



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

LFC – 0737

# Wellbeing Strategy

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**Report to:**

Commissioner's Board  
Deputy Mayor's Fire and Resilience Board  
London Fire Commissioner

**Date: 3 August 2022**

3 August 2022  
31 August 2022

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**Report by:**

Milo Bodrozic, Wellbeing Manager

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**Report classification:**

For decision

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**For publication**

# **PART ONE**

## **Non-confidential facts and advice to the decision-maker**

### **Executive Summary**

This is a follow up report to that submitted to the Commissioners Board on 3 November 2021 where a request was made for additional information to be included in the strategy document to evidence the reasoning behind the development of the actions in the Wellbeing Strategy.

### **Proposed decision – the London Fire Commissioner**

The LFC approves the Wellbeing Strategy and officers continue to develop London Fire Brigade's wellbeing service provision

## **1 Introduction and background**

**1.1** People Board approved LFB's Wellbeing Strategy on 22 July 2021. On 3 November 2021 the Commissioner's Board similarly approved the strategy document but requested more information to be included about the reasoning behind the development of the actions proposed in the strategy. The report submitted to the Boards in July 2021 and November 2021 is attached in Appendix 1 (note that the appendices referenced in the aforementioned report are not attached)

### **Data and benchmarking**

**1.2** Officers have updated the strategy document (see Appendix 2) to include data and benchmarking information (sections 3 and 10 refer) to show why the actions contained in the strategy have been developed.

**1.3** Prioritising the delivery of the actions in the strategy will be influenced by the organisation's Delivery Plan 2022/2023. At present there are only two deliverables referenced in this plan which may be attributable to the fact the actions in the strategy are of a business as usual (what we do now) and continuous improvement (what we will do in the future) nature.

**1.4** Notwithstanding, Target Delivery Dates, measures of success and assurance across the three-year period of the strategy have also been included so that these can be used to monitor the progress and impact of the actions.

### **Communicating the strategy**

**1.5** The proposal remains that the strategy document will be shared with staff via the Local Wellbeing Partner initiative on a face-to-face basis. The detail in the document has been kept to a minimum, with a focus on what wellbeing service provision is presently available and what LFB will do in the future to improve. This tact has been taken following feedback from staff who requested a document that would summarise and clearly explain LFBs wellbeing service provision.

## 2 Objectives and expected outcomes

2.1 To update LFBs Wellbeing Strategy to include additional information that evidences why the actions have been proposed.

## 3. Equality comments

3.1 The LFC and the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience are required to have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) when taking decisions. This in broad terms involves understanding the potential impact of policy and decisions on different people, taking this into account and then evidencing how decisions were reached.

3.2 It is important to note that consideration of the Public Sector Equality Duty is not a one-off task. The duty must be fulfilled before taking a decision, at the time of taking a decision, and after the decision has been taken.

3.3 The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership (but only in respect of the requirements to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination), race (ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality), religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex, and sexual orientation.

3.4 The Public Sector Equality Duty requires decision-takers in the exercise of all their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct.
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

3.5 Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic where those disadvantages are connected to that characteristic.
- take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
- encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

3.6 The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

3.7 Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- tackle prejudice
- promote understanding.

3.8 A full EIA has been completed as referenced and attached to the reports of 22 July 2021 and 3 November 2021. No adverse impacts have been identified as a result of the assessment.

## **4 Other considerations**

### **Workforce comments**

**4.1** Officers have engaged, and continue to engage with, internal and external stakeholders/subject matter experts, including, but not limited to, Equality Support Groups, Health and Safety, Central Operations, Training and Professional Development, Health Management Ltd, Mental Health First Aid England, The Royal Foundation, MIND, Public Health England and The Fire Fighters Charity.

### **Sustainability comments**

**4.2** This report does not introduce any sustainability impacts but if such developments do arise, they will be progressed in accordance with existing protocols.

### **Procurement comments**

**4.3** This report does not introduce any new procurement or sustainability impacts but if such developments do arise, they will be progressed in accordance with existing protocols.

### **Communications comments**

**4.4** Paragraph 1.5 references a proposed communications approach for the Wellbeing Strategy, the detail of which is contained therein and in the appendix report.

## **5. Financial comments**

**5.1** This report recommends that the Wellbeing Strategy is approved. The Wellbeing Strategy sets out actions going forwards which include training and wellbeing sessions. The cost of this will be contained within existing resources within People Services.

## **6. Legal comments**

**6.1** Under section 9 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, the London Fire Commissioner (the "Commissioner") is established as a corporation sole with the Mayor appointing the occupant of that office. Under section 327D of the GLA Act 1999, as amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2017, the Mayor may issue to the Commissioner specific or general directions as to the manner in which the holder of that office is to exercise his or her functions.

