

# Workforce Wellbeing Action Plan for Fife

## *Good Work is Good for Business*

2019-20

### 1. About the Action Plan

In Fife we believe that ‘Good Work is Good for Business’ and we want Fife to be a thriving and inclusive place to live and work.

The Workforce Wellbeing Action Plan for Fife supports this goal through working with partners to better promote and coordinate existing support for employers to create mentally healthy workplaces.

Achieving these goals entails a partnership approach and the following organisations have been involved in the development and will support the implementation of this strategy:

The Opportunities Fife Partnership which brings together Fife Council, Dep’t for Work and Pensions, Fife College, Fife Voluntary Action, Skills Development Scotland, Fife Health & Social Care Partnership

Additional supporting partners include: Health & Work Support, Fife Employment Access Trust, Business Gateway Fife, Scottish Enterprise, See Me, Chambers of Commerce and the Workplace Team, Health Promotions

This is the first Action Plan of its kind for Fife. It is our intention to monitor its impact closely with a view to refreshing it in 2020.

Progress against the Workforce Wellbeing Action Plan will be reviewed by the Opportunities Fife Partnership Employer Engagement Delivery Group (EEDG).



## 2. Policy Context:

The Scottish Government's Fair Work Action Plan was launched in February 2019<sup>1</sup> and its Action Plan for halving the disability employment gap<sup>2</sup> launched in December 2018. Both Plans clearly evidence the Government's commitment to improving workforce wellbeing and employment outcomes in Scotland and this Action Plan is part of Fife's answer to these challenges.

The Equality Act (Scotland) 2010 places an expectation on employers to make reasonable adjustments for employees experiencing health problems or disabilities in work.

The Health & Safety Executive now recognises 'stress' as a health and safety risk which means employers have a legal duty to assess risk and take appropriate action.

Scottish Enterprise Strategic Board have committed to a national campaign on Workplace Innovation and Inclusive Business Models and this work is being supported by our local Business Gateway.

In 2018 Fife published its Local Outcome Improvement Plan for the next 10 years – Plan 4 Fife<sup>3</sup>. The plan sets out four key priorities which includes 'Inclusive growth and jobs'.

In February 2019 Fife launched the Fife Business Charter<sup>4</sup> which aims to improve the economic performance of the region and reduce inequalities, thereby creating a Fairer Fife as outlined in the local Plan 4 Fife.

The Charter encourages businesses to demonstrate a commitment to the physical and mental health and well-being of their employees through a range of existing award schemes and commits Fife Council to refocus employability support to people with mental health issues, amongst other priority groups.

In Fife we are using the World Health Organisation definition of good mental health:

*"A state of wellbeing in which every individual realises their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to their community." Adapted from World Health Organisation 2009.*

*In Fife we believe that this state of wellbeing can occur in the presence or absence of a diagnosis of mental illness or a mental health condition.*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://economicactionplan.mygov.scot/fair-work/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.scot/news/tackling-the-disability-employment-gap-1/>

<sup>3</sup> [http://publications.fifedirect.org.uk/c64\\_Plan\\_for\\_Fife\\_2017\\_2027.pdf](http://publications.fifedirect.org.uk/c64_Plan_for_Fife_2017_2027.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://businesscharter.fife.scot/>

### 3. Understanding the Problem

'Thriving at Work', the Stevenson/Farmer Review estimates that across the UK 500,000 people with long-term mental health conditions lose their job each year<sup>5</sup>.

The Mental Health Foundation estimate that around 17.5% of the working age population have symptoms of a common mental health problem<sup>6</sup>. In Fife this means we can estimate that mental health issues are affecting over 40,000 16 to 64yr olds at any one time.

The cost to business is significant with estimates of an average of around £1,300 per employee per year.

