

14 November 2018

Ordinary Council

Time to Change Employer Pledge

Report of: *Kim Anderson, Partnership, Leisure and Funding Manager*

Wards Affected: *All Brentwood Borough Wards*

This report is: *Public report*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1.** The Time to Change Employer Pledge sets out Brentwood Borough Council's commitment to change how we think and act about mental health in the workplace and make sure that employees who are facing these problems feel supported. To support the Time to Change Employer Pledge an action plan has been submitted to Time to Change to review, provide feedback and be agreed. This action plan is set out in Appendix A of this report. Subject to Members support the pledge board will be signed at the meeting.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** That Members support the Time to Change Employer Pledge, and that delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive to sign the pledge board on behalf of Brentwood Borough Council.

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1.** Time to Change is an organisation that supports Mental Health Champions, Employers and Schools to end stigma and discrimination about Mental Health. The Employers Pledge sets out the Council's commitment to change how we think and act about mental health in the workplace and make sure that employees who are facing these problems feel supported.
- 3.2.** 1 in 6 workers experience stress, low mood or poor mental health and mental ill-health is the leading cause of sickness absence in the UK, costing an average of £1,035 per employee per year. 95% of employees calling in sick with stress give a different reason. 42% have considered resigning due to workplace stress.

- 3.3.** Tackling stigma can make a real difference to sickness absence rates, presenteeism levels, staff wellbeing and productivity, and retention. 95% of employers that have already signed the pledge said it has had a positive impact on their organisation.
- 3.4.** The pledge is supported with an agreed action plan which sets out seven key principles:
- 1) Demonstrate senior level buy-in
 - 2) Demonstrate accountability and recruit Employee Champions
 - 3) Raise awareness about mental health
 - 4) Update and implement policies to address mental health problems in the workplace
 - 5) Ask staff to share personal experiences of mental health problems
 - 6) Equip line managers to have conversations about mental health
 - 7) Provide information about mental health and signpost to services
- 3.5** The employee champions will be established to challenge stigma and discrimination around mental health in the workplace, provide a conduit to drive change, create a grass roots movement, help support action plan activities and commit to normalizing conversations about mental health.
- 3.6** Managers have been provided with support on Mental Health with the 'Being a Mindful Manager' training and through the Absence Management Policy which provides guidance on supporting employees with mental Health illnesses.
- 3.7** Awareness raising amongst employees on Mental Health issues is currently being delivered with 'Time to Talk Day', Mental Health Awareness Week and World Mental Health Day.

4. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1.** The action plan (Appendix A) was sent to Time to Change for their agreement which the Council has now received. The action plan before Members tonight sets out the activity to support the seven key principles in the Time to Change Employers Pledge.
- 4.2.** There is a requirement that this pledge is signed on behalf of Brentwood Borough Council on the pledge board which has been supplied by Time to Change.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 All elected Members are signed up to be Mental Health Champions and Brentwood Borough Council is committed to promoting good mental health in the workplace. By supporting the Time to Change ethos, the Council will challenge stigma and discrimination surrounding mental health illness to promote the wellbeing of all of the employees. The Council will do this by appointing staff champions who will raise awareness of mental health in the workplace at campaign events, by embedding wellbeing in our policies, promoting a culture of conversation with our managers, and making information, advice and support easily accessible and readily available for everyone.

6. References to Council Priorities

The Time to Change pledge sits under the Community and Health strand of the Corporate Plan 2016-19 making Brentwood a Borough where people feel, safe healthy and supported.

7. Implications

Financial Implications

Name & Title: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts Interim Chief Finance Officer
Tel & Email: 01277 312829 jacquelinevanmellaerts@brentwood.gov.uk

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications to sign up to the Time to Change Employers Pledge to the Council apart from employee time to support the action plan delivery.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Daniel Toohey, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Tel & Email: 01277 312860 Daniel.toohey@brentwood.gov.uk

The time to change pledge is not a legally binding agreement but sets out the Council's commitment to promote and support good mental health in the workplace.

8. Appendices

Appendix A – Time to Change Employers Pledge Action Plan

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