**6.2** Section 1 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (FRSA 2004) states that the Commissioner is the fire and rescue authority for Greater London.

**6.3** Under section 7 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the Commissioner has the power to secure the provision of personnel, services and equipment necessary to efficiently meet all normal requirements for those functions.

**6.4** Furthermore, in accordance with section 5A of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (FRSA 2004), the Commissioner, being a 'relevant authority', may do 'anything it considers appropriate for the purposes of the carrying-out of any of its functions'. This includes putting in place a Wellbeing Strategy to improve efficiency of personnel in meeting the functional requirements.

# List of appendices

Appendix	Title	Open or confidential
1.	Refreshed Wellbeing Strategy	Open
2.	Wellbeing Strategy 2021 - 2024	Open

## **Part two confidentiality**

Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be in the separate Part Two form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

**Is there a Part Two form:** NO



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

Report title

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## Refreshed Wellbeing Strategy

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Report to

Date

**Commissioner's Board**

3 November 2021

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Report classification:

**For Decision**

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The subject matter of this report deals with the following LFB strategic priorities:

**The best people and the best place to work**  
**Delivering excellent**

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Report number – LFC-0737

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For Publication

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### **PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE DECISION-MAKER**

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#### **Executive Summary**

London Fire Brigade's original wellbeing strategy document - *Delivering Our Strategy; Wellbeing* (LFC 0334) – was approved in March 2020. Since publication feedback from staff and stakeholders has resulted in the document being given an amber risk rating in the People Directorate Risk Register. This is based on the fact that staff perceive the messaging in the document and LFB's overall approach to wellbeing as not being supportive. Officers have therefore revisited the document and produced a refreshed version attached to this report. The refreshed strategy has two parts, an overview document that uses a simple format to outline the aims of the strategy, how it has been developed and what supportive wellbeing service provision already exists for our staff, alongside what future developments are proposed. The second part is a time lined action plan that lays out the detail of how officers propose to deliver the developments to LFB wellbeing over the next 3 years.

#### **Recommended decision(s)**

LFC approves the refreshed wellbeing strategy and officers to continue to develop LFB's wellbeing service provision in line with the strategy document and action plan

Proposed Decision

For the Deputy Mayor

That the Deputy Mayor has considered the attached report prior to the London Fire Commissioner approving the decisions to publish the refreshed Wellbeing Strategy

For the London Fire Commissioner

LFC approves the refreshed wellbeing strategy and officers to continue to develop LFB's wellbeing service provision in line with the strategy document and action plan

