

## LGA Employee Health & Wellbeing Strategy Paper

<b>Review Date</b>	<b>Revisions</b>
<b>September 2020</b>	Updated action plan to include a focus on supporting staff during and post pandemic
<b>September 2021</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. updated aims to reflect EDI objectives</li> <li>3.2 updated to include temperature check surveys</li> <li>4.1 updated to reflect current clubs and activity</li> <li>5.2 reference to counselling services made available by the employee assistance programme and link to FAQs</li> <li>6.1.2 reference to e-learning updated in line with new learning platform</li> <li>7.1 reference to transitional flexible working policy</li> <li>7.2 reference to networks, steering groups, and temperature check surveys</li> <li>7.3 updated reference to home working resources</li> <li>7.4 addition to capture introduction of mental health first aiders</li> <li>8.1.2 reference to manager toolkits updated to include hybrid working</li> </ul>

Date created:	<b>May 2019</b>
Responsible officer:	<b>HR &amp; Payroll Manager</b>
Date of next review:	<b>July 2024</b>
Date agreed by SMT (if applicable)	

## 1. Aims of the strategy

The LGA is committed to improving overall and individual health and wellbeing and to raise awareness of mental and physical health issues, encourage participation in healthy lifestyle practices, and provide resources for employees to improve their lifestyle, in and out of work.

The strategy aims to:

1. Improve physical and emotional wellbeing of all staff;
2. Create and maintain a positive, safe and healthy working environment;
3. Encourage and support employees to develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle in and out of work;
4. Support people with manageable mental and physical health problems or disabilities to maintain access to work;
5. Improve staff satisfaction & candidate attraction;
6. Promote and enable inclusive and progressive change by aligning wellbeing activity to the aims of the equality, diversity, and inclusion strategy

## 2. What is Health and Wellbeing?

“Health and Wellbeing is about being emotionally healthy as well as physically healthy. It’s feeling able to cope with normal stresses, and living a fulfilled life. It can be affected by things like worries about money, work, your home, the people around you and the environment you live in. Your wellbeing is also affected by whether or not you feel in control of your life, feeling involved with people and communities and feelings of anxiety and isolation.”

*Source: National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) 2010*

There are many definitions of wellbeing and the experience of health & wellbeing will vary from person to person.

## 3. The LGA’s Current Health and Wellbeing Status

- 3.1 The LGA regularly undertakes staff surveys and results for 2018 can be found [here](#)
- 3.2 The LGA has regularly undertaken temperature check surveys since 2020 to track the impact and overall mood of the organisation during the pandemic and results can be found [here](#)

## Current Health and Wellbeing Activity at the LGA

### 4. Health & physical activity

4.1 Clubs - The LGA encourages all staff to engage with staff-led social clubs All classes, communities and activities can be found via the [Staff Room](#) page of the wire and regular classes include Yoga, Craft Club, Gardening club, , and other communities found on [Yammer](#).

4.2 Cycling - The cycle to work scheme is administered by Human Resources and staff can request an interest free loan of up to £1,000 towards a bicycle or cycling equipment as part of a salary sacrifice scheme. More information can be found on [the benefits page](#)

## **5. Employee Assistance Programme (Advice & Support)**

- 5.1 The LGA has engaged [Health Assured](#) to provide a free and confidential support service which is designed to give all staff unlimited access to information, advice and emotional support to help prepare for and manage all of life's ups and downs, events and challenges. The tools are there to support wellbeing at home and at work and the EAP can [provide advice and support on a broad range of topics](#) and [FAQ's](#) can be found on the Wire.
- 5.2 As part of the EAP services there is access to telephone, virtual or face-to-face counselling for up to six sessions per employee in addition to online cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).
- 5.3 The EAP can be accessed by [telephone, an online portal or by downloading a free MyHealthyAdvantage App](#). Alternatively, an employee can be referred for the counselling services by a manager or HR referral.

## **6. Workplace Desk Assessments & Occupational Health**

All LGA staff are able to complete the workstation desk assessments and access occupational health services regardless of their length of service.

### **6.1 Workstation Desk Assessments**

6.1.1 All staff receive an induction to the workplace and are signposted to the online [Display Screen Equipment guidance](#) which is mandatory for all to complete at the start of employment and on an annual basis.

