

**POLICE AND CRIME PANEL – 24 September 2019**

**HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

**REPORT BY THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER**

**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

*To present members with an update on Dorset Police's approach to officer and staff health and wellbeing, as well as the Force's utilisation of the Police and Crime Commissioner's Health and Wellbeing Fund.*

**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The pressures faced by emergency service personnel have been well publicised. In Dorset, the Force has experienced an increase in not only demand, but also complexity – with emerging threats such as cybercrime, child sexual exploitation and county lines drug gangs becoming more prevalent in recent years. Of course, such challenges have occurred at a time of central government budget cuts.
- 1.2 The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has described this as a perfect storm, in which the work required of Dorset Police is ever more challenging, but the resources available have shrunk. Indeed, police officer numbers in Dorset are at their lowest number since the 1980s.
- 1.3 Against this backdrop, it is sadly inevitable that the health and wellbeing of Force personnel will begin to suffer, and the Chief Constable has previously highlighted an increase of welfare referrals during this period of austerity.
- 1.4 In response to this, and the Chief Constable's stated desire to improve the health and wellbeing of his workforce, the PCC made available a £250,000 health and wellbeing fund from his annual commissioning budget in order that extra steps could be provided to support those who are charged with protecting the public.
  - 1.1. The intention of this commitment was to create a happier and healthier workforce for Dorset Police and, in doing so, increase the organisation's capability and resilience.
  - 1.2. In response to the fund, the Force identified a number of initiatives to improve health and wellbeing, and subsequently requested £237,000 of the £250,000 offered.
  - 1.3. Subsequently 21 new wellbeing initiatives were proposed and accepted by the Police and Crime Commissioner for delivery throughout the 2018/19 & 2019/20 periods. These initiatives are detailed further in Appendix A.

## 2. WELLBEING STRATEGY

2.1. In July 2018, recognising that the abovementioned health and wellbeing challenges are common to all forces in England and Wales, the Home Office set a 'common goal for police wellbeing'. This set out to ensure, by 2021:

- Every officer and staff member *feels confident that their welfare and wellbeing is actively supported by their police force throughout their career;*
- *That a culture supporting this is embedded in every force;*
- *That individuals have access to appropriate support when they need it.*

2.2. The Home Office goal includes physical and mental health as well as the broader concept of wellbeing – which enables individuals to realise their potential, be resilient and be able to make a productive contribution to the police workforce.

2.3. In response, the Force approved a dedicated, evidenced based wellbeing strategy in 2018 that set out six key priorities, namely:

- Improvement in measures of health and wellbeing and emotional resilience;
- Reduction in numbers of people with sedentary life styles;
- Further reinforcement of the 'Centre for Health at Work' approach;
- Development of an organisational health and wellbeing culture that embraces good health, good work, good relationships and good specialist support;
- Improved awareness and reduced perceived stigma in respect of mental health;
- Implementation of the Blue Light Wellbeing Framework, developed by the College of Policing and Public Health England.

## 3. BASELINE

3.1. A baseline is necessary, to compare progress over the life of the funded initiatives. A combination of approaches has been agreed where the existing force wellbeing survey will be used alongside a formal assessment of delivery against the six key priorities.

3.2. This blended approach allows for both qualitative and quantitative improvements to be tracked, and for progress against both national and local priorities to be identified. The success of forces in term of wellbeing will, nationally, be measured against the Home Office goal of ensuring staff and officers feel supported and have access to support when it is required. This is also reflected fully in the force wellbeing strategy and the results of the dedicated 'Wellbeing Pulse Survey' which will provide a baseline to measure progress going forward.

3.3. The baseline measures from the Pulse Survey are as follows:

- 64% of respondents believe Dorset is a good place to work;
- 50% believe their wellbeing has improved or been maintained at a generally good level;
- 56% carry out the recommended minimum amount of physical activity every/most weeks;
- 57% of respondents said they have experienced significant stress or mental health issues in the last year;
- out of 5 agree that their line manager is interested in their wellbeing;
- Only 38% of staff regularly get at least 7 hours sleep;
- 81% of staff view their relationship with their manager as positive;
- 92% feel their relationship with work colleagues is positive;
- When accessing support, staff are overwhelmingly positive about the benefits of private medical interventions, the EAP, physiotherapy, counselling and occupational health (85% - 70%)