### **Introduction and background**

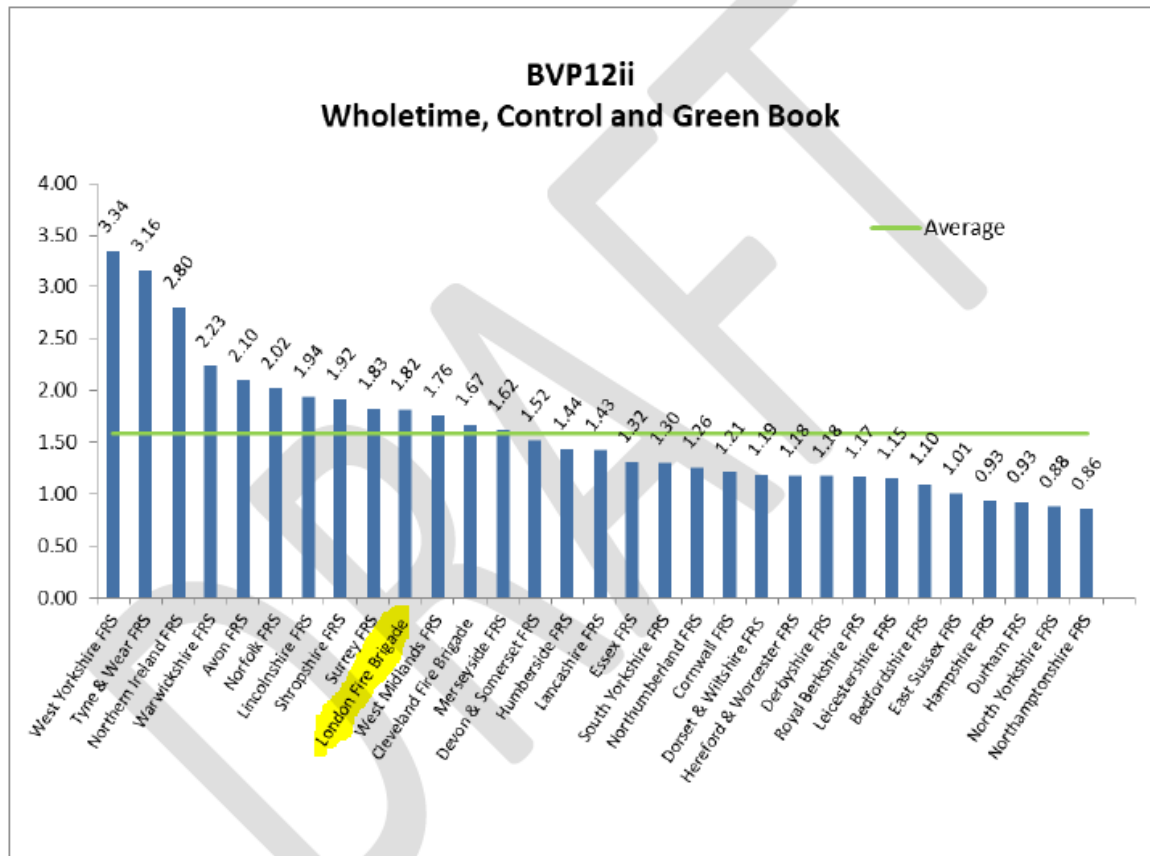
1. LFB's *Delivering Our Strategy; Wellbeing* report (LFC 0334) was presented to Corporate Services Directorate Board (CSDB) and the Commissioners Board (CB) in March 2020 and accordingly approved.
2. Feedback from staff and stakeholders about this report, and on LFB wellbeing in general, revealed that our people still held a perception that LFB's wellbeing service provision was not supportive; staff evidencing that their primary interface with the Wellbeing Team was more about sickness absence management than wellbeing, and when individuals engaged with managers about their wellbeing it was similarly more often than not about sickness absence.
3. In light of this the *Delivering Our Strategy; Wellbeing* report was categorised in the People Directorate Risk Register as amber; the risk described as *The Brigade's Wellbeing strategy fails to adequately support the physical and mental wellbeing of our people leading to poor staff wellbeing, an increase in sickness, and reputational damage that the Brigade does not care about its staff*
4. Interventions are in place to mitigate this risk with a restructure of the Wellbeing Team being proposed as part of the People Services strategy; moving more of the transactional wellbeing activities to a HR Operations Team leaving the Wellbeing Team to focus on proactive wellbeing support for our people, alongside endeavouring to better promote the levels of support available. Activities such as ensuring provision of medical certification and sick pay process have already been moved from the Wellbeing Team to HR Services.

### **LFB's Wellbeing Risk**

5. Staff perception of the service provision offered by the LFB's Wellbeing Team has always been clouded by the fact that sickness absence/capability have been an integral part of the team's responsibilities.
6. It was intended that the *Delivering Our Strategy; Wellbeing* report, approved by CSDB and CB in March 2020, would go some way to dispelling this perception.
7. Unfortunately, the document was overly long, complicated and had LFB's Managing Attendance policy (PN 889) as an integral part which reinforced staff perception that wellbeing in LFB was more about management of sickness absence, and not a service that was in place to support individual wellbeing needs.



8. In light of this finding the strategy document was identified as a potential risk to the wider work of People Services.
9. An amber categorisation was given (Likelihood 4 Impact 4) reflective of the fact that the strategy document in its original format did not sufficiently demonstrate to staff that LFB was committed to supportive individual wellbeing, this further being compounded by the circumstances surrounding the tragic death of Firefighter Jaden Francois- Esprit.
10. The development of the refreshed strategy acknowledges these issues and also references that the document is/will:
  - a) be flexible enough to be able to accept/act upon further feedback received from staff
  - b) be aware of, and seek to align, with new wellbeing innovations in wider industry; and
  - c) incorporate any wellbeing recommendations from the cultural review
11. Notwithstanding, the early control measures proposed to mitigate the identified risk were agreed as being
  - a) a necessity to revisit the original strategy document and produce a refreshed version that was clear in terms of the approach LFB would use to establish a better understood and more accessible wellbeing service
  - b) to review and realign the more transactional and sickness absence related matters to other teams within People Services as part of a wider People Services strategy so that the Wellbeing Team would be better able to "rebrand" their service provision to staff
12. Although the intention of the refreshed wellbeing strategy document is to reinforce that LFB's wellbeing service provision is supportive in nature, the acquisition and use of sickness data will still be vital in helping to understand how effective our wellbeing interventions are, without making data use a mainstay of LFB wellbeing messaging.
13. Increased sickness levels are referenced in the risk description as an outcome of the LFB wellbeing strategy failing to deliver adequate support for the physical and mental health of our workforce.
14. Data presently shows that when compared to other FRS's, LFB's sickness absence levels are above the UK FRS average. See graph below



