

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE15 June 2015INVESTORS IN PEOPLE: HEALTH AND WELLBEING AWARDREPORT OF HEAD OF ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENTContact Officer: Jamie Cann Tel No: 01962 848437RECENT REFERENCES:

None.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Winchester City Council was first successfully assessed against the Investors in People Health and Wellbeing framework in March 2012 and was subsequently awarded the prestigious Investors in People Gold Standard in March 2014.

During April 2015, an external assessor completed a reassessment against the Health and Wellbeing standard, involving 52 staff in either face to face meetings or telephone discussions.

A copy of the external assessors report is available from Organisational Development should Members require further information.

Members' attention is drawn to the following comments, contained within the external assessor's report:

"I am delighted to confirm that Winchester City Council has maintained its IIP Health and Wellbeing Award and there was ample evidence to show that it has been continuously reviewing and revising its policies and procedures in this area over the past three years.

This assessment has highlighted a real commitment from Members, Chief Executive and Senior Managers to the health and wellbeing of staff. In addition, it marked improvement in the managers being proactive in

supporting the needs of their team and individuals.

There was also evidence of a more proactive approach to supporting staff where absenteeism and ill health is concerned. Managers indicated that they had received good support from HR tackling difficult situations, and new policies and procedures had helped to clarify different ways of working that are achieving required results.

The whole atmosphere within the Council appeared to be very positive. There is a general culture of 'making things happen'. The general view of staff is that Winchester City Council is a great place to work."

On hearing the outcome of the assessment, the Chief Executive commented:

"This award shows that, in spite of budget and other challenges, we are on the right track. The award is recognition for the professionalism, positive attitude and resilience that staff demonstrate at Winchester City Council. They should be proud of their achievement."

The external assessment also identified areas for continuous improvement. In summary form these areas include:

- Considering how the effectiveness of managers in relation to health and wellbeing might be incorporated in to the draft Employee Wellbeing Plan.
- The evaluation of the success of the Health at Work programme could be improved by gaining more immediate feedback on the activities, however the success will no doubt be further down the line and ways of following up the impact with staff should be reviewed.
- Consideration could be given to carrying out a skills analysis across the Council to identify any skills and talents staff may have that could be used to support the Council.
- New staff were not sure if the commitment by the Council to their health and wellbeing was mentioned during recruitment. This might be an area to be reviewed as it is a 'unique selling point' for the Council.

The Head of Organisational Development will oversee an action plan to maintain the momentum in this area and to implement the areas of continuous improvement identified within the report.

The following two items were also highlighted in the areas for continuous improvement. Members are asked to note that progress is already being made to address these areas as outlined below:

- Consideration should be given to implementing a system whereby anyone, including managers and staff, can put forward colleagues or teams for recognition awards.

Members are asked to note that this scheme has since been established through the refreshed “Alfie’s” awards which are now branded as “Celebrate”. The first award ceremony is being held on 30 June 2015.

- Discussions highlighted a suggestion of a pay review and consideration should be given to reviewing the lower level wages to include perhaps Winchester weighting.

Members are asked to note that the Council’s approach to reward and recognition is identified as a priority within the Portfolio Plan.

The draft Health and Wellbeing Plan referred to herein is being finalised to reflect comments from Officers and will be shared with Members for information at a future meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Committee notes the achievement of maintaining the Investors in People Health and Wellbeing Award and raises any issues of note with the Portfolio Holder.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

The External Assessors’ full report is available from the Head of Organisational Development.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1- Areas of Strength as identified by the External Assessor

Appendix 1

Areas of strength as identified in the external assessor's report

- There is definitely a commitment for staff health and wellbeing throughout the whole Council. This is recognised by staff at all levels and as a result staff morale appears to be high as reflected in the improved scores in the latest Health and Wellbeing survey.
- The 1Team is working much more effectively since the last assessment. There is evidence of far more interaction between the various teams. Staff also commented on the benefit of working for a small Council as they felt part of one family and knew most of the people. The friendly, supportive environment has definitely been a factor in long service within the Council.
- The draft Employee Wellbeing Plan is well written with measurable targets. The fact it has been developed through consultation with many levels of staff will hopefully encourage their buy-in.
- Task and Finish groups have been used effectively to help give staff opportunities to be involved in decision making. They have also encouraged more cross organisational working.
- The structure of the Council, with the Assistant Directors roles, has promoted collaboration and brought together expertise throughout the Council to work on Corporate projects where required. This is now working well.
- Staff were all aware of the purpose, values and objectives of the Council. The meetings between the Chief Executive and small teams have increased the two-way communication between staff and the senior team.
- The managers are now far more aware of their roles and responsibilities in supporting their team's health and wellbeing. They were able to describe individual and team needs and how these needs are being supported. The Bradford system appears to be working effectively as a means of monitoring absenteeism and all managers agreed the training had been useful.
- Flexi working has definitely been a real factor in reducing stress amongst staff and supporting their work life balance. Managers are now managing this far more effectively than when the last assessment took place. There was evidence of equal opportunity for this to be agreed where needed – although there are a few areas within the Council where the roles do not lend themselves to this kind of working and more innovative ways of supporting work life balance have had to be implemented.
- There were good examples where changes/restructuring had taken place as a result of consultation with staff. This was particularly relevant where the Housing team are concerned.
- Managers all described how they are well supported through HR policies and procedures. They confirmed excellent support from HR and could give examples of how they had been supported in areas such as performance management and difficulties with sickness and absenteeism. There was evidence that the reviewed grievance policy has been successfully used to resolve issues through mediation.
- Managers are now being more proactive in recognising health and other issues within their teams. This is reflected in the increased use of Occupational Health support over the past year.

- The Health at Work Group has worked extremely hard to promote a healthy lifestyle throughout the Council. Their activity programme is now more high profile and it is clear they take on board staff needs. Staff confirmed City Voice, the intranet and posters have been the main method of communication although access to the intranet for health and wellbeing information was variable. Those using the events were all really delighted – especially with the massage and fruit. There were lots of accolades for these.
- Many of the staff interviewed gave examples where they had been given opportunities to progress their careers within the Council either by using secondments, professional qualifications or internal vacancies advertised through the 1Team. Discussions confirmed managers are now supporting their staff to achieve their aspirations where possible.
- The appointment of apprentices has encouraged a more diverse workforce where age is concerned. It has also helped to build capacity for the future. Discussions with apprentices highlighted they are motivated by being given opportunities to volunteer to work in the community. This has also fostered team work amongst them.
- Those staff returning to work after a long period of sickness all said they had been supported effectively whilst on leave as well as when they returned to work. Phased return to work programmes and also Occupational Health support has been very welcomed.