

# **Case study – providing targeted support for staff physical and mental wellbeing**

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# Lambeth's workforce context

Excluding schools, 3,000 workforce total. 2,500 directly contracted and 500 agency workers. 59% Black, Asian, minority ethnic. 9% disabled, 61% female



500 front line workers – providing pandemic response services

Rapid need for risk assessment and COVID-19 security measures March 2020

80% working from home since March 2020

# Our wellbeing pledges

## Lambeth Wellbeing Pledges

### 1 Taking care of ourselves

- We will continue to provide a programme of training, events, workshops and webinars that are designed to educate all of us to better manage our own health and wellbeing, no matter what our work setting.
- We will offer all staff the opportunity to take part in the 'laughter' wellbeing programme that has been piloted successfully by Residents Services.
- We will work with managers to ensure that each team can best support the wellbeing of its individual members, including encouraging the use of the Wellbeing Toolkit.

### 2 Looking out for each other

- We will build out our existing network of mental health first aiders and champions across our directorates. We will continue to offer the confidential Employee Assistance Programme, available for all staff.
- As sponsors of the staff forum, we will work with each forum to ensure there are regular safe-space opportunities to share experiences, and that key issues arising are taken up to management board.
- We will ask all staff to take part in the Samaritans 'well-being in the workplace' training so that we are all better able to identify and respond to colleagues who are distressed.

### 3 Your work setting

- We will work with managers to double check that all staff, no matter where they are working from – home, office, out in the borough, on the frontline - have the resources and equipment needed to do their job safely, properly and comfortably.
- For office-based staff who cannot work from home, we will continue to provide you with the option to come and work from the office, subject to a risk assessment.
- As the pandemic allows, we will provide opportunities for all staff to spend some time in Council offices for team building and collaboration.

### 4 Your working day

- Within each directorate we will work further with managers to support a healthy working day which features appropriate breaks, time away from the screen, time to connect with colleagues, and recognise any additional caring responsibilities staff may have.
- For those who are out and about in the borough, opportunities to regroup and provide mutual support will be factored in.
- Each team will be encouraged to allocate an hour a month to hold a Time-to-Talk session.

### 5 Taking your annual leave

- We strongly want staff to be able to take annual leave, and to be able to use that leave to support their own resilience and recuperation.
- But where staff are unable to take annual leave due to work demands, we will allow staff to carry over up to 10 days of annual leave, which can be taken at any time over the next year.





# COVID-19 impact on workforce health

- Sickness rate reduced from 9.5 days per head to 7.3 over the last year
- Three colleagues sadly died from C-19
- 160 C-19 total cases since the start of the pandemic including agency workers. 5% of the total workforce
- C-19 disproportionate impact on BAME employees and risk assessment impact
- Higher impact on frontline services: adult care, children's services, housing officers and customer services

# Risk assessment for mental and physical wellbeing

- Workplace risk assessment
- Workforce risk assessment
- Individual risk assessment
- 1,200 individual risk assessment for frontline
- 1,000 home/remote working risk assessment with the delivery of IT and office equipment
- 30 culturally sensitive individual risk assessments with occupational health provider



# Wellbeing toolkit to support physical and mental wellbeing

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**Work Safe,  
Work Smart.**



# Supporting good mental health

- 50 mental health champions
- Developing mental health first aiders
- Whole-council 'Time to Talk' day and sessions
- Tracking mental health sickness absence – work and non-work related
- Commitment from the chief executive and lead cabinet member
- Increased take up of our employee assistance programme – up to 15% of the workforce, especially for anxiety counselling during the pandemic

# Office COVID-19 golden rules

- Before returning to one of our office buildings, staff should familiarise themselves and follow nine golden rules developed through the building risk assessment process, in consultation with trade unions, to ensure that staff and visitors remain safe.
- 1. Everyone must observe social distancing rules and keep two meters apart and wear a mask when this is not achievable.
  2. Sanitise your hands when entering all buildings
  3. Follow the marked one-way routes around the Town Hall, Civic Centre and Union Road
  4. Only one person is allowed in the lift at any one time
  5. You must book a workstation for the day. We are no longer 'hot-desking'
  6. Do not use workstations where the desk sensor indicates it has already been occupied. Check the Red/ Amber/ Green cleaning status of your reserved desk on screens before sitting down
  7. Sanitise or wash your hands before and after using all communal touch points, such as the lift and photocopier
  8. Avoid congregating in the lift lobby areas and all other communal spaces
  9. If you start to feel unwell at work with Covid-19 like symptoms, make your way to the isolation room, where there will be further advice about what to do





## The Future Office

- Monday – Friday, 9 to 5, is no longer
- Design of collaboration space
- Pulse survey of workforce
- Anxieties about return
- Forward-looking risk assessment

# Workforce Health impact assessment

- Staff survey in December 2020
- 74% agreed good work life balance but 17% disagreed
- 82% agreed there is a clear future plan, but 4% disagreed
- Overall improvement in employee engagement from 2019 survey with the Council achieving Silver-status accreditation
- Action plans are being developed to focus on improvement
- Wellbeing surveys prepared for cross-sections of the workforce