National Fire and Rescue Service Occupational Health Performance Report 2020

15. The reasons for sickness absence across UK FRS's are evenly split between musculoskeletal (MSK) and mental health issues; 34% and 32.5% of duty days lost respectively.
16. Present LFB data (as of 9 July 2021) differs slightly to the wider UK FRS; showing that of the 354 people absent from work because of sickness, 40% of absence was attributable to musculoskeletal issues and 22% to mental health matters, although when viewed by occupational groups mental health matters are the number one cause of absence in the FRS and Control, whereas it is MSK for the operational workforce.
17. LFB's standing in terms of sickness absence levels across the UK fire service is somewhat at odds with its status as an organisation that has received numerous awards for its wellbeing provision for its staff, not least its "Excellence" level accreditation\* from the GLAs London Healthy Workplace Charter Award that found LFB *had demonstrated that health and wellbeing are embedded in their corporate culture and values*.

\*achieved in 2017 – due for reaccreditation in September 2021

18. This further reinforces officers' belief that there is a necessity to repackage and rebrand the LFB wellbeing service provision so that our people are better informed, more motivated and better supported to take up what is on offer.
19. A refreshed strategy is a starting point, and it is also a tool that can be used to co-ordinate all the wellbeing initiatives that are presently being progressed by different groups across the

organisation in a bid to avoid duplication of effort and so ensure our wellbeing interventions are as impactful as possible.

### **Refreshed strategy**

20. In light of the identified risk, the refreshed wellbeing strategy has been written so that our people are clear about
  - a) the aims of the document
  - b) how LFB has developed its approach to wellbeing
  - c) what wellbeing service provision presently exists for staff; and
  - d) what developments are proposed for LFB wellbeing over the next 3 years, especially in light of the fact that LFB still has relatively high sickness levels when compared to other FRS's but is seen externally as a best practice organisation in terms of its wellbeing provision for its people
21. The principle of the World Health Organisation's model of wellbeing (physical, mental and social) used in the original strategy document has been retained, but adapted for LFB purposes (to psychological, physical and workplace wellbeing) and aligned to a framework for action using a Promote, Prevent and Treat model where
  - a) **Promote** is providing staff with information and resource materials to raise a wider awareness and understanding of psychological, physical and workplace wellbeing
  - b) **Prevent** is providing staff/managers with resources that can be accessed to help prevent poor psychological, physical and workplace wellbeing
  - c) **Treat** is providing support and services to all staff who may be experiencing episodes of poor psychological, physical and workplace wellbeing
22. Using the Promotion, Prevent and Treat model officers have outlined what wellbeing service provision presently exists as staff have regularly advised (as evidenced by questioning at All Staff Briefings) that the messaging about wellbeing service provision is not reaching our people.
23. Communications is an area in the strategy document that is specifically referenced with the recognition that there is a requirement to adapt how we engage with our staff, especially our staff at fire stations who do not access electronic communications to any great degree.
24. The main proposal in the strategy document is to establish a cadre of Local Wellbeing Partners (LWPs) who will be a conduit between the central wellbeing team, fire stations, Control and FRS teams. The aim is to recruit at least one LWP on each Watch at each fire station, Control watch and FRS teams/departments and make wellbeing activity more locally based and peer provided with specific support from specialist teams i.e. Wellbeing Team, Fitness Advice Team, LFB Mental Health First Aiders.
25. Early indications from the Model Fire Stations project is that staff would be keen for such an initiative to be put in place. This has also been reinforced by the feedback the Assistant Director People Services has received following her visits to different fire stations over the last few months where staff are particularly keen to become involved in wellbeing related matters.

26. The refreshed strategy document references other areas of importance associated with wider wellbeing interventions where there is an opportunity to engage with our people, identifying

- a) People and Teams
- b) Policies and guidance documentation
- c) Training; and
- d) Specific career/employment stages

as particular areas to focus upon alongside ensuring sufficient resource provision is in place to support initiatives.

27. Importantly, the Wellbeing Team is maintaining strong links with People Service colleagues in the Cultural Change team to ensure that their work related to leadership and behaviours further underpins LFB wellbeing imperatives, not least because the best advocates of wellbeing will be our individual managers and how they engage, and deal with, our people on a day to day basis, and by their very actions support individual psychological, physical and workplace wellbeing needs.

### **Action plan**

28. Linked to the strategy document is a detailed and time lined action plan that officers will use to progress the development of the wellbeing initiatives outlined in the strategy document.

