

Workforce resilience and well-being

Summary

This paper outlines a strategic approach from Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce to support Salford' Health and Wellbeing Board to:

1. engage local businesses and employers, especially small and medium enterprises
2. demonstrate the contribution that local businesses and employers can make to health and well-being, including cross-cutting themes in Salford's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy
3. offer a practical approach to improving staff health and well-being that is of direct interest to local businesses and employers, and addresses priorities and outcomes in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy

The main aim is to help more Salford people to become and to stay more employable, while encouraging and supporting high quality employment. In order to engage employers, any approach must start from their perspective and be described in terms comfortable to them.

The approach should ultimately lead to positive engagement with employers to better support the health and well-being of their staff, not only out of goodwill but from a clear self-interest. In this way, local businesses and employers can become new and active allies in Salford's endeavour to improve health and well-being.

There is a range of areas that could be addressed to improve workforce resilience and well-being. Areas for action should be those in which a significant difference can be demonstrated, and where there are mutual interests with employers. Possible areas of greatest opportunity are:

- employee resilience and mental well-being
- development of a Fit for Work service
- provision of NHS health checks in workplaces
- all Board member organisations giving weight in procurement to suppliers that offer high-quality local employment

Consideration can then be given to appropriate support or resourcing for each area as appropriate, such as contract variation, different use of existing services, innovation funding or external resources.

It is **recommended** that the Health and Wellbeing Board:

1. support the strategic approach to workforce resilience and well-being
2. facilitate engagement with local businesses and employers
3. confirm specific areas for implementation, with each allocated to the appropriate sub-group and with a named lead person
4. consider how best to liaise with and influence the Skills & Work Board to optimise its impact on health and well-being

"Rise up with me against the organisation of misery." (Pablo Neruda).

1. Business case: quality work as health improvement

Salford’s Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy states that “in terms of health and well-being, sustainable paid employment is one of the best health improvement measures we can support.”

At the Health and Wellbeing Board’s development session on 17 December, 2014, one thematic priority identified was work and health, with a particular focus on supporting and influencing employers to improve employee resilience and well-being.

The Marmot review concluded that one policy objective necessary to reduce health inequalities is to create fair employment and good work for all. In short, “Work is good – and unemployment bad – for physical and mental health, but the quality of work matters. Getting people off benefits and into low-paid, insecure and health-damaging work is not a desirable option.” (Marmot, M., *Fair Society, Healthy Lives*, London, 2010).

The *Greater Manchester Strategy 2013-2020* recognises that “put simply, we need to reduce demand for public services by helping our residents to become more self-reliant, get back into work, or to gain better quality work and to remain in work.” One aim to have an employer-led skills system, with much greater employer involvement in the design and delivery of skills programmes. There is similar potential for employer involvement in staff resilience and well-being.

2. Employer offer for health and well-being

The priorities of Salford’s Health and Wellbeing Board are: best start in life for children; healthy lifestyle supported by resilient communities; and access to and appropriate use of quality health and social care.

Local businesses and employers directly contribute to two of the Board’s cross-cutting themes: employment and tackling poverty. They offer a series of activities that contribute to health and well-being, which may be summarised as:

Connect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. healthy workplaces • employee engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. location to provide health checks • local suppliers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. local provision of goods and services
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Communicate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • employers – including small and medium enterprises <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. through Chamber of Commerce • workforce resilience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. action to reduce sickness absence • business approach to solutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. innovation on health and well-being challenges
Create	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quality paid employment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. providing jobs for local people • training, learning and development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. improving employability • economic impact – wealth retention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. local business retaining money in local economy

More specifically, possible options linking to the outcomes within Salford’s Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and also to reduced costs for employers, include:

1a	promoting healthy weight of staff (especially of younger adults and parents of primary school age children)
1b	supporting breastfeeding initiation and maintenance by staff
1c	providing greater realistic employment prospects for young people in their teenage years
2a	identifying and supporting staff who are vulnerable or subject to violent crime, and engaging those staff who might have a propensity to violence
2b	identifying and supporting staff with problem drinking behaviours
2c	identifying and supporting staff who experience loneliness; engaging local businesses in helping to create more resilient communities
3a	enabling NHS health checks at times and places that are most convenient for staff
3b	supporting staff to manage long-term mental and physical health conditions
3c	identifying and supporting carers to maintain their employment

3. Health and well-being offer to employers

The priorities of local businesses and employers are: financial performance; people with the right skills and attitudes; and confidence for recruitment, investment, etc. These reflect strategic aims around economic growth, employment and skills.