#### 4. PROGRESS TO DATE

- 4.1. Recognising that limited time has passed since the implementation of the new initiatives, there has been significant progress in respect of promoting wellbeing across the Force.
- 4.2. HMICFRS specifically reviewed 'Wellbeing' as part of the Peel Inspection process in 2017 and at that time commented that the force had a good understanding of the importance of promoting wellbeing, recognised the issue as a priority, had suitable governance in place, but was not investing as much as Devon & Cornwall Police in this area of activity.
- 4.3. Since that time, and owing to the PCC's increase in funding for wellbeing activity, the Force has taken forward a range of new developments as detailed in Appendix A.
- 4.4. In the draft of its latest 2019 Peel assessment HMICFRS recognised this investment, summarised performance as 'good' and reported that: 'there is a caring culture in the force'; staff 'felt their welfare was a priority'; line managers 'know how to access wellbeing services'; and 'equal importance is given to both physical and mental ill-health'.
- 4.5. It is too early to make a formal assessment of the impact of the new initiatives, but some areas of current progress are provided below:
  - Dorset now has five dedicated Health and Wellbeing Groups in place, ensuring most business areas are able to directly influence and promote wellbeing initiatives at a local level.
  - Work is continuing in a number of areas to encourage individuals into active lifestyles. Healthy lifestyle sessions have been introduced in Dorset and have been well received by staff.
  - In October 2018, 13 Individuals completed a Level 2 Gym Instructor course. These staff are acting as health champions encouraging individuals in stations to be more physically active and assisting with gym inductions across the force.
  - The wearable fitness devices study undertaken by the force in partnership with Exeter University has shown positive long-term lifestyle changes to individuals wearing these devices, particular for individuals with sedentary lifestyles.
  - There is continued emphasis on a Health Screening programme, in support of officers and staff working in roles with high psychological risk. This recognised 'good practice' has been a long-standing element of the Force's approach to wellbeing and a similar scheme has now been adopted by Devon & Cornwall Police.
  - Specific activity of note also includes Menopause awareness training and the development of Menopause SPOCs; the introduction of additional TRIM practitioners to support staff after traumatic incidents; and the continued investment in personal resilience training, which is receiving very positive feedback.
  - On 'World Mental Health Day' a force message was sent out linked to a number of 'Let's Talk' videos, where individuals who have struggled with their mental health shared their stories. Feedback has been very positive and more videos are being prepared as part of tackling perceived stigma in respect of mental health.
  - A major event of note in respect of improving awareness and dealing with issues of stigma was the Force's first mental health conference. Feedback obtained from participants was used to inform production of the Mental Wellbeing Plan.
  - Alongside the planned activity, a wellbeing communications and engagement strategy has also been developed to ensure that there is a clear and consistent message about the help and support that is available to anyone experiences issues with mental health.
  - Dorset Police signed up to the Blue Light Wellbeing Framework and has taken the learning from its completion to inform the development of its 'Wellbeing Delivery Plan' and 'Mental Wellbeing Plan'.

- 4.6. In terms of overall impact from wellbeing activity, the national drive is to focus on support rather than attendance. This has resulted in absence data all but disappearing from the HMICFRS value for money dashboard, making national comparison extremely difficult. The current HMICFRS dashboard only highlights police officer long-term sickness and shows that Dorset is 5th best in its group of most similar forces and 20th nationally, with long term absence rates at 1.9% against a national average of 1.9%.
- 4.7. The force will continue to report wellbeing data on a quarterly basis through the Strategic People Board, which is attended by the Chief Executive.

## **5. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

- 5.1. The key focus going forward is to achieve the 'Home Office common goal for police wellbeing' and ensuring that by 2021, and, as set out earlier in this report, the Force have detailed delivery plans in place for both general wellbeing and mental wellbeing.
- 5.2. Over the next six months, the focus will be on continuing to deliver on the challenging range of priorities detailed within these plans. The force will also be re-running the Wellbeing Pulse Survey to assess the impact of the force's continued focus on wellbeing on the workforce.
- 5.3. The Force will continue undertaking formal environment scanning to ensure they, and the OPCC, remain aware of all the latest developments in this specialist area.
- 5.4. There is also the additional focus, going forward, to harmonise the Force's approach to wellbeing with Devon & Cornwall Police and align working arrangements. There is already a joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy in place, and a new joint Health and Wellbeing Policy has just been completed.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1. This report offers a high level overview into the work being carried out by the Force in relation to health and wellbeing, as a result of the PCC's funding, and ongoing developments. Detail is also provided regarding the specific initiatives that have been funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- 6.2. It should be understood that benefits from the investment into wellbeing will not be immediate given the nature of the issues being tackled. It is anticipated that the benefits of this work will become apparent in the next 12 – 24 months.
- 6.3. The OPCC will continue to work with the Force to evaluate the success of the 21 PCC-funded initiatives, as well as Force delivery against the six strategic objectives of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

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### Appendices

Appendix A – Health and Wellbeing Initiatives