29. Officers have purposefully not provided this level of detail in the overview strategy document as the intention is to provide staff with a copy that they can reference, and if they so wish, they can access the link to see what actions will be taking place to keep LFB wellbeing development activities moving forward. This document will be held on Hotwire alongside the strategy and updated quarterly to evidence progress.

30. By providing this option officers believe that staff will be more engaged in seeking to acquire a better understanding of LFB wellbeing service provision.

### **Launch of refreshed strategy document**

31. Subject to the Board approving the refreshed strategy document it is proposed that

- a) a Director and/or Head of Service (maybe Deputy Commissioner Richard Mills) becomes the "face" of wellbeing and documentation/activities are underwritten by this individual
- b) a "recruitment" campaign for Local Wellbeing Partners is undertaken and the refreshed strategy document is used as part of the recruitment materials
- c) a "hard copy" of the refreshed strategy is provided to all stations OiCs so that they can draw attention to the wellbeing service provision to all fire station staff
- d) the Wellbeing Team continue to promote wellbeing service provision in accordance with the refreshed strategy document and action plan

## **Objectives and expected outcomes**

32. To refresh LFBs wellbeing strategy document to
  - a) make it as clear and concise as possible
  - b) make clear what wellbeing service provision presently exists for staff
  - c) outline what LFB's plans are for wellbeing development over the next 3 years; and
  - d) use a Promote, Prevent and Treat action framework to focus our wellbeing activity

## **Equality Impact**

33. The LFC and the Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience are required to have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) when taking decisions. This in broad terms involves understanding the potential impact of policy and decisions on different people, taking this into account and then evidencing how decisions were reached.
34. It is important to note that consideration of the Public Sector Equality Duty is not a one-off task. The duty must be fulfilled before taking a decision, at the time of taking a decision, and after the decision has been taken.
35. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership (but only in respect of the requirements to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination), race (ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality), religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex, and sexual orientation.
36. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires decision-takers in the exercise of all their functions, to have due regard to the need to:
  - a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct
  - b) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
  - c) foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share.
37. Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to
  - a. remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic where those disadvantages are connected to that characteristic;
  - b. take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
  - c. encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low

38. The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.
39. Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:
  - a) tackle prejudice, and
  - b) promote understanding
40. A full EIA has been completed and is attached. No adverse impacts have been identified as a result of the assessment.

### **Other Considerations**

#### *Workforce comments*

41. Officers have engaged, and continue to engage with, internal and external stakeholders/subject matter experts, including, but not limited to, Equality Support Groups, Health and Safety, Central Operations, Training and Professional Development, HML Ltd , Mental Health First Aid England, The Royal Foundation, MIND, Public Health England.
42. No formal engagement has commenced with trade union colleagues, although they are aware that a refresh of the strategy document was in progress alongside the development of a complementary but standalone mental health policy that is due to be presented to BJCHSW in July 2021. The Board should note that consultations with trade unions were ongoing prior to the publication of the original strategy document in March 2020, but their focus was very much toward the Managing Attendance Policy aspects of that document and no due regard was taken of the other matters raised. Subject to the Board's approval of the recommendations in this report, officers will share the contents of the refreshed strategy document and action plan with trade union.

#### *Sustainability comments*

43. This report does not introduce any sustainability impacts but if such developments do arise, they will be progressed in accordance with existing protocols.

#### *Procurement comments*

44. This report does not introduce any new procurement or sustainability impacts but if such developments do arise, they will be progressed in accordance with existing protocols

### **Financial comments**

45. The Chief Finance Officer has reviewed the report and has no comments.

### **Legal comments**

46. Under section 9 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, the London Fire Commissioner (the "Commissioner") is established as a corporation sole with the Mayor appointing the occupant of that office.
47. Section 1 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (FRSA 2004) states that the Commissioner is the fire and rescue authority for Greater London.

48. Under section 7 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the Commissioner has the power to secure the provision of personnel, services and equipment necessary to efficiently meet all normal requirements for those functions. Furthermore, in accordance with section 5A of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 (FRSA 2004), the Commissioner, being a 'relevant authority', may do 'anything it considers appropriate for the purposes of the carrying-out of any of its functions'. This includes putting in place a wellbeing strategy to improve efficiency of personnel in meeting the functional requirements

### List of Appendices

Appendix	Title	Open or confidential
1.	Wellbeing Strategy – Formatted document – September 2021	Open
2.	Wellbeing Strategy – May 2021 - tabbed	Open
3.	Equality Impact Assessment	Open

**Part 2 Confidentiality:** Only the facts or advice considered to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act should be in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

**Is there a part 2 form – NO**

**ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:**

Drafting officer to confirm the following (✓)

**Drafting officer**

Milo Bodrozic has drafted this report and confirms the following:

**Assistant Director/Head of Service**

Kate Bonham has reviewed the documentation and is satisfied for it to be referred to Board for consideration.

