

SUNDERLAND HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

20 March 2020

HEALTHY ECONOMY

Report of the Healthy Economy Working Group

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 Healthy Economy is one of the Board's seven priorities and the Healthy Economy Working Group is developing a programme of activity that will tackle:

- Workplace health - employers' role in improving employee's health
- Healthy labour-force - the health of those in work and seeking work
- Employment in the health and social care sector - understanding and tackling recruitment issues and wider workforce opportunities.

1.2 This report sets out the progress made to date in respect of each of the above workstrands.

2.0 Background

2.1 Unlike many of the Board's other priorities Healthy Economy is a new strand of work that has not been pursued in the past by partners. The exception to this is the Workplace Health workstrand that the council's Public Health team have tackled for a number of years.

2.2 As a consequence, the Workplace Health workstrand is at an advanced stage of development and an action plan for this aspect of the Healthy Economy priority is included in this report. Development of the two other workstrands continues and an update about their direction of travel is also provided.

3.0 Healthy Economy priority update

3.1 The overarching aim of the '**Workplace Health**' workstrand is to raise the profile of health and wellbeing in the workplace which will result in business benefits such as reduced sickness absence, improved staff morale, and increased productivity and performance.

Evidence shows that employers that invest in appropriate workplace health initiatives to support the health and wellbeing of their employees have the potential to see a significant return on investment. Evidence shows that investing in appropriate workplace health initiatives has the potential to deliver a significant return on investment, which typically ranges from £2 to £34 for every £1 spent.

The key objectives of this workstrand are:

- Supporting evidence-based local healthy workplace schemes which encourage employer-led workplace health activity
- Leadership buy in to workplace health from the HWBB and City Board
- Establishing a baseline of health and wellbeing needs of businesses through the use of health needs assessments
- Developing the knowledge and skills and building the capacity of upper and middle tier management through a menu of opportunities, via which they can facilitate change as a health and wellbeing ambassador within their workplaces
- Build intelligence for future workplace health initiatives in Sunderland.

The action plan for this workstrand (Appendix 1) includes two significant programmes through which these objectives are to be achieved - the Better Health at Work Awards and Workplace Health Alliance. The plan also requires the Board to take forward a number of actions itself in order to advance workplace health across the city and demonstrate leadership in this area.

The Board is asked to endorse the action plan.

- 3.2 The **'healthy labour-force'** workstrand has considered how to get more unemployed people into work as well as looking at those on long-term sickness (both mental and physical health). Although there are a number of initiatives across partner organisations, the focus of the working group has now homed in on vulnerable young people and their access into work, in particular those that are Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) and Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), with a view to co-ordinating effort across partners to develop pathways into employment for this cohort.

Nationally, people with the most severe forms of SEND can find it difficult to enter the world of work, with an employment rate as low as 7%. However, a government trial of supported internships resulted in 36% of students with SEND gaining paid employment.

Recommendations from the NDTI Commissioner (National Development Team for Inclusion – guide for mental health) include the need for work experience, apprenticeships and internships for young people with SEND. The NDTI also suggests the need for a local employment strategy that supports employment pathways, and the need for partnership working across education, health and social care to ensure effective use of resources.

Work continues on this workstrand and is focussed on capturing further data and intelligence. This will include how many of these people wish to pursue this route, the type of employment they seek, the nature of their SEND and the challenges that need to be overcome so that each person can achieve their goals. Work will also continue with Sunderland College on education, training, work experience and pathways for young people with SEND.

Specific targets for this workstrand include:

- Providing targeted support to increase the number of work experience and internship opportunities for vulnerable young adults with SEND and that are NEET
- Increase the annual take up by employers of Disability Confident status and the level of the status (there are three levels)
- Providing learning days or engagement for groups with protected characteristics for training and development opportunities and pathways into work.

3.3 Employment in the health and social care sector workstrand - the health sector in Sunderland represents 14.2% of employee jobs in the city and regularly faces recruitment difficulties. The current shortages are due to a number of factors including the fragmentation of responsibility for workforce issues at a national level; poor workforce planning; cuts in funding for training places; restrictive immigration policies exacerbated by Brexit; and worryingly high numbers of doctors and nurses leaving their jobs early.

The rate of vacancies in adult social care services has continued to rise in recent years across most job roles. There is regional variation in the ability of services to recruit and retain staff, with geography and local area factors playing a role in shaping workforce challenges.

There are also a number of key roles within the health sector that have been difficult to recruit to – for example nursing staff and GPs. The work of the college and university with nursing and the new medical school will support local people into these roles, but this will take time.

Work has been taking place to look at the wider health and social care workforce of the future.

Specific targets for this workstrand include:

- Profiling the number of health and social care jobs available in Sunderland and preparing future forecasts
- Consideration of an integrated health and social care pathway approach to maximise health and social care opportunities for local residents
- Ensure that health and social care apprentice opportunities are maximised with the use of unspent and reallocated apprenticeship levy
- Encourage careers advisers in schools to promote pathways into health and social care
- Working with the North East Local Enterprise Partnership to ensure health and social care is linked into current initiatives around employer engagement and information advice and guidance
- Working with North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust to explore opportunities to link Sunderland to their Refugee Doctor scheme
- Linking into the national Prince's Trust Scheme through which NHS England are employing 10,000 school leavers trained by the Trust.

