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Why we signed the pledge

Denbighshire County Council felt it was extremely important to be part of the Time to Change Wales Employer pledge. We wanted to make a difference and make a public commitment to change the way we think and act about mental health at every level of the authority.

We wanted to be open about mental health and ensure that all employees are part of a movement that's changing the conversation around mental health and ensuring that no one is made to feel isolated or alone for having a mental health problem.

We recognise that the pandemic has increased the need for our organisation to talk more openly about employee mental health, which is why we got buy-in from all senior leaders including lead members and Union representatives to develop our Action Plan that would see commitment from us all as one whole organisation.

How to promote mental health awareness

We have worked hard over the last year and put together some excellent resources for all our employees. These include:

- Training Mental Health First Aiders.
- Training managers and supervisors on mental health awareness and how they can support their teams.
- Mandatory mental health awareness e-learning module for all employees.
- Dedicated mental health and wellbeing section on our website for employees
- Developing a new mental health policy.
- Developing guidance for managers and for staff who may be experiencing negative mental health.
- Recruiting Employee Champions to help keep the agenda alive and changing the culture within the authority.

The first question on our 1-2-1 forms is 'how are you?' ensuring that managers and supervisors give their line reports the opportunity to talk about their feelings and making the topic of mental health an important item to discuss in an open and safe manner.

How this helps the workplace

Our long-term actions are to try and keep the momentum going within the Council; that we keep the mental health agenda very much on the agenda in all types of ways.

Our focus will be to take stock of where we are now and what we need to do in the future by getting as many employees as possible to complete a staff wellbeing survey. This will enable us to put some plans in place as to what else we need to do to support employee wellbeing, especially as we start to move to some kind of normality as we come out of the pandemic.

We will be working in a different way to what we were used to prior to the pandemic and therefore we need to ensure that the mental health of our employees is still of importance. It may be that we need to put dedicated training in place on how to work more remotely or in a different way and provide guidance on how we can support employees who may be struggling with working from home.