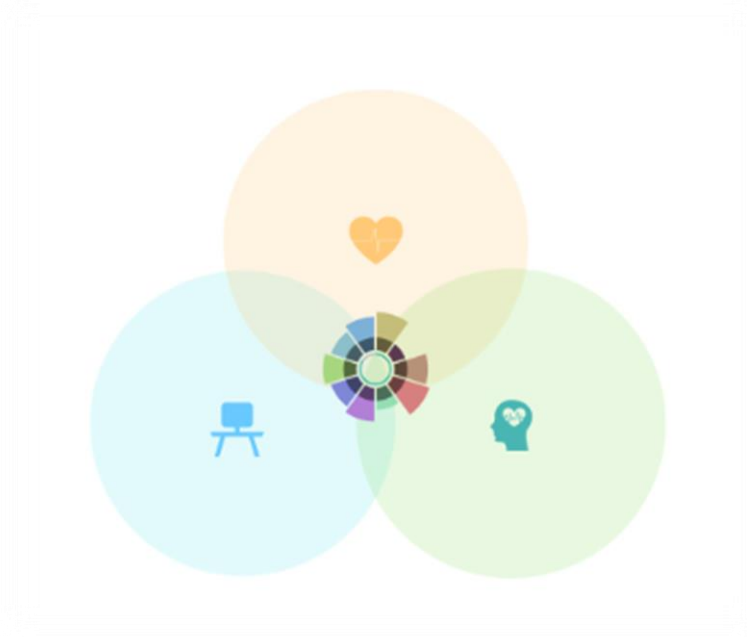
**Advice**

The Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal;

Natasha Singh Legal Advisor, on behalf of General Counsel (Head of Law and Monitoring Officer)

David O’Sullivan Financial Advisor, on behalf of the Chief Finance Officer

Providing information, support and services for your physical, psychological and workplace wellbeing



# Wellbeing Strategy 2021 - 2024

Promote, Prevent and Treat



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## 1. Aims of LFBs Wellbeing Strategy

This LFB Wellbeing Strategy document has 3 aims:

**Aim 1** - to provide you with a clear overview of what wellbeing support and services are presently available and to encourage you to use them

**Aim 2** - to outline how LFB intends to improve its wellbeing provision over the next 3 years

**Aim 3** – to set out our success measures, enabling us to track progress and ensure our activities are having an impact

## 2. Why do we need a Wellbeing Strategy?

The London Fire Brigade only exists as a group of people, and as such our people are our greatest asset.

Keeping our staff safe and well is a priority as it helps us provide a service to the people of London. However, during a person's working life there will invariably be episodes when they are unwell and not able to attend their workplace.

LFB uses data from such absences, as well as wider industry metrics and trends, to

- help inform what service provision should be in place to support our people when such instances occur
- determine what measures we should be looking to put in place to keep the health and wellbeing of our workforce the best that it can be

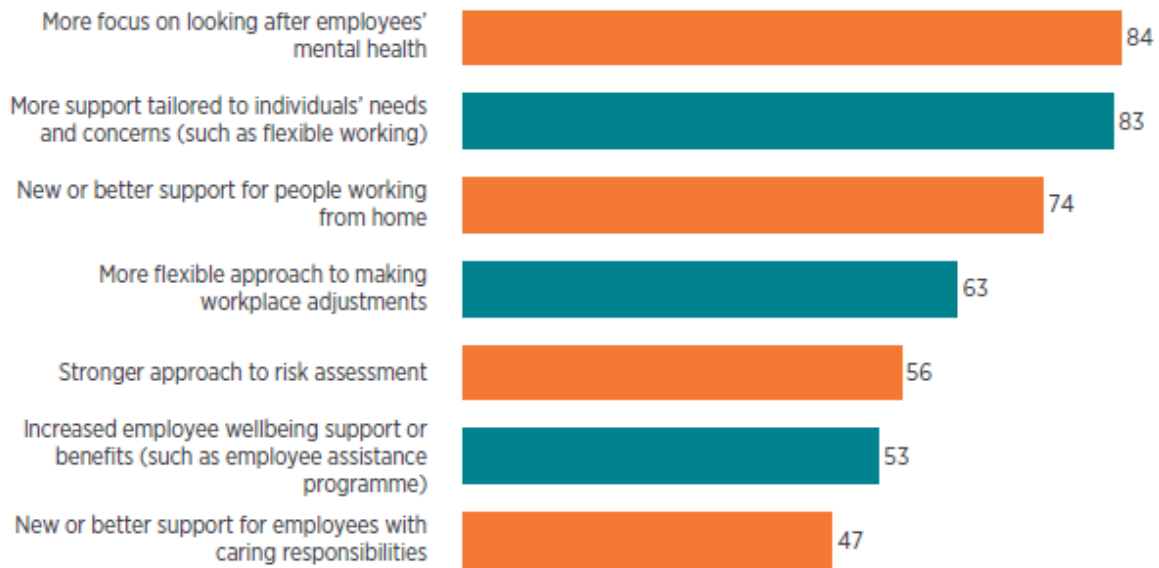
Having a Wellbeing Strategy is a way of helping us to focus and co-ordinate our work and intentions in respect of these actions. It is also a document that staff can access to see what provisions are in place to support their wellbeing.

