BRIEFING PAPER

TO:	Audit Committee
FROM:	Lorraine Nicholls

SUBJECT: Employee Wellbeing Statement

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the report is to introduce a draft Employee Wellbeing Statement for consideration by Senior Managers within the Organisation, the statement will introduce responsibilities for wellbeing across the Organisation and will also complement the existing polices in place relating to absence, attendance, work life balance and flexible working practices alongside the HSE Stress Management Standards which BwDBC have already adopted.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

To introduce a statement that lays out duties and responsibilities for all employees within Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council in relation to Wellbeing.

The benefits of which may include:

• improved relationships between line managers and employees

• improved employees involvement and communication within teams

• improved use of job design, flexible working and the use of occupational health and wellbeing support

• the statement promotes a culture of understanding the importance of wellbeing in the workplace

• highlights the responsibilities of all employees

• makes clear links to the BwDBC policies and guidance that support the management standards

3. BACKGROUND

Wellbeing is very important to Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and part of the commitment to employees' health and wellbeing is to foster and promote a culture that increases awareness of ways to improve health, decreases high levels of stress though monitoring the working environment, protecting employees where possible from workplace injury, offering job satisfaction and flexible working options and supporting employees through having in place health and wellbeing medical, physical and mental health support and guidance available from a range of practitioners.

The Council as employer has a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees as far as reasonably practicable. It is also required to have in place measures to mitigate as far as practicable factors that could harm employees' physical and mental well-being, which includes

work-related stress. This duty extends only to those factors which are work-related and within the Council's control.

Absence management remains high on the Council Priorities, this statement will support the practices used to reduce absence and improving wellbeing across the organisation.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS
There are no policy implications relating to this statement, and clear references are made to the supporting policies and guidance.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS
There are no known legal implications, however the application of a Wellbeing Statement will support the Organisations Commitment to its Employees Wellbeing.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
There are no resource implications to implementing this statement in the long term.
In the short term, the statement will need to be discussed at SLT's (to be agreed) and then cascaded via team meetings by departmental managers.

VERSION:	V1

CONTACT OFFICER:	Lorraine Nicholls
DATE:	4th May 2016
BACKGROUND PAPER:	Draft Employee Wellbeing Statement

Employee Wellbeing Statement

1. Introduction

Wellbeing is very important to Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council and part of our commitment to all our employees' health and wellbeing is to foster and promote a culture that increases awareness of ways to improve health, decreases high levels of stress though monitoring the working environment, protect employees where possible from workplace injury, offer job satisfaction and flexible working options and support employees through having in place health and wellbeing medical, physical and mental health support and guidance available from a range of practitioners.

The Council as employer has a duty to ensure the health, safety and welfare of its employees as far as reasonably practicable. It is also required to have in place measures to mitigate as far as practicable factors that could harm employees' physical and mental well-being, which includes work-related stress. This duty extends only to those factors which are work-related and within the Council's control.

All Employees have specific duties in relation to health, safety and wellbeing. These duties include:

- Treating individuals / colleagues with consideration, respect and dignity.
- Ensuring that there is good communication with all colleagues in the team and with whom they work.
- Adhering to the sound management principles set out in the Council's Human Resources policies and procedures and the Behaviours framework.
- Attending training as appropriate in order to increase their awareness of the causes and effects of work-related stress.
- Co-operating with Human Resources (HR) and the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team to ensure that risk assessments are undertaken or supporting colleagues undertaking risk assessments for roles or working practices that may give rise to work-related stress.
- Participating in events and initiatives undertaken by the Council to promote well-being and more effective working.
- Raising concerns with their line manager if they feel there are work issues that are causing them stress and having a negative impact on their well-being.
- Taking responsibility for their own health and well-being by adopting healthy lifestyles.
- Taking responsibility for their own development skills as one of the means to enable them to work effectively in their team and so reduce of the risk of stress.

- Taking responsibility for working effectively in their assigned roles, and therefore helping to avoid causing stress to their colleagues.

