8.3.2 Where the requirement for mental health first aid training is identified as a job requirement due to the work being undertaken or the type of client or Service user being dealt with this shall be regarded as part of the job function and will not attract the mental health first aid allowance.

8.4 Recruitment and Selection of Mental Health First Aiders

8.4.1 When recruiting and appointing mental health first aiders for employees, the following should be considered:-

- Their availability during the working day.
- The demands and nature of the mental health first aid cover.
- The personal attributes required e.g. reliability, likely to remain calm in an emergency.
- Ability to deal with incidents.

8.5 Provision of Facilities

8.5.1 Given the stigma surrounding mental health issues and the requirement for confidentiality, each Directorate should identify a room or area where a mental health first aider can talk to an employee in confidence. Where possible these facilities should be utilised. This room should have access to a telephone line.

8.5.2 Where there is a requirement to meet an employee outside the working environment the mental health first aider must ensure that the Council's policy on Violence and Lone Working is followed. Their line manager must be told where they are going, and they must report back to their line manager when they are finished.

8.6 Mental Health First Aid Treatment

8.6.1 Where mental health first aid treatment is given, no record will be kept to ensure employees accessing the drop-in service will have total privacy and complete confidentiality.

8.6.2 Further advice on any issue can be obtained from OD & HR

8.7 Informing Employees

8.7.1 Every building will display a suitable notice indicating who the mental health first aiders are and how to contact them.

8.8 Support and Counselling

8.8.1 The Council will provide a range of support for employees experiencing mental health problems; these can be accessed either through the employee's line manager or through OD & HR:

- Whilst not trained counsellors, HR Advisors have been trained to support individuals in the workplace.
- Through the employee development review system under IIP individuals are provided with a mechanism to ask for and obtain support.
- An open door policy for employees to approach managers and colleagues if they have an issue concerning them.
- Healthy Working Lives champions identified within each Directorate.
- Communications champions identified within each Directorate.
- Trained mental health first aiders within Service areas and within OD & HR.
- All directorates will notify their staff as to who the mental health first aiders are in their directorate.
- Free and confidential access to counselling services. This can be obtained through the Council's Occupational Health Service drop in facility, via your line manager or via OD & HR.
- The opportunity to draw up, in conjunction with your line manager, OD & HR and Occupational Health a plan outlining the type of support you require to deal with work related stress or mental health issues. This will be reviewed on a regular basis.

This support is provided on a self referral, mental health first aider referral, and/or management referral basis.

8.8.2 Further support is available via a number of external agencies; information about these agencies is available on the Council's Intranet through this link. [External Support](#).

9 INFORMATION AND TRAINING

9.1 Information

9.1.1 Inverclyde Council recognises the need to provide staff with relevant information on mental health and mental illness. Employee awareness will help with the implementation of the policy and the reduction of the stigma associated with mental ill health. Information on mental health and mental wellbeing will be made available on the Council's Intranet System, via Line Managers and Trade Union Safety Representatives or via the information library held in Organisational Development and Human Resources. The information will be updated on a regular basis.

9.2 Training

9.2.1 The Council recognises that training of managers and employees is important to ensure that all employees have the necessary skills to aid employees with mental health issues. The following training will be made available through the Corporate Training planner or if identified through the risk assessment process other specialist

training can be made available. All training provided will include information about this Council policy.

9.2.2 Mental Health related training:

- Scottish Mental Health First Aid
- Mental Health First Aider Training
- ASIST Training (Suicide Prevention)
- Safe Talk Course (Suicide Prevention)
- Self Harm Awareness

9.3 Communication of the Policy

9.3.1 The Council recognises the importance of communicating the policy to all employees. This policy will be communicated to staff via the Corporate Health and Safety Committee, the Council's team briefing system and a copy will be placed on the Council's Intranet system.

10 MONITORING, EVALUATION & REVIEW

10.1 This policy was ratified by the Council's Policy and Resources Committee on <**Date To be Inserted**> and implemented immediately thereafter.

10.2 Regular monitoring and review are necessary to measure the effectiveness of the policy and to ensure it remains relevant to the needs of the Council. The Head of OD & HR will have responsibility for the on-going monitoring and review of the policy, including taking action to amend the policy, where required, in consultation with staff.

10.3 The policy will be reviewed 12 months from implementation and every three years thereafter unless there is significant change in legislative requirements or risk assessment identifies a need for review. Measuring the effectiveness of the policy will include a review of organisational stress risk assessments, staff sickness/absence levels, uptake of support and counselling services and feedback from staff.