The benefit of having a wellbeing strategy is that over 70%\* of organisations report that having one in place results in a happier and more engaged workforce.

\*Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) 2021

### Covid 19

The impact of the coronavirus pandemic has, of course, focused attention even more so toward health and wellbeing. LFB has developed its support and service provision in this regard and has also followed best practice (see following graph - measures to support employee health and wellbeing in response to COVID-19 (%)) to further underpin its approaches that you will see outlined in the strategy.



CIPD 2021

### 3. What does data tell us about wellbeing need?

"Data", "metrics" and "trends" are referenced in section 2 above. In this section these are evidenced to show how they have been used to develop LFBs Wellbeing Strategy.

#### Sickness absence data

55170 days were lost to absence in the period 1 April 2021 to A31 March 2022 in the LFB, 47600 for operational staff, 1341 for control staff and 6229 for FRS staff. This has been increasing consistently for the last 5 years.

The most common reason for absence across LFB for operational staff is musculoskeletal (physical) issues, and for FRS and Control staff it is stress anxiety and depression (psychological), broken down as follows:

- Operational staff - 12285 days lost – 26% of all absences
- Control staff - 479 days lost – 36% of all absences
- FRS staff - 2530 days lost – 41% of all absences

This is broadly in line with other UK fire and rescue services. National Fire and Rescue Service Sickness Absence Report data 2021 shows UK fire service operational staff losing 57554 days (25% of all absences) to musculoskeletal issues and Control and FRS staff losing 3486 (34% of all absences) and 14444 (31% of all absences) respectively to stress anxiety and depression.

#### Mental Health

It is notable that LFB FRS staff are significantly more impacted by stress anxiety and depression than their national colleagues. Although physical wellbeing matters affect operational staff more, the difference in terms of day lost to stress anxiety and depression is small; just over 500 days less per year (11767). Anecdotal evidence from our Equality Support Groups (ESGs) also shows that stress

anxiety and depression is an increasingly significant factor affecting the wellbeing for those employed by LFB.

Mental health is a wellbeing factor that is evidenced as having an impact on all staff that work within an "emergency responder" occupation (The Royal Foundation 2020 – *Assessing the mental health and wellbeing of the emergency responder community in the UK*)

LFB's own data (below) supports this and shows that "health", inclusive of mental health, is the most predominate factor for people that present to LFB's Counselling and Trauma Service (CTS).

WORK 21% of total		HEALTH 60% of total (physical and mental)		PERSONAL 19% of total	
% of total	Top issues:	% of total	Top issues:	% of total	Top issues:
3.1	Trauma –post critical incident	18.5	Life stress	6.7	Bereavement
2.1	Grievance	11.4	Anxiety (mild – moderate)	6.0	Relationship with partner
1.4	Discipline - conduct	4.8	Covid 19	2.4	Divorce or separation

LFB Counselling and Trauma Service 2020/2021






#### 4. LFB's approach to wellbeing

LFB absence and wellbeing data shows us that we need to address psychological, physical and workplace wellbeing in order to reduce sickness absence and improve overall staff wellbeing.

We have used the World Health Organisation's (WHO) definition of wellbeing – "a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" – and adapted this for the LFB workplace to establish a specific LFB wellbeing identity – the "interlinking circles of wellbeing"



 <p>Psychological Wellbeing</p>	<p>a state of wellbeing in which an individual is able to realise their own abilities and can cope with the normal stresses associated with life and work</p>
 <p>Physical Wellbeing</p>	<p>a state of wellbeing in which an individual is able to maintain a healthy quality of life that allows them to get the most out of their daily activities without undue fatigue or physical stress</p>
 <p>Workplace Wellbeing</p>	<p>a state of wellbeing that relates to all aspects of an individual's working life, from the quality and safety of the physical environment, how they feel about their work, how they behave and interact with colleagues, and what provisions (conditions of service, ways of working) are available to them to ensure that they are able to be the best that they can be whilst at work</p>

## 5. How we will action the strategy

LFB has traditionally focussed on the treatment of physical and psychological wellbeing issues, for example through a highly regarded Counselling and Trauma Service, fitness and medical testing services.