This statement accepts the Health and Safety Executive definition of work-related stress as "the adverse reaction a person has to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them". There is an important distinction between 'reasonable pressures' which stimulate and motivate and 'stress' where an individual feels they are unable to cope with excessive pressures or demands placed upon them.

This statement recognises that there are many sources of work related stress and that stress can result from the actions or behaviours of managers, employees or citizens or users of the service.

The Health and Safety Executive have produced a number of **Management Standards** which cover the primary sources of stress at work that, if not properly managed, are associated with poor health and well-being, lower productivity and increased sickness absence. These are:

- **Demands** – i.e. workload, work patterns and the work environment.
- **Control** – i.e. how much say the person has in the way they do their work.
- **Support** – i.e. the encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.
- **Relationships** – i.e. promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- **Role** – such as whether people understand their role within the organisation and whether the organisation ensures that they do not have conflicting roles.
- **Change** – such as how organisational change (large or small) is managed and communicated within the organisation.

The Council's performance on well-being and stress management will be assessed in the context of the HSE Management Standards of which the Council already adheres to and from which the following policies are linked.

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- work life balance statement - http://teamtalk.blackburn.gov.uk/human-resources/flexible-working/work-life-balance/

- performance management policy - http://teamtalk.blackburn.gov.uk/human-resources/performance-management/

- sickness absence management policy and guidance - http://teamtalk.blackburn.gov.uk/human-resources/improving-attendance/

- risk assessment safety procedural documents - http://teamtalk.blackburn.gov.uk/health-safety/health-and-safety-topics/risk-assessment/risk-assessment-safety-procedural-document-spd01/

- stress management policy, guidance and stress indicator toolkit - http://teamtalk.blackburn.gov.uk/human-resources/stress-management/

2. Statement of Intent

The Council Leadership, Directors and Managers acknowledge the potential impact that work has on an individual's physical and mental health, and that there is a persuasive business case as well as a moral and legal duty for taking steps to promote employee well-being as far as reasonably practicable.

The Council Leadership, Directors and Managers are committed to fostering a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect, where all individuals are treated with dignity, and can work at their optimum level.

The Council Leadership, Directors and Managers recognise that work-related stress has a negative impact on employees' well-being, and that it can take many forms and so needs to be carefully analysed and addressed at an organisational level.

The Employee Well-being policy expands upon the Council's Health and Safety policy, setting out how the Council will promote the well-being of employees by:

- Creating a working environment where potential work-related stressors as far as practicable are avoided, minimised or mitigated through good management practices, effective Human Resources policies and employee development.
- Increasing managers' and employees' awareness of the causes and effects of stress.
- Developing a culture that is open and supportive of people experiencing stress or other forms of mental ill-health.
- Developing the competence of managers through Knowledge, Skills and the Behaviours framework, so that they manage employees effectively and fairly.
- Engaging with employees to create constructive and effective working partnerships both within teams and across the Council.
- Establishing working arrangements whereby employees feel they are able to maintain an appropriate work life balance.
- Encouraging employees to take responsibility for their own health and well-being through effective health promotion programmes and initiatives.
- Encouraging employee to take responsibility for their own work and effectiveness as a means of reducing their own stress and that of their colleagues.

3. Responsibilities for implementing the Employee Well-being Statement

The Council Leadership, Directors and Senior Managers will:

3.1.1   Support steps taken to develop a culture of co-operation, trust and mutual respect within the Council.

3.1.2   Champion good management practices as set out in the Behaviours framework, and the establishment of a work ethos within the Council which discourages assumptions about long term commitment to working hours of a kind likely to cause stress and which enables employees to maintain a reasonable "work life balance".

3.1.3   Promote effective communication and ensure that there are procedures in place for consulting and supporting employees on changes in the organisation, to management structures and working arrangements at both a Council-wide and departmental level.