6.1.2 The [learning and development hub](#) holds multiple resources for staff to refer to in relation to workplace environment including a 25 minute Display Screen Equipment (DSE) course. Any employees who require an independent desk assessment from our external provider can contact [HRandPayroll@local.gov.uk](mailto:HRandPayroll@local.gov.uk) for this to be arranged.

### **6.2 Occupational Health**

The LGA recognises its duty of care towards its employees' health and safety at work and is committed to developing a healthy workforce.

The occupational health service is an independent, confidential health service provided by Health Management Ltd.

Occupational health exists to keep people well, productive and 'in work', by providing independent specialist medical advice to employers and employees. This advice includes:

- Promotion of health and wellbeing
- Advice and strategies for managing risks to health from work
- The effects of work on health and health on work

- Interventions, reasonable adjustments and support to enable a return to work
- Medical advice to manage health issues

As part of this service;

6.2.1 All employees are subject to medical checks by Occupational Health as part of their pre-employment checks.

6.2.2 All employees are able to request for a referral to Occupational Health and will be asked for their consent for any outcomes to be shared as appropriate with HR and/or their line manager.

6.2.3 Employees will be asked for their consent where a referral is made by their line manager.

For further information on this service please email [HRandPayroll@local.gov.uk](mailto:HRandPayroll@local.gov.uk)

## **7. Promoting mental wellbeing through productive and healthy working conditions**

### **7.1 Flexible working**

7.1.1 All employees are able to take advantage of the flexible working policies including the transitional flexible working policy for 2021 - 2022 which allows for office-based staff to work remotely up to four days per week. The LGA does not have set working hours and colleagues are expected to work to the demands of their role, agreeing working arrangements with their line manager.

7.1.2 The LGA's flexible working policy and compassionate and family support policies aim to support parents and carer's in balancing their caring responsibilities by working flexibly and taking time off to respond to an emergency related to a dependant.

### **7.2 Staff engagement**

7.2.1 This strategy aligns itself to the vision of the internal communications strategy 2021

7.2.2 Staff are engaged with change through a range of channels as relevant. For regular feedback on the LGA's practices, staff wellbeing and communications, a temperature check survey is circulated on a monthly basis. This allows staff to report feedback anonymously. Formal engagement takes place at the All-Staff Webinars, and the EDI steering group & other working groups including network meetings. Details on staff engagement events are shared on [the Wire](#).

### **7.3 Work environment**

7.3.1 The LGA fosters an open plan environment for the 18 Smith Square office and has a 'hot-desk' culture to allow freedom for employees to change their work environment, allow potential to increase collaboration, boost innovation and use space efficiently.

7.3.2 The LGA contributes to the set-up costs of a home office for contractual home workers. Home workers are entitled to claim up to £300 as a one-off payment, to set

up their workstation. Details on how to claim can be found in the [Employee Expenses Policy](#).

7.3.3 With Musculoskeletal issues on rise across the UK and the transition to hybrid working all staff have access to online resources on the [‘Your wellbeing’ hub](#) including how to set up a workspace at home, setting up for laptop users and further signposting to the online DSE assessments

#### **7.4 Mental health first aiders**

The LGA has implemented [Mental Health First Aiders \(MHFA’s\)](#), enabling a dedicated pool of staff to be trained to support colleagues who are either in mental health crisis or who need support with their mental health. MHFA’s have undertaken a two day internationally recognised training course, accredited by the Royal Society for Public Health, which has been designed to teach them how to spot the signs and symptoms of mental ill health and provide help on a first aid basis.

### **8. Management practice**

8.1 Managers have a responsibility to familiarise themselves with relevant [policies and procedures](#) available on the Wire

8.1.1 The use of an automatic alert system (Agresso) reminds managers to complete probation forms, appraisals, review sickness absence. This acts a tool to prompt managers to have discussions with employees and HR as required.

8.1.2 Managers have a responsibility to consider their own health and wellbeing, act as a role model and treat their staff as individuals when dealing with their wellbeing. They should have a person-centred approach and be open to listening to individual needs. [Manager toolkits](#) can be found on the HR&Payroll pages of the Wire.

