

Integration Joint Board

Agenda item:

Date of Meeting: 27th May 2020

Title of Report: Employee / Staff Wellbeing and Resilience / Covid-19

Presented by: Jane Fowler, Head of Customer Support Services

The Integration Joint Board is asked to:

- Note the approach taken and progress to date to support staff wellbeing and resilience
- Note that this builds on work that was already underway
- Note that this is an integrated and inclusive approach across 2 employers and expands out to the 3rd and independent sector providers
- Note that the approach aligns with the National Wellbeing Network led by the Minister for Health, Claire Haughey.

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report outlines the approach and progress with support measures being put into place for staff within Argyll and Bute HSCP during the current Covid-19 crisis.
- 1.2. Within the HSCP the council and NHS already have a number of measures in place to support the health and wellbeing of their staff. These measures were reviewed in light of the current Covid-19 pandemic and have been enhanced or, where appropriate, new measures have been introduced or are being planned. Some of these are also being reviewed in terms of what can also be offered to other partners within the partnership in addition to ongoing national plans.
- 1.3. These actions have been taken in response to the needs of staff at this difficult and unprecedented time and also in response to the letters from Claire Haughey, the Minister for Mental Health (Appendix A) dated 26th March and 20th April (Appendix B) encouraging the promotion of Mental Health and Wellbeing during Covid-19 for the health and social care workforce. A paper and action plan went to the HSCP SLT, Council SMT and Covid-19 Tactical Group for feedback including Trade Unions in early April.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Minister for Mental Health highlights in her first letter “Our workforces always respond professionally in times of need. However the scale of the

challenge is unprecedented. We are asking people to work in unfamiliar settings and many will be asked to learn new skills and will be working in new roles. We recognise that many will be personally impacted by the Covid-19 virus. Some will be caring for their own families, some may be at high risk themselves. This is no small ask. Therefore it is absolutely essential that we look after their mental health and well-being”.

2.2 Staff mental health and wellbeing is paramount for Argyll and Bute HSCP and particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic. All staff are likely to be under increased pressure over this period and need appropriate support. As well as many staff working in the frontline in a variety of different roles with people suffering from Covid-19, staff are also part of their local communities. People may be anxious about contracting or passing on the virus. Some may have been ill with the virus or have been affected by family, friends or colleagues who have been, and sadly some will be experiencing loss and bereavement. Many are working from home, sharing this space with others and coping day to day with being isolated from friends, family and colleagues for long periods of time. They are juggling home and work life and caring responsibilities with many home schooling.

3 DETAIL OF REPORT

3.1 Wellbeing covers basic physical and mental health needs, information, peer support and psychological first aid. It is not just about helping staff when there is a crisis, although there is that support, but about encouraging a focus on keeping ourselves mentally and physically well and paying attention to our own needs as a matter of course. Good self care routines such as a healthy approach to diet, exercise, relaxation and sleep. This is even more important at this time particularly given the duration of the pandemic.