Research <sup>7</sup> suggests the issue of supporting mental health in the workplace is being driven by the following factors:

- ⊗ **Employers struggle to find and filter out relevant information and advice:** the majority of employers in Fife (8,425 in 2018<sup>8</sup>) employ less than 10 people. It is not always easy for smaller employers to find the right support for them or their staff.
- ⊗ **Fear of discussing mental health:** when problems do arise managers can be worried to say the wrong thing and make a situation worse or get it wrong from a legal perspective. Instead they may prefer to say nothing at all.
- ⊗ **Lack of knowledge leading to stigma:** Because many people do not disclose when they have a mental health issue those that do can feel very exposed. Sometimes they are judged unfairly. This has led to people being isolated, demoted or even dismissed.
- ⊗ **Rapid growth:** When businesses go through a rapid expansion the tools required to ensure and embed healthy working practices are often not yet in place. The Manager is focussing on business growth but without these foundations in place things can easily go wrong.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/thriving-at-work-a-review-of-mental-health-and-employers>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/fundamental-facts-about-mental-health-2016>

<sup>7</sup> In addition to the above referenced documents

<https://www.fva.org/downloads/DeliveringDifferentlyWorkshopReport.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Nomis

## 4. Good practice for improving mental health in the workplace

Effective support for Mental Health in the Workplace is in place when businesses know how to:

- ✓ Support someone who is off sick with mental health issues
- ✓ Help staff who are struggling at work due to mental health issues
- ✓ Create and sustain a mentally healthy workplace

In Fife we support a set of 6 'core' standards that all employers should put in place to help achieve this<sup>9</sup>:

1. Introduce a workplace wellbeing programme
2. Raise awareness about mental health amongst employees
3. Encourage good communication
4. Provide a good working environment
5. Support and develop line managers and supervisors
6. Monitor employee health and wellbeing

## 7. Resources

In addition to the national resources Fifehosts established Supported Employment and Individual Placement and Support (IPS) services both of which specialise in supporting people who have issues with their mental health to gain and retain employment.

Fife also has an active NHS Fife Health Promotion Workplace Team who operate a programme of free training and support to employers wishing to address mental health in the workplace.

Scottish Enterprise's Workplace Innovation Service (launched in 2016) aims to create a positive workplace culture through the introduction of fair work practices. This is locally implemented by Business Gateway Fife.

Fife is one of the pilot areas for the new **Health & Work Support service** which provides a single gateway for both employers and employees to accessing health related support. In addition to this there are numerous local and national support services aimed at helping employers.

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<sup>9</sup> Adapted from Thriving at Work, Stevenson/Farmer report 2017, courtesy of Fife Health Promotion Workplace Team

## 5. The Fife 2019-20 Action Plan

### Promote general awareness of creating mentally healthy workplaces

- ✓ **Business engagement events** will include information on organisations, support and guidance available to help employers establish mentally healthy workplaces
- ✓ Work with partners to direct a **media campaign** throughout 2019 including personal stories to celebrate good practice and promote mental health in the workplace
- ✓ Promote good practice through **Fife Business Diversity Awards**
- ✓ Increase the number of Fife-based employers **engaging in Time to Talk and other mental health awareness events** throughout the year
- ✓ Promote and **improve uptake of Scottish Enterprise support** for progressive workplace practice amongst SMEs including the Workplace Innovation Fund
- ✓ Create & maintain a **Guide to Mental Health Workplace Support Services** on Opportunities Fife and related business-facing websites
- ✓ Work with See Me to undertake an **employer attitude survey in 2019**

### Support to help employers create mentally healthy workplaces

- ✓ **Launch and promote Just Ask, Listen Talk** to small to medium size enterprises in key sectors including construction, retail, agriculture and health and social care
- ✓ Promote and monitor uptake of **See Me free e-learning course** on the impact of stigma and discrimination on people with mental health problems in the workplace
- ✓ **Train Fife Employer Engagement staff** across all public sector partners in basic mental health in the workplace and the full range of healthy workplace support available to employers in Fife
- ✓ Work with DWP to **promote Disability Confident** as a benchmark for success and increase the numbers of Level 2 Disability Confident employers in Fife by 50%
- ✓ **Fife Business Charter** signed up to by 100 employers in Fife
- ✓ Work with Health Promotions Workplace Team to promote a **mental health awareness training programme for managers** including the voice of lived experience

### Raise awareness of specialist support for when people become unwell and promote the employment of people with a history of mental health issues

- ✓ **Actively promote and monitor uptake of the Health & Work Support pilot**, particularly for people experiencing mental health problems in work
- ✓ **Monitor impact of OFP investment** in additional Individual Placement and Support, Supported Employment provision and Fife-ETC generalist in-work support on recruitment and retention rates for people with mental health issues.

This action plan will be monitored by the Opportunities Fife Partnership Employer Engagement Delivery Group.