8.1.3 Managers should hold regular one to one meetings with their team to allow time for reflection and strategies for considering with individual needs (the “how are you” conversation)

## Appendix 1

### LGA Commitment to Wellbeing & Actions for the Coming Year (September 2021 – September 2022)

The strategy paper and action plan will be reviewed annually by the responsible officer.

Item	Current & ongoing commitments	Aims for the coming year (2021 - 22)
<b>Raising awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committed to promoting health and wellbeing campaigns as set out in the annual internal comms calendar</li> <li>• Accessible resources for both employees and managers to be signposted on the wire</li> <li>• HR have a pro-active approach to health and wellbeing to ensure adequate response and adaption of resources at times of need for specific groups of individuals or the organisation as a whole.</li> <li>• Address the topic of wellbeing at internal forums including the All Staff Webinar, EDI network and other network groups on an adhoc basis</li> <li>• Use of physical signposts including posters &amp; pamphlets in communal areas in 18 Smith Square</li> <li>• Update and maintain the number of available resources for both employees and managers on the Wire in the dedicated health and wellbeing portal 'Your wellbeing' and HR &amp; Payroll pages</li> <li>• Bring awareness of free health events or offers including signposting staff who are eligible for free NHS health checks</li> <li>• Mirror the promotion of resources/raising awareness with topical events. For example, a focus on desk assessments for all staff was prioritised to ensure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace any remaining PDF resources on the 'Your wellbeing' hub with accessible versions</li> <li>• Measure the awareness and utilisation of the LGA's health and wellbeing offer through regular temperature check surveys</li> <li>• Encourage and facilitate (where appropriate) conversations concerning health and wellbeing with network groups and forums as appropriate.</li> <li>• Continue to recognise that high workloads and associated pressures may contribute to poor wellbeing and identify any needs to support the reduction of this</li> <li>• Promote the transitional flexible working policy and its benefits to all staff</li> </ul>

Item	Current & ongoing commitments	Aims for the coming year (2021 - 22)
	<p>staff were working in a suitable home environment during the pandemic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage the use of appropriate apps available to download on work and personal devices</li> </ul>	
<b>Resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A dedicated 'Your wellbeing' hub on the Wire provides immediate resources and signposting to external resources on a broad range of health, wellbeing, financial and compassionate issues</li> <li>• A free confidential and 24/7 employee assistance programme with additional services including counselling services, MyHealthyAdvantage app, online articles</li> <li>• LGA mental health first aiders to support colleagues in crisis, or in need of mental health support and signposting</li> <li>• Cycle to work scheme</li> <li>• Display equipment checks – LGA has engaged Posturite to provide DSE services</li> <li>• Occupational Health – LGA has engaged Health Management Ltd to provide occupational health services</li> <li>• HR promote and provide annual flu vaccination vouchers for all staff</li> <li>• Online resources and short courses on the learning hub</li> <li>• Encourage the use of appropriate apps available to download on work and personal devices</li> <li>• Have established guidance on how to set up your own network group or club at the LGA as shared on the staff room</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access and promote resources using the organisation's membership with Inclusive Employers (a membership organisation for employers who are committed to prioritising inclusion and creating truly inclusive workplaces, they provide resources and consultancy services)</li> <li>• Review the 'Your wellbeing' hub and learning hub to ensure that resources are aligned between the two resource areas</li> <li>• HR &amp; Payroll team to continue to collaborate with the internal comms team and networks to promote wellbeing, inclusion and celebration of diversity</li> <li>• HR &amp; Payroll team to continue to support and promote the staff networks and their goals, as well as resources</li> <li>• Continue to empower staff to generate their desired social clubs/classes into a reality by advertising space and opportunities within the LGA and recognise gaps</li> <li>• Improve the resources available to staff in relation to Women's Health, Men's Health and LGBTQIA+ Health</li> <li>• Aligned to the actions in the EDI action plan, consider how the organisation can better support staff and prepare/support managers of staff who</li> </ul>