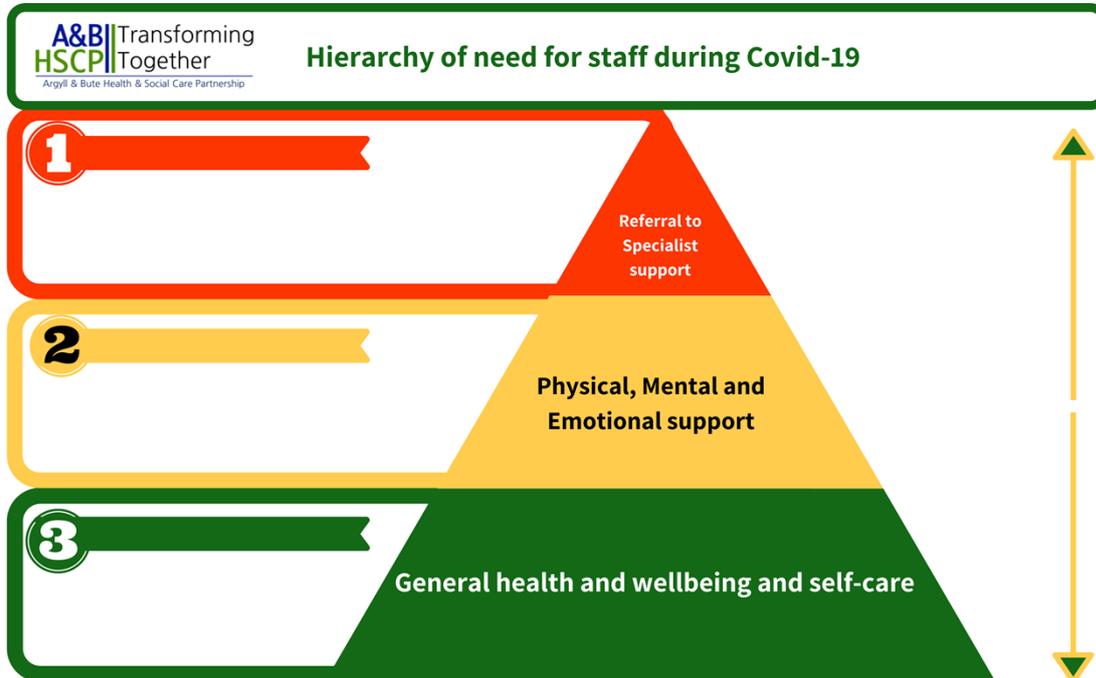
3.2 An Argyll and Bute HSCP Wellbeing Group has been established to share resources, coordinate where possible, and ensure the full range of health and social care staff are supported with their wellbeing and mental health. The group links closely with the NHS Highland Wellbeing Group, the Council's Wellbeing Team and the National Wellbeing Champions' Network. It includes organisational development, public health, mental health and psychological support services and a Council wellbeing representative. The group has co-produced an action plan which has been agreed by the HSCP Senior Leadership Team, Council SMT and reports to A&B HSCP Silver Command.

3.3 It is recognised that this a rapidly changing situation and additional support measures are being developed in response to new and changing demands on an ongoing basis. Further national developments continue including:

- National Workforce Wellbeing Network. The aim is to promote and support good psychological mental health and wellbeing of the health and social care workforce across Scotland. Jane Fowler is the Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Champion for the HSCP and Council and Fiona Hogg (Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development for NHS Highland

- Recommendations are being developed on how best to spend a donation from the NHS Charities Together

3.4 Our approach to staff wellbeing is illustrated by the pyramid below.



3.5 To help to ensure the best use of resources, staff have been categorised in three areas of need although it is acknowledged that individuals may cross over into more than one category at any one time. These groups are:

1. Those who may require **Referral to Specialist support** (Red section) (i.e. front-line NHS and HSCP Key-Workers who are in direct contact with Covid-19 cases).
2. Those who may require **Physical, mental and emotional support** (Yellow section) (i.e. staff in roles who are able to continue working either on-site or remotely, and who may be facing increased demand/pressure).
3. Those with concerns over their **General health and wellbeing and self-care** (Green section) (All staff, but particularly those not affected by Covid-19-related demands at work, but who will be affected by the situation in general).

3.6 The key activities to date are outlined below under the three levels whilst acknowledging as before that individuals may cross over into more than one.

3.7 Referral to Specialist support

- NHS Highland has established a Staff Psychological Wellbeing Network. This service is available to all health and social care staff within Argyll and Bute HSCP, clinical and non clinical, if they need it. This Network provides advice and support to build and maintain the psychological wellbeing of colleagues, to increase resilience

and to reduce the likelihood of burnout, trauma, or other emotional injury during the Covid-19 outbreak.

- Occupational Health (OH) Services are available for Council and NHS employees. NHS OH capacity focussed on Covid-19 testing.
- Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP). The Council has a service provided by Health Assured. NHS Highland launched their new service on 1 May, this was due to launch later and was brought forward to support staff now. The service is delivered by Validium.

3.8 Physical, mental and emotional support

- The Department of Spiritual Care (Chaplaincy) is offering support to HSCP staff by creating opportunities to talk about issues that matter most and the impact work has on us. The department of spiritual care is uniquely placed to help address some of the difficult topics people may have at this time.
- Support via the intranet and internet: Argyll and Bute Council has a wellbeing webpage that is available to all employees and to the general public, in addition to the EAP for staff; a Wellbeing webpage is being developed by NHS Highland building on some strategic work that had previously started.
- Some localities have set up various local supports utilising local skilled professionals and volunteers.
- Establishing Wellbeing Champions – SLT have been asked to nominate colleagues who can help to signpost and promote wellbeing support services as well as provide feedback to A&B wellbeing group from staff on the ground. These could be sustained into the future renewal phase
- Resources for building resilience that include establishing a pilot for 50 staff of Resilience Engine's online guide to resilience and wellbeing. This is bite sized chunks, 2-3 hours of guidance, tools and stories on how to boost resilience. This will be alongside OD support.
- One area of focus as we move forward is ensuring that managers are well trained to support employees' continued well-being and to understand, recognise and better deal with mental health issues in the workplace to support more good days at work where staff can thrive and flourish.

3.9 General health and wellbeing and self-care

- Practical Covid-19 information for staff – PPE, Infection Control, Virus information, Risk Assessment so that staff are informed and feel safe at work. This work is being lead and co-ordinated by colleagues in Health and Safety, however the impact of any difficulties in accessing PPE can impact on staff wellbeing.
- Wellbeing Wednesday – a now weekly feature of emails to staff highlighting where to find support covering:
 - General health and wellbeing guidance and tips
 - Brief, themed messages aimed at promoting wellbeing, along with links to useful support and reference materials (available in the national Communications toolkit that is a living document

- Details of other key information and resources available and about working at home
- Reminder of our internal support resources including chaplaincy, Employee Assistance Programme and psychological support
- Links to Council e-learning and national NHS e-learning, which have specific wellbeing modules
- Free access to wellbeing, mindfulness and sleep apps
- Posters designed by NES (NHS Education Scotland) illustrating psychological and self-soothing support have been circulated to all Local Area Managers and care home contacts
- The Going Home Checklist designed by MIND/NHS has been circulated to all buildings and included in staff email
- The importance of communication channels within the HSCP are being reviewed as part of a communications plan to enable key messages to get to staff quickly and efficiently.

4 RELEVANT DATA AND INDICATORS

- 4.1 A “pulse-check” staff survey will be carried out at regular intervals to assess the state of wellbeing and compare data to check that the wellbeing activities are supporting staff. This will be done jointly with health and council staff. The aim is the Wellbeing Champions can also provide feedback from their localities and areas of work.

5 CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- 5.1 We anticipate that staff will continue to need wellbeing support in the longer-term and that the work we are doing now will provide a sound foundation. This is an unprecedented situation for our employees, our patients and clients and our communities. Learning from countries who are coming through the pandemic is that the psychological impact of working in this environment can have long term effects. It is important that we are able to support our colleagues with all the resources that we can.
- 5.2 This builds on previous work that started around health and wellbeing and will help to build a better workplace for the future with more good days at work.

6 GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial Impact

None – developments all taking place within existing resources

6.1 Staff Governance

The Action Plan has been developed in partnership with TUs and Staff Side.

6.2 Clinical Governance

7 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

8 RISK ASSESSMENT

9 PUBLIC & USER INVOLVEMENT & ENGAGEMENT

Feedback from colleagues will be assessed through the pulse surveys.

10 CONCLUSIONS

The HSCP value all staff and are committed to supporting them during the Covid-19 pandemic. The existing and proposed support measures outlined in the attached Action Plan will provide a range of resources to help support the health and wellbeing of all staff and their families during these difficult times. We are currently in this phase, however we will need to plan for the next renewal phase and there are opportunities from this pandemic to make real, significant and sustainable improvements to the strategic approach of the health and wellbeing of staff in the HSCP

11 DIRECTIONS

Directions required to Council, NHS Board or both.	Directions to:	tick
	No Directions required	X
	Argyll & Bute Council	
	NHS Highland Health Board	
	Argyll & Bute Council and NHS Highland Health Board	

REPORT AUTHOR AND CONTACT

Name: Jane Fowler, Head of Customer Support Services

Email: Jane.Fowler@argyll-bute.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Letter from Claire Haughey, Minister of Health, 26 March

Appendix B – Letter from Claire Haughey, Minister of Health, 20th April