

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Slough Wellbeing Board

DATE: 14th March, 2021

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PART I **FOR INFORMATION**

WORKPLACE HEALTH TASK AND FINISH GROUP – MARCH 2022 UPDATE

1. **Purpose of Report**

To provide the Slough Wellbeing Board with an update on the work of the Workplace Health Task and Finish Group.

2. **Recommendations/Proposed Action**

The board is requested to:

- Receive and comment on the work done by the Workplace Health Task and Finish Group since the last update to the Wellbeing Board.

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

- 3.1 The work of the Slough Wellbeing Board aims to address the four priority areas outlined in the Slough Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2025:
- Starting Well
 - Integration
 - Strong, healthy and attractive neighbourhoods
 - Workplace Health
- 3.2 In particular, the work of the Workplace Health Task and Finish group aims to address Priority Four – Workplace Health.
- 3.3 The priorities in the Wellbeing Strategy are informed by evidence of need contained in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. Therefore, the work outlined in the work programme is built upon the evidence outlined in the JSNA.
- 3.4 The work of the Slough Wellbeing Board also contributes to the five priority outcomes in the Council's Five Year Plan:

- Outcome 1: Slough children will grow up to be happy, healthy and successful.
- Outcome 2: Our people will be healthier and manage their own care needs.
- Outcome 3: Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and stay.
- Outcome 4: Our residents will live in good quality homes.
- Outcome 5: Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide opportunities for our residents.

3.4 In particular, the work of the Workplace Health Task and Finish Group aims to address outcome two of the council's Five Year Plan.

4. **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

There are no financial implications of proposed action.

(b) **Risk Management**

There are no risk management implications of proposed action.

(c) **Human Rights Act and other Legal Implications**

There are no Human Rights Act implications arising from this report.

(d) **Equalities Impact Assessment**

There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

5. **Supporting Information**

5.1 The Workplace Health Task and Finish group was set up in spring 2020 in order to lead on delivering Outcome Four of the Slough Wellbeing Strategy – Workplace Health.

5.2 The first meeting of the Task and Finish group took place on Friday 9th October. At this meeting, it was decided that the group would meet regularly to begin with, in order to rapidly progress work in this field. Since then, the group has met monthly. In addition to these main meetings, members of the group have met in smaller groups to progress work in several key areas.

5.3 The group was originally chaired by Sue Foley, the Service Lead for Public Health, the group has begun to be chaired by the new Interim Service Lead for Public Health, Dr Sohail Bhatti. Due to the issues related to Plan B, and the Omicron surge, it has proven difficult to meet since November 2021. There have also been movement in staff leaving SBC.

5.4 The membership of the group is currently comprised of:

- Sohail Bhatti – Public Health, Slough Borough Council (chair)
- Ellie Gaddes – Strategy & Partnerships Team, Slough Borough Council (Policy Support) **LEFT**
- Dipak Mistry – HR, Slough Borough Council
- Simon Lawrence – Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust
- Adrian Davies – Department for Work and Pensions
- Ramesh Kukar – Slough Council for Voluntary Services
- David Saab - Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce.
- Victoria Swift – Health and Safety, Slough Borough Council **LEFT**
- Levine Whitham – Regulatory Services, Slough Borough Council **MAT LEAVE**
- Sarah Ella Davies – Department for Work and Pensions

- 5.5 Since the group began meeting in October, members of the group have:
- Created an overview of key data and insight in the field of workplace health.
 - Conducted an audit of existing workplace health interventions in the borough.
 - Supported Tracey Faraday-Drake in her bid for funding from the Health Foundation. (Unfortunately, the bid from Slough was not successful).
 - Run a workshop for Slough residents on accessing employment during the COVID-19 pandemic. This workshop was run in partnership between Slough CVS, Slough Borough Council Public Health Team, and the Department for Work and Pensions. Due to the success of this workshop, more workshops are planned.
 - Run webinars for SBC staff on mental health at work, and rolled out Mental Health First Aid training for SBC staff. Learning from the rollout of these projects is being continually shared and learned from with partners in the group.
 - Created a Workplace Health Toolkit. This toolkit forms part of the second action outlined in Priority Four of the Slough Wellbeing Strategy. This toolkit pulls together key resources around the topic of workplace health, and combines them with information about Slough, to make a clear, easily accessible document which is targeted specifically at Slough. The toolkit is aimed at both employers and employees in Slough, and was approved at the May meeting of the Slough Wellbeing Board.

An overview of the key parts of this work has been provided in previous updates to the Wellbeing Board, with the most recent update provided in May 2021.

- 5.6 Since the last update to the Wellbeing Board, the Workplace Health Task and Finish Group has met on 5th October, 2021.

5.7 During this meeting, the group has primarily focused on promoting and circulating the Workplace Health Toolkit. The toolkit, including the one-page poster version, is on the Slough Borough Council Website. It can be found at:

- <https://www.slough.gov.uk/strategies-plans-policies/workplace-health-toolkit>

Members of the Workplace Health Task and Finish group have circulated this toolkit to members of their networks.

5.8 In addition to this, the group has begun work towards the first action of Priority Four – creating culture change around Workplace Health and celebrating achievements through a set of Wellbeing Awards. The group has done some research on existing award and accreditation schemes running in Slough, including the awards scheme led by Slough CVS and the Early Years Kitemark Accreditation Scheme.

5.9 The plan was for the group to continue to meet every six weeks, in order to progress work in this area rapidly. Work was intended to focus on evaluating the success of the Workplace Health Toolkit, and on setting up a set of Wellbeing Awards in Slough. Unfortunately, with the Plan B restrictions and the additional pressure on staff, this has not been possible. There has been, however, intentions to setup an awards scheme through Slough CVS in April/May. Unfortunately, the majority of charities are run by people of older age and often with underlying conditions, so full engagement will not be possible until there are lower levels of COVID. It must be remembered that 25% of eligible residents have not received a single vaccination dose and only 44% have been boosted – some 20% behind the UK average in both measures, indicating the need for caution.

5.10 However, the opportunity has been taken to carry out an audit of some of the 46,000 people who have had COVID-19, in order to establish the prevalence and duration of symptoms. No work on chronic (long) COVID has been published in the UK, with a particular focus on BAME communities, so this work in Slough will be innovative research and also provide some intelligence about fit to work issues in the future in Slough's workforce. Thus far, over 502 people have responded either by telephone or by completing an online form. People are being randomly selected for the exercise.

6. **Conclusion**

This report is intended to provide the Slough Wellbeing Board with an update of the work of the Workplace Health Task and Finish group.

The board is requested to:

- Take note of the work done by the Workplace Health Task and Finish Group since the last update to the Wellbeing Board.

7. **Appendices Attached & Background Papers**

None.