Item	Current & ongoing commitments	Aims for the coming year (2021 - 22)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empower staff to generate their desired social clubs/classes into a reality by advertising space and opportunities within the LGA</li> <li>• Yammer rolled out as a private social network to engage informally with work colleagues – guidance available in the staff room</li> </ul>	<p>have experienced exclusion or mistreatment due to a protected characteristic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In line with the EDI action plan, review support for staff with caring responsibilities</li> </ul>
<b>Work environment</b>	<p>Specific to 18 Smith Square;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy catering options, including vegan &amp; vegetarian options available for ordering for internal meetings (as appropriate)</li> <li>• Kitchens are fully equipped to enable staff to store, heat and eat their food at work – including fridges, microwaves, cutlery, mugs, glasses and plates</li> <li>• Tea, Coffee, Milk &amp; Juices provided to all staff on all floors at no individual cost to them</li> <li>• Communal sofa and table areas on all floors</li> <li>• Terrace space &amp; open council area</li> </ul> <p>General</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remind staff of their individual responsibility to ensure desk/workstation is appropriate for own needs</li> <li>• Allowance provided to set up home working station (£300 for home-based workers – a temporary allowance was made available during the pandemic though this has now expired))</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In line with the EDI action plan, ensure that equality impact assessments are undertaken as appropriate in relation to organisational change</li> <li>• In partnership with the EDI Action - consider implications of flexible working policy review for building usage, including prayer room</li> <li>• Undertake a wellbeing risk assessment in addition to mandatory risk assessments, ahead of big changes including where change of equipment or work area occurs across the organisation (impact of COVID-19, any restructure to the organisation, removal of benefits as appropriate)</li> <li>• Align well-being activities with due consideration to changes in how the LGA works going forward (during COVID and post COVID).</li> </ul>



Item	Current & ongoing commitments	Aims for the coming year (2021 - 22)
<b>Active participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible working across the organisation including, flexibility of hours, TOIL and more</li> <li>• Encourage regular breaks from desks including one hour lunch breaks and time spent outside during daylight hours – especially important during autumn / winter months</li> <li>• SMT participation in the promotion of health and wellbeing at the LGA including, through the Chief Executive weekly videos to all staff</li> <li>• Regular temperature check surveys with resulting action plans</li> <li>• Promote social activities by encouraging team and organisational interactions, in and out of work time. Including but not limited to quiz's, coffees breaks (virtual and face to face) and use of Yammer</li> <li>• Promotion of health and wellbeing campaigns and awareness days including 'Time to Talk', cycle to work day, world heart day etc.</li> <li>• All staff webinars and weekly updates are available on the Wire to be accessed on a later date for events that fall on an individuals non-working day.</li> <li>• Empower staff and managers to become advocates for mental health and wellbeing through sharing experiences and best practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to conduct temperature check surveys to determine the 'mood' and needs of the organisation as it adjusts to hybrid ways of working</li> <li>• Continue to review and update Manager Toolkits in relation to supporting staff</li> <li>• Work with the internal comms team to encourage participation in campaigns related to health and wellbeing, and social activities to boost morale</li> </ul>
<b>Learning &amp; Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage staff to engage with internal and external development opportunities through communication</li> <li>• Facilitate 1-1 manager guidance sessions and 'surgeries' with HR</li> <li>• Implemented mental health first aiders at the LGA in 2021 following exclusive and intensive training</li> <li>• Promote wellbeing &amp; resilience courses to all managers and employees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the implementation of 'lunch &amp; learn' and/or HR drop- in sessions to identify learning needs and allow managers and staff to speak informally about issues</li> <li>• Work alongside the network groups and forums to take forward actions related to health and wellbeing at the LGA</li> <li>• Promote webinars and training as hosted/promoted by Inclusive Employers</li> </ul>

Item	Current & ongoing commitments	Aims for the coming year (2021 - 22)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote training on hidden disabilities such as dyslexia and epilepsy</li> <li>• Promotion of HR services, policies &amp; procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish dedicated training for managers and their wellbeing</li> <li>• Continue to consider awareness and training opportunities, and different models of engagement such as webinars, speakers and drop-in sessions when promoting future health and wellbeing campaigns and activity at the LGA</li> </ul>
<b>Equality &amp; Diversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion steering group continues to encourage and invite participation from staff of different backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences to improve EDI at the LGA</li> <li>• Subgroups of the EDI steering group that have been established by staff include BAME Network, Women's Network, Disability Network and LGBTQIA+ Network</li> <li>• The LGA recognises itself as a Disability Confident leader and this has had a positive impact on recruitment processes</li> <li>• Encourage individuals to share individual experiences at employee forum and through other mediums</li> <li>• Have a dedicated SMT lead responsible for Equality and Diversity at the LGA</li> <li>• Introduced and maintain anonymised recruitment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and enable inclusive and progressive change by aligning wellbeing activity to the aims of the equality, diversity, and inclusion strategy</li> </ul> <p>In partnership with the EDI action plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review how support for return to work from long term leave works in practice</li> <li>• Ensure guidance is produced on managing workloads for staff working reduced hours</li> <li>• Review support for people with caring responsibilities</li> <li>• Consult on, develop and support an approach to allyship in the LGA</li> <li>• Develop range of engagement methods to raise awareness/ celebrate difference</li> <li>• Ensure wellbeing strategy aligned to EDI strategy</li> <li>• Review process for requesting reasonable adjustments as part of procurement of Occupational health provider</li> <li>• Continue to support and promote the staff networks</li> </ul>

Item	Current & ongoing commitments	Aims for the coming year (2021 - 22)
<b>Home &amp; Remote Workers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of communication and collaboration tools including work mobiles, outlook, Teams, WhatsApp to make it easier to communicate with colleagues</li> <li>• Access to personal information online (Agresso) to allow ease of reference to payslips, expenses, contact details etc</li> <li>• Commitment to ensure internal meetings can be accessed remotely as well as face-to-face by encouraging the use of zoom and video conferencing</li> <li>• Manager toolkits on how to support remote teams and hybrid teams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In recognising homeworkers, the LGA aims to be inclusive, and to bring together the gap between remote and office workers but still recognising any individual needs</li> <li>• Understand that home worker needs will vary and look at gathering feedback from remote workers in a way that is bespoke to them</li> <li>• Treat home worker's fairly when looking at their health and wellbeing against office-based employees but acknowledge that there may be different needs for those who work remotely</li> <li>• Maintain best practice introduced as a result of the pandemic and ensure that the move to hybrid working continues to benefit all staff who work from home either part or full time</li> <li>• All policy and internal communications language to be updated to ensure inclusive of remote and home-based workers</li> <li>• Continue to consider how to engage part time colleagues and recognise the impact on engagement by reviewing the regularity of any social/work events</li> <li>• The HR &amp; Payroll team consider the effect on part time workers when developing learning and training dates, to minimise impact on their ability to attend.</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring &amp; measuring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of key indicators such as sickness absence rates, vacancy rates and agency spend to highlight where health and wellbeing may be impacting on productivity in both a positive and negative way</li> <li>• Analysis of staff survey data (temp check and 2022 staff survey pending)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to monitor and measure KPI's through the Corporate Health Indicators and HR Dashboard</li> <li>• Measure the understanding, usage and barriers to using services included in the LGA's wellbeing offer to staff through analysis of the temperature check surveys</li> </ul>

Item	Current & ongoing commitments	Aims for the coming year (2021 - 22)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR analysis of the use of EAP, Occupational Health &amp; Posturite services and recognition of trends alongside sickness absence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff survey 2022 analysis to support change</li> <li>• Continue to support the review of temperature check surveys as required alongside the communications team</li> </ul>
<b>Policies &amp; Procedures</b>	<p>HR review and update all HR policies on an annual basis in line with legislative changes, best practice and organisational change as appropriate.</p> <p>The following policies promote the health and wellbeing of staff;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance management policy</li> <li>• Capability policy and the recognition of supporting employees to improve as opposed to disciplining for capability and performance concerns</li> <li>• Career Break policy</li> <li>• Transitional flexible working policy</li> <li>• Flexible Retirement policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR to continue to review HR policies and procedures on an annual basis</li> <li>• HR to release a 'Transitioning at Work' policy in Autumn 2021</li> <li>• HR to develop an explicit zero tolerance policy on discrimination, micro aggressions, bullying, harassment and victimisation with measure for review and anonymous reporting – March 2022</li> <li>• Ensure the roll-out of policies is introduced alongside insight sessions, toolkits and/or training as appropriate</li> <li>• Review all policies to ensure they are 'carer friendly'</li> </ul>