



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Human Resources Committee

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE WELLBEING AT WORK: WORKPLACE HEALTH AWARD SCHEME

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 4 November 2016

Purpose of Report:

To inform Members of Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service's recent achievement of the Silver level of the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Wellbeing at Work Award Scheme, and to provide an overview of the support available to Service employees.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At its meeting on 16 October 2015, the committee considered a report setting out the attainment of a Bronze Award under the Nottinghamshire Wellbeing at Work: Workplace Health Award Scheme.
- 1.2 The scheme recognises good practice in the promotion of a healthy lifestyle agenda and evaluates organisational commitment to wellbeing at work against established standards and aims to provide small, medium and large sized organisations with the opportunity to promote and enable better health and wellbeing in the workplace. The scheme is open to all organisations, regardless of industry (or sector). It comprises 5 attainment levels across 5 themed areas, with a tiered approach as follows:

AWARD LEVEL	INTERVENTION TIERS
Bronze	Health promotion and information
Silver	Health development
Gold	Enabling and increasing access to local wellbeing services
Platinum	Policy changes and culture changes
Maintenance	Demonstrate continuous commitment to improve and development of health and wellbeing in the workplace.

- 1.3 Since the previous report, the Occupational Health (OH) team have been successful in attaining the Silver Award, and has been recognised as meeting the prescribed criteria in the area of Health Development.
- 1.4 This report provides an update of the occupational health initiatives which are in place to support employee wellbeing.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The award scheme concentrates on evidence across a range of support, concentrating on the following areas:
- Substance Use / Misuse
 - Mental Health and Wellbeing
 - Healthy Weight
 - Protecting Health
 - Safe Workplace
- 2.2 **Substance use / misuse:** the Service has a long established Substance Misuse Policy and undertakes pre-employment and in-employment screening for prohibited substances. Screening is provided through a third party substance screening agency. The aim of the policy is to support those who declare an addiction through a rehabilitation process which requires them to work with the Service, and with support from their primary healthcare provider, to break their addiction. This may be an addiction to narcotics, prescribed medication, alcohol or other banned substances.

- 2.3 Additionally, the Service has, through its adoption of the “Securing a Tobacco Free Generation for Nottinghamshire” in 2015, been working to reduce smoking amongst its employees by engaging in smoke-stop campaigns and appointing an employee volunteer Health Champion who actively promotes smoking cessation and works with individuals on a personal level. The Service introduced a smoking ban at Service Headquarters from April 2016.
- 2.4 **Mental Health and Wellbeing:** absence due to mental health issues accounts for a high proportion of sickness nationally, and is amongst the top two reasons for absence within the Service. Stress management training has been provided as part of the prospectus for some time and a stress risk assessment is available via the OH intranet site.
- 2.5 Particular focus has been given to mental health awareness and support through a number of initiatives in the past year. This has included the roll-out of a Post Incident Support Programme based on the Critical incident Stress Management model to all Watch Managers, with over 33 half day sessions being undertaken, and the development of an e-learning module which is freely accessible to all employees. Additionally, an external provider has been commissioned to run “Building Mental Health Resilience” and “Managing Resiliently” workshops over the course of the past year; and 97 participants have attended the sessions.
- 2.6 The Service has also signed up to the Mind “Time to Talk” campaign and to the Blue Light Programme which provides a dedicated helpline for emergency service workers. Mind has also provided some training for managers.
- 2.7 During 2016, a Peer Support team has become established to provide confidential, workplace social support. There are 19 trained Peer Support volunteers who make themselves available to meet with colleagues to talk through issues that are worrying them.
- 2.8 Professional counselling support is available through our membership of the Westfield Health Scheme, contract with Relate and links to the Trauma Centre. The Fire Fighters’ Charity provides mental health support at its centres for all Service employees and their families, and the Service Chaplain is also available to provide individual and group support following traumatic incidents. The OH team also fund some private counselling where appropriate.
- 2.9 A joint Mental Health Working Group has become established during 2016, led by the Head of People and Organisational Development and with representatives from trade unions, the Employee Engagement Network, OH and Peer Support team. The aim of the group is to promote mental ill health initiatives and identify any areas of concern.
- 2.10 **Healthy Weight:** this forms part of the total package of health care provided by the OH team. Standard medicals include waist measurement, blood pressure checks, cholesterol checks, blood sugar checks, dietary assessment and advice. Promotional campaigns are run to encourage healthy eating and to provide further information on diet. For instance, earlier this year, an open event was arranged through a company called The Healthy Employee, which focused on food choices and portion sizes, and was very well attended by employees. Follow up shows that people have actually changed their eating habits as a result.

- 2.11 Employees over 45 are encouraged to take advantage of a lifestyle MOT provided by the OH team, which includes analysis of height/weight, cholesterol, body fat and other health indicators. “Know Your Numbers” has become an annual event.
- 2.12 It is a role requirement that operational fire-fighter maintain high fitness levels and clearly weight forms part of operational fitness checks. For those struggling to meet fitness requirements, remedial fitness programmes are put in place which may include diet plans.
- 2.13 **Protecting Health:** This is predominantly awareness raising initiatives, with posters, leaflets and information which points employees to further support. The Service employs an OH Support Officer to lead on health promotion and to visit workplaces to undertake on-site medical checks.
- 2.14 The Service provides gyms at all its sites, and Physical Training Instructors on stations provide advice and support to maintain operational fitness. Fitness tests are undertaken annually and the Grade One pass rate for 2016 is 96.5%. A qualified Fitness Advisor is available to work with employees struggling to maintain their fitness or returning to work following illness or injury.
- 2.15 All employees are members of the Westfield Health Scheme, which offers a cash-back scheme for dental and optical checks and treatment and facilitates access to physiotherapy support and access to consultancy diagnostics and treatment, including MRI and CT scans. This enables employees to receive fast-track diagnosis of conditions and receive treatment either directly or through NHS referral. The scheme also provides an employee helpline, 24 hour telephone GP access, and counselling sessions.
- 2.16 **Safe Workplace:** this supports the work the Health, Safety and Environmental Risk Management section does ensuring that the Health and Safety Reps carry out inspections and that accidents, near misses and dangerous occurrences are reported and investigated.
- 2.17 Alongside this, the OH Team carried out a health promotion campaign about Winter Flu and Norovirus. A week long campaign highlighted the importance of washing your hands, cleaning keyboards and telephones, gave tips on boosting your immune system with certain foods and how to avoid the Norovirus with the “Catch it, Bin it, Kill it” posters. To assist with this, flu vaccinations were also offered – 75 in total were given in 2015.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Expenditure is contained within existing budgets and there are no charges relating to participation in the scheme.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

The Service has a strong commitment to maintain and enhance the health, fitness and wellbeing of its employees. This award demonstrates this commitment in practice and reflects the work being undertaken to prevent ill-health and promote healthy lifestyles. Over time this should lead to a reduction in sickness absence and a healthier workforce.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An Equality Impact Assessment has not been undertaken as there are no policy or service delivery implications.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications arising from this report. However it should be noted that a preventative approach to health and wellbeing should result in fewer absences from work and improve employee morale.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members note the contents of the report and agree to receive future updates on the work undertaken by the OH team to promote employee wellbeing.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER