

## LGA Employee Health & Wellbeing Strategy Paper

Date created: May 2019

Responsible Officer: Head of HR & Payroll

Date for next review: April 2025

Date of last revision: January 2023

Review Date	Revisions
<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>
<b>January 2023</b>	Updated aims for the coming year 2023
<b>January 2024</b>	Updated actions for coming year 2024

### 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 the 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 2024 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 also on [Yammer](#).

4.2 Cycling - The cycle to work scheme is administered by the HR & Payroll team 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](#)

4.3 Active Wellbeing Challenge – The LGA encourages all staff to participate in this annual, [virtual walk around the world](#) event organised through the Civil Service Sports Committee (CSSC).

4.4 Promotion of health awareness days – a range of awareness events and activities are promoted throughout the year in accordance with the wellbeing calendar.

### **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.

5.2 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.

5.3 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).

5.4 The EAP can be accessed in a multiple of ways through their [Wisdom 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 can 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 [Thrive online, the LGA's learning and development hub](#) holds multiple resources for staff to refer to in relation to the 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 Assured.

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 can 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)

### **6.3 Reasonable Adjustments Passports**

The LGA HR & Payroll team and Disabilities Staff Network have launched a Reasonable Adjustment Passport and managers guide. The Reasonable Adjustment Passport has been designed as a 'talking tool' for colleagues to have positive and constructive conversations with their line managers about reasonable adjustments that they might need in the workplace.

Equality law recognises that achieving equality for disabled people may mean changing the way that employment is structured known as the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

The LGA wants to recognise colleagues as a whole individual at work and to do that, a reasonable adjustment passport can facilitate open, honest, practical, positive, and productive conversations between colleagues and their line manager about their additional needs and the reasonable adjustments which can be made to the working environment, work style and/or hours of work and for this to be recorded within a Reasonable Passport. More information on establishing and reviewing the passport and managers' guide can be found on the wire.

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

### **7.1 Flexible working**

7.1.1 All employees can take advantage of the flexible working policy. Office based staff are required to attend 18 Smith Square, external events, visits, or meetings at least twice a week. The LGA does not have set core 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 carers 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 The internal communications strategy is being refreshed and will seek to incorporate wellbeing.

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, engagement takes place at the All-Staff Webinars, and the newly established People & EDI strategic 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. New private work pods will also be piloted on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor and the venue team have engaged with the Disability and Neurodiversity Network.

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 the rise across the UK and the transition to hybrid working all staff have access to online resources on the ['Your health and 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. MHFA's are also required to attend refresher training every 3 years.

## **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 (People XD) reminds managers to complete probation forms, appraisals, and review sickness absence. This acts as 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 individual needs (the “how are you” conversation). Guidance on best practice one to one conversations can be found in the [appraisal guidance in the performance zone](#) .

## Appendix 1

### LGA Commitment to Wellbeing & Actions for the Coming Year (January 2024 – December 2024)

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

Item	Current & ongoing commitments	Aims for the coming year (2024)
<p><b>Raising awareness</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committed to promoting health and wellbeing campaigns as set out in the annual internal communications 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 well-being 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 Meetings, People &amp; EDI Steering Group, and other network groups on an ad hoc 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> </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 staff 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 flexible working policy and its benefits to all staff</li> <li>• Raise awareness of financial wellbeing through a range of resources to mirror the current issues people are facing regarding cost of living</li> </ul>

Item	Current & ongoing commitments	Aims for the coming year (2024)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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.</li> <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, the Wisdom 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 and enablement services</li> <li>• Occupational Health – LGA has engaged Health Assured to provide occupational health services</li> <li>• HR promote and provide annual eye care and 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> </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 learn and perform 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 have experienced</li> </ul>

Item	Current & ongoing commitments	Aims for the coming year (2024)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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> <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>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. The LGA will be able to gain further understanding of the needs of colleagues with caring responsibilities through the Staff Survey results.</li> </ul>
<b>Work environment</b>	<p><b>Specific to 18 Smith Square;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Healthy catering options, including vegan, vegetarian &amp; Halal 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>• £300 allowance provided to contractual home-based workers to set up home working station</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 plan- consider implications of flexible working policy review for building usage, including First Aid/ Multi Faith 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 (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</li> </ul>

Item	Current & ongoing commitments	Aims for the coming year (2024)
<b>Active participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible working across the organisation including, flexibility of hours (no core hours), taking back time to suit personal circumstances 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 regular SMT blogs to all staff</li> <li>• Regular staff 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 quizzes, coffee 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 meetings 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>• Conduct staff surveys to determine the ‘mood’ and needs of the organisation</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> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work alongside the network groups and forums to take forward actions related to health and wellbeing at the LGA</li> </ul>

Item	Current & ongoing commitments	Aims for the coming year (2024)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate 1-1 manager guidance sessions and 'surgeries' with HR</li> <li>• Promote wellbeing &amp; resilience courses to all managers and employees</li> <li>• Promote training on hidden disabilities such as dyslexia and epilepsy</li> <li>• Promotion of HR services, policies &amp; procedures</li> <li>• Implementation of workshop sessions and/or HR drop- in sessions to identify learning needs and allow managers and staff to speak informally about issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote webinars and training as hosted/promoted by Inclusive Employers</li> <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 e.g., Menopause awareness webinars</li> <li>• Consider refresher training for MHFAs</li> </ul>
<b>Equality &amp; Diversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A People and 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 People and EDI steering group that have been established by staff include BAME Network, Women's Network, Disability &amp; Neurodivergent Network, LGBTQIA+ Network and Early Careers 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 through various mediums</li> <li>• Have a dedicated SMT lead responsible for Equality and Diversity at the LGA</li> <li>• Introduced and maintain anonymised recruitment</li> <li>• Introduced Reasonable Adjustment passport</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 via staff survey.</li> <li>• The LGA have consulted on an approach to allyship an agreement was made to pause on the issue with the potential to review. Further develop range of engagement methods to raise awareness/ celebrate difference</li> </ul>

Item	Current & ongoing commitments	Aims for the coming year (2024)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refreshed Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan process</li> <li>• Development of workshop drop in sessions on EDI topics including, neurodiversity in the workplace, LGBTQIA History session, Social Model of Disability etc.</li> </ul>	
<b>Flexible working</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As part of Flexible Working Policy, review the effective 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 (People XD) 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 continuing to encourage the use of Teams</li> <li>• Manager toolkits on how to support remote teams and hybrid teams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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 workers 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>• 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, staff turnover and reasons for leaving, 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</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 staff surveys</li> </ul>

Item	Current & ongoing commitments	Aims for the coming year (2024)
	<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>	
<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>Flexible working policy</li> <li>Flexible Retirement policy</li> <li>Compassionate and Family Support Leave policy</li> <li>Dignity at Work policy</li> <li>Time off for Public Duties and Volunteering</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 develop an updated Dignity at work Policy to include zero tolerance policy on discrimination, micro aggressions, bullying, harassment and victimisation with measure for review and anonymous reporting</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' using the Equality Impact Assessment tool.</li> </ul>