4.0 Recommendations

4.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board is recommended to:

- Receive the progress update report on the three strands of the Healthy Economy priority
- Agree the Workplace Health action plan (Appendix 1)
- Ask the Healthy Economy Working Group to bring finalised action plans for the remaining two workstrands to a future meeting of the Board.

Workplace Health Draft Action Plan

Appendix 1

| | Objective | Initiative and actions | Accountable Lead | Monitoring metrics & | | Update |
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| 1 | Support evidence-based local healthy workplace schemes which encourage employer-led workplace health activity | Ongoing public health initiatives to support businesses on health, work and wellbeing | Gillian Gibson | Provision of Workplace health Schemes, namely Better Health at Work Award and Workplace health Alliance | | |
| | | Workplace Health Alliance to be established with an action plan | Yusuf Meah | Workplace Health Alliance governance strengthened, and action plan established | Quarterly Alliance Meetings addressing key health challenges faced by businesses. | |
| | | SME businesses encouraged to become members of the Sunderland Workplace Health Alliance | Gary Barnfather | Increase the SME businesses signed up to the Sunderland Workplace Health Alliance membership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual increase to be monitored • Record of organisations who are participating | | |
| | | Number of Sunderland businesses progressing through the Sunderland Workplace Health Alliance charter | Yusuf Meah | Work with 30 businesses progressing through the charter at any one time | | |

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| | | The Better Health at Work Award (BHAWA) Scheme supported with all anchor organisations enrolled | Yusuf Meah Healthy Workplace Coordinator | 5 anchor businesses signed up and successful on the bronze level of the Better Health at Work award Scheme annually | 15 anchor organisations continuing and successfully awarded on the Better Health at Work award silver, gold and continuing excellence level | |
| 2 | Leadership buy in to workplace health from the Health and Wellbeing Board and Dynamic City Board | All members of the HWB to ensure a named lead from their organisation has overall responsibility for their organisation's employee health and wellbeing | Ken Bremner | Number of named leads and organisations | | |
| | | All members of the HWB to sign up to the Workplace Health Alliance Charter | | Number of HWB members signed up to the Workplace Health Alliance | Number of HWB members who are progressing through the Workplace Health Alliance Charter | |
| | | All members of the HWB which have over 250 employees to sign up to the Better Health at Work Award (BHAWA) and progress through | | Number of HWB members signed up to the Better Health at Work Award Scheme (BHAWA) | Number of HWB members successfully achieved Better Health at Work Award (BHAWA) | |
| | | All HWB organisations who are a Commissioning organisation to incorporate a clause/statement in contracts committing to Sunderland's Workplace Health Charter as part of the social value commitment | Ken Bremner | HWB organisations agreed to implement Workplace Health as part of contracts | | |

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| | | Dynamic City Board committing to actively promoting the Sunderland Workplace Health Alliance charter | Catherine Auld | Number of businesses enrolled on to Workplace Health Alliance charter | | |
| 3 | Establish a baseline of the health and wellbeing needs of businesses through the use of a health needs assessment | Pilot an online Health Needs Assessment with 15 employers (small and large) which identifies key issues and establish plan to improve employee health and wellbeing | Victoria Mosley Healthy Workplace Coordinator (SCC) | 15 businesses completed the Health Needs Assessment | Number of organisations implementing an action plan | |
| | | Identification of key health issues experienced by employees and key types of action taken by employer | Janet Collins/Professor Ling | Undertake a strategic needs assessment through the Alliance which will give a holistic overview of health needs. | Key actions agreed with businesses to address identified need | |
| 4 | Develop knowledge, skills and build capacity of upper and middle tier management through a menu of opportunities via which they can facilitate change as a health and wellbeing | Provide Health Advocate training to the nominated leads (and champions) of all businesses signed up to the BHAWA and Workplace Alliance | Healthy Workplace Coordinator (PCP/SCC) | Quarterly Health Advocate training sessions | Number of health advocates trained monthly Follow up session with trained health advocates to consolidate the learning from the session | |

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| | ambassador within their workplaces | Commission Mental Health First Aid training for the nominated Health Leads of all businesses signed up to the BHAWA and Workplace Alliance Charter | Healthy Workplace Coordinator (SCC) | Minimum of 3 Mental Health First Aid training sessions annually | Number of Mental Health First Aiders trained quarterly by organisation | |
| | | Facilitate a menu of support to Businesses completing portfolios for the Better Health at Work Award | Healthy Workplace Coordinator (SCC) | 5 public sector or large businesses signed up on the bronze level of the Better Health at Work Award Scheme annually | 15 public sector or large businesses continuing and on the Better Health at Work award silver, gold and continuing excellence level | |
| | | Lead practice sharing sessions for all businesses signed up to the BHAWA and Workplace Alliance | Yusuf Meah Healthy Workplace Coordinator (SCC) | Annual practice sharing event | Annual BHAWA & Alliance celebration event | |
| 5 | Build intelligence for future Workplace Health initiatives in Sunderland | Scope the impact of existing workplace health initiatives in Sunderland and recommend ways to enhance the offer to businesses | Professor Ling | Evaluation of Sunderland workplace health initiatives and its impact on health and wellbeing for the local population. | | |