3.1.4   Encourage initiatives and events that promote health and well-being.

3.2 <u>Managers and supervisory staff will:</u>

   3.2.1   Treat individuals reporting to them with consideration and dignity, and will promote a culture of mutual respect in the teams they manage. They will not permit unacceptable behaviour and will take decisive action when issues are brought to their attention.

   3.2.2   Ensure that there is good communication within their team and there are opportunities for individuals to raise concerns about their work, seeking advice from Human Resources (HR) and the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team at an early stage where concerns are raised.

   3.2.3   Adhere to the sound management principles set out in the Council's Human Resources policies and procedures and the Behaviours framework.

   3.2.4   Attend training as appropriate in order to increase their awareness of the causes and effects of work-related stress.

   3.2.5   Co-operate with Human Resources (HR) and the Health, Safety and Wellbeing team to ensure that risk assessments are undertaken for roles or working practices that may give rise to work-related stress.

   3.2.6   Encourage their employees to participate in events and initiatives undertaken by the Council to promote well-being and more effective working.

   3.2.7   Take action in the interests of all their colleagues where performance by a member of staff may cause stress to their colleagues.

3.3 <u>All Employees will:</u>

   3.3.1   Treat colleagues and all other persons with whom they interact during the course of their work with consideration, respect and dignity.

   3.3.2   Co-operate with the Council's efforts to implement Well-being policy initiatives, attending briefings and raise their own awareness of the causes and effects of stress on health.

   3.3.3   Raise concerns with their line manager if they feel there are work issues that are causing them stress and having a negative impact on their well-being.

   3.3.4   Take responsibility for their own health and well-being by adopting healthy lifestyles.

   3.3.5   Take responsibility for their own development skills as one of the means to enable them to work effectively in their team and so reduce of the risk of stress.

   3.3.6   Take responsibility for working effectively in their assigned roles, and therefore helping to avoid causing stress to their colleagues.

3.4 <u>Human Resources (HR) will:</u>

   3.4.1   Provide advice to managers and employees on best practice in relation to human resource management, developing policies and procedures as required.

   3.4.2   Ensure that there are arrangements in place for communicating the content of the Council's human resource management policies, procedures and toolkits or guidance to managers and employees.

3.4.3 Develop arrangements to enable managers and employee to achieve the necessary competencies in relation to the good management practices set out in the Behaviours framework.

3.4.4 Ensure there are arrangements in place to support individuals experiencing stress, referring them to the Council's Employee Assistance Programme, Wellbeing Service or Occupational Health Support where appropriate.

3.4.5 Ensure there are arrangements in place to support managers experiencing problems with employee performance via Human Resources (HR) or the Managerial Advice line available through the Employee Assistance Programme..

3.4.6 Collate management information which will enable the Council to measure its performance in relation to stress management and employee well-being, such as:

- Sickness absence data
- Employee turnover, exit interviews
- Number of self-referrals to the Employee Assistance Programme and Wellbeing service
- Number of referrals to the Occupational Health Provider
- Numbers of HR related cases.

3.4.7 Seek the views of employees on Well-being and stress management arrangements using employee surveys and other appropriate questionnaires.

3.5 <u>The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team will:</u>

3.5.1 Ensure that the Well-being statement is kept under review and updated as appropriate, and will agree changes via the Health and Safety Consultative Committee (HSCC).

3.5.2 Will make readily available the stress indicator toolkit based on the Health and Safety Executive's "Management Standards for Work-related Stress".

3.5.3 Assist and support managers to undertake local stress risk assessment where required.

3.5.4 Organise and where appropriate in conjunction with the Councils Wellbeing Team workshops, toolbox talks and events/initiatives to promote health and well-being.

3.6 <u>The Health & Safety Consultative Committee (HSCC) will:</u>

3.6.1 Act as the main focus group for consulting on the well-being statement and liaise with the Health and Safety Task Groups to highlight initiatives discussed at departmental level. The HSCC will discuss and agree where appropriate to initiatives which help reduce absence and or work-related stress.

4. Arrangements for implementing the Well-being Statement

4.1 Risk Assessment

4.1.1 Council wide level.

The Stress Indicator Toolkit should be used as part of departmental risk assessments to establish whether the Council's policies and procedures are sufficient to enable compliance with the HSE's "Management Standards" in relation to the management of work related stress.

Where gaps or issues in arrangements or practice are identified, escalation should be to the departmental Head of Service and Director, who will seek advice from the Health, Safety and Welfare Team.

4.2 Arrangements for well-being and stress prevention through good management practices.

These include the following:

- Recruitment and selection procedures.
- Clear job descriptions and person specifications to ensure that the 'right' person is recruited for the job, autonomy to undertake the duties
- Agreed knowledge, skills and behaviours for managers, to be cascaded through to all levels of management and supervision.
- Training and Development procedures to ensure that individuals have the necessary skills and competencies to undertake the tasks/duties required of them.
- Managing performance procedures
- Capability and absence management & return to work procedures to ensure that individuals are supported back into work following illness.
- Suitable adaptations for disability.
- Harassment and anti-bullying procedures.
- Procedures for communicating with employees on the work of the Council and issues affecting their work.
- Flexible working arrangements, and contact days with employee on maternity leave.
- The arrangements will be updated and augmented as required and when deemed necessary by the findings of stress risk assessments.
- Opportunities for promoting employees mental wellbeing.
- Fostering a culture of participation, equality and fairness.

5. Consultation

5.1.1 Employee surveys will be used to gather feedback on the Well-being policy.

5.1.2 The views of individuals will be at local level through stress risk assessments.

5.1.3 Recognised Trade Unions under the provisions of Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 will also be consulted on the development of local stress initiatives and invited to be involved on the delivery where appropriate.

6. Communicating the Well-being statement and measures taken by the Council to manage work related stress.

6.1.1 The Well-being statement will be published under Health and Safety and Human Resources intranet pages.

6.1.2 The Well-being policy will be promoted in Teamtalk and in Briefings.

6.1.3 The contents of the policy will be covered during general induction training sessions for employees and specific training on stress awareness.

7. Monitoring and reviewing the Well-being statement.

7. 1.1 The Well-being policy will be reviewed every three years by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team in conjunction with the Director of Human Resources and in agreement with the Health and Safety Consultative Committee (HSCC).

Useful Links and support:

- For Human Resource advice and guidance:
  http://teamtalk.blackburn.gov.uk/human-resources/

- For Health and safety advice and guidance:
  http://teamtalk.blackburn.gov.uk/health-safety/

- For Health and Wellbeing advice and guidance:
  http://teamtalk.blackburn.gov.uk/human-resources/health-and-wellbeing-support/

- For Case study information relating to Wellbeing:
  http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/casestudies.htm

- For Recruitment and Selection advice:
  http://teamtalk.blackburn.gov.uk/human-resources/recruitment-and-selection/recruitment-and-selection-policy/

- For the Behaviours framework information:
  http://teamtalk.blackburn.gov.uk/human-resources/conduct-and-behaviour/behaviours-framework/

- For employee training information:
  http://teamtalk.blackburn.gov.uk/learning-development/

- For Human Resources polices and procedures advice and guidance:
  http://teamtalk.blackburn.gov.uk/human-resources/hr-policies/

- For absence support, information and guidance:
  http://teamtalk.blackburn.gov.uk/human-resources/improving-attendance/

- For flexible working arrangements information:
  http://teamtalk.blackburn.gov.uk/human-resources/flexible-working/flexitime-scheme/

- For risk assessment information:
  http://teamtalk.blackburn.gov.uk/health-safety/health-and-safety-topics/risk-assessment/risk-assessment-safety-procedural-document-spd01/

- For the Stress Indicator Toolkit (S.I.T) and guidance: http://teamtalk.blackburn.gov.uk/human-resources/stress-management/

- Work life balance statement http://teamtalk.blackburn.gov.uk/human-resources/flexible-working/work-life-balance/