In Salford’s Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Health and Wellbeing Board commits that it “will use its position of influence to promote work across all sectors of the local economy to see good employment a realistic prospect for all local citizens.” To fulfil this commitment, the Board needs a practical plan of action, working with local businesses, addressing both:

- the crucial area of skills development
- the health and well-being of current and potential employees, including through a larger Fit for Work service

For most businesses, staff are their greatest asset and yet many could do far more to invest in and protect this “asset” to the level that many do with capital assets. This might be conceived in terms of “whole-life” cost:

Cost	Example
purchase: the lowest sustainable purchase price	making it easier and cheaper to recruit Salford people with the right skills and attitudes
operation: the lowest sustainable operational costs	promoting and supporting the Living Wage through the City Partnership and as a requirement in all contracts with suppliers of goods and services
maintenance: the lowest sustainable maintenance costs	supporting ways of maintaining the health and well-being of staff
disposal: the lowest sustainable disposal costs	responding swiftly when local employers plan to dismiss staff or make posts redundant, in order to support the health and well-being of the people affected
retirement: the lowest sustainable retirement costs	engaging at the earliest possible time before staff retirement to address health and well-being implications

4. Priorities

According to Marmot, the priority objectives are:

1. Improve access to good jobs and reduce long-term unemployment across the social gradient.
2. Make it easier for people who are disadvantaged in the labour market to obtain and keep work.
3. Improve quality of jobs across the social gradient.

Any plan should address some or all of Marmot’s policy recommendations:

1. Prioritise active labour market programmes to achieve timely interventions to reduce long-term unemployment.
2. Encourage, incentivise and, where appropriate, enforce the implementation of measures to improve the quality of jobs across the social gradient, by:
 - ensuring public and private sector employers adhere to equality guidance and legislation
 - implementing guidance on stress management and the effective promotion of well-being and physical and mental health at work

3. Develop greater security and flexibility in employment, by:
 - prioritising greater flexibility of retirement age
 - encouraging and incentivising employers to create or adapt jobs that are suitable for lone parents, carers and people with mental and physical health problems

5. Approach

It is in every employer's interest to have not only staff with the right skills and attitudes, but also sufficient confidence both to recruit new staff and in its existing workforce.

The Health and Wellbeing Board has an opportunity to engage strategically with employers, in business terms that will resonate. This means engaging local businesses and employers from their perspective and using their language.

The Health and Wellbeing Board could develop partnership working for mutual benefit with local businesses and employers, with:

- local businesses and employers gaining a more effective workforce
- Salford having a healthier and more employed population

This could be described in business-friendly language, such as:

- "helping you to have a more resilient workforce"
- "helping you to protect your greatest asset"
- "helping you reduce your employment costs".

To raise awareness of benefits and costs, this might be presented within the form of a non-legal "contract" under which, if the initial work has been done to recruit and skill staff, employers commit to offering a robust mechanism to take care of them.

6. Method of improvement

To effect improvement, this method could be adopted:

1. Set principal goals – what do we want to improve, by how much, by when
2. Build from primary drivers –
 - a. leadership and engagement
 - b. measurement – use data towards a shared goal
 - c. building capacity for change
 - d. implementation and project management with shared and simple governance
3. Identify secondary drivers

7. Greater Manchester

If the approach described in this paper proves effective, it might then be promoted to other parts of Greater Manchester, perhaps through the Greater Manchester Health and Wellbeing Board.

Chris Dabbs (Chief Executive, Unlimited Potential)

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Appendix - possible links

There are at least two existing local links that might be made:

Salford City Mayor's Charter for Employment Standards

This is designed to help raise employment standards for employees and businesses across the city. The charter contains a suite of pledges, focused in three categories:

- Putting Salford First: creating training and employment opportunities for Salford people, particularly those facing greatest disadvantage.
- Buying in Salford: looking to purchase Salford goods and services at every practicable opportunity.
- Setting the Standard: promoting the adoption of the best possible working practices and conditions, such as working towards the introduction of a living wage, a commitment to eradicating the illegal practice of blacklisting and opposing the use of zero-hour contracts.

Good Work: Good Health Charter

This is the workplace well-being charter for Greater Manchester. The Charter is a self-help tool for businesses to improve worker productivity through good work and good health. It uses a series of standards developed with employers and health professionals, based on international research and best practice. There is also an awards process for those meeting the standards, organised by New Economy in Greater Manchester and funded by Greater Manchester Public Health Network.

While health features more prominently in the Greater Manchester document, the two reinforce each other. Applying the principles of the Greater Manchester Charter to project implementation would support the aims of the Salford Charter.