Going forward, the LFB will focus on **promotion** and **prevention**, as well as treatment, where:

**Promote** is providing staff with information and resource materials to raise a wider awareness and understanding of psychological, physical and workplace wellbeing

**Prevent** is providing staff and managers with resources that can be accessed to help prevent poor psychological, physical and workplace wellbeing

**Treat** is providing support and services to all staff who may be experiencing episodes of poor psychological, physical and workplace wellbeing.

This means we will proactively **Promote** and improve the variety of wellbeing interventions that you can use so that you are better placed to **Prevent** episodes of poor wellbeing taking hold and the necessity to access **Treat** services, although these will always be available to you.

## 6. Action plan





In addition to this strategy document a detailed time lined action plan has been prepared that combines the interlinking circles of wellbeing and the **Promote, Prevent** and **Treat** framework. This plan is an internal resource used by the Wellbeing Team to manage and prioritise the workload associated with the delivery of the outcomes of the strategy.

The strategy document may be subject to change dependent on feedback received from staff, any new wellbeing innovations arising from wider industry, and/or any learning that may emanate from the ongoing review of our culture. Updates to the strategy document will be issued when changes are made and will be recorded using a version control system.

Detailed in the following pages is a summary of the action plan, which focuses on what wellbeing service provisions are already in place for staff to use, and what improvements will be made over the lifetime of the strategy document.

## 7. PROMOTE

### 7.1 - what we do NOW to promote positive wellbeing is to use

- **LFB communication channels** and media including Hotwire, Shout, Managers Update, Yammer
-  **LFB Wellworks (soon to be Virgin Pulse)** - our dedicated wellbeing platform containing information, advice and resources specifically tailored for LFB staff
- **Dedicated Teams and People**
  - the  **Wellbeing Team** – assisting with all matters related to wellbeing support for LFB staff
  -  **Counselling and Trauma Service (CTS)** – supporting the psychological health of LFB staff by the provision of a full time professionally accredited counselling service
  -  **LFB Mental Health First Aiders (LFB MHFAs)** – trained in house volunteers who are able to support staff experiencing episodes of poor mental health
  - **Equality Support Groups (ESGs)** – available to staff to support wellbeing needs within a variety of different contexts
- **Learning Support Team** – available to support staff with neuro diversity needs

## 7.2 - what we want to do GOING FORWARD is to

### Communicate more effectively with our staff

- Establish a unique **LFB Wellbeing identity**  that staff will be able to recognise when accessing existing communication channels and mediums

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: July 2022*

- Establish an **LFB Wellbeing page on Hotwire** that will provide staff with easy access to all wellbeing information sources and portals

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: September 2022*

- Migrate from LFB WellWorks  to the **Virgin Pulse** wellbeing platform

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: September 2022*

- Engage in more **face to face wellbeing activity** by visiting fire stations to promote LFBs wellbeing service provision using the existing resources of the Wellbeing Team, Fitness Advice Team (FAT), LFB Mental Health First Aiders

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: September 2022*

- Use LFBs existing **Inclusion and Wellbeing Calendar** to better focus on wellbeing events that LFB will support in any given year and to better understand wellbeing factors affecting staff from underrepresented groups and staff with disabilities

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: July 2022*

### Make better use of our people and teams, particularly at a local level

- Establish the role of **Local Wellbeing Partners (LWPs)**; staff who will be based at fire stations and other Brigade locations. They will be the link between the centrally based Wellbeing and Fitness Advice Team so that information, resources, guidance and advice can be directly obtained and implemented at a local level
  - the aim is to have one LWP on each Watch at each LFB fire station, on each Control Watch and within FRS teams and departments who will be invited to bimonthly informative sessions regarding internal and external support services available to Brigade staff



- LWPs will be offered access to the 2-day Mental Health First Aid Training course delivered by Mental Health First Aid England to enable them to support staff experiencing episodes of poor mental health
- LWPs will have specific resource materials made available to support operational colleagues to prepare for their periodic fitness assessments

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **January 2023***

- Use LFBs new **Mental Health First Aid and Trauma Team Lead** role as the focal point for all LFB MHFA activity; being responsible for recruiting more LFB MFAs\*, establishing a framework of operation for LFB MHFAs that complements CTS, and also offering existing LFB MHFAs
  - support when dealing with staff requiring professional mental health support
  - access to supervision, training and networking opportunities

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **September 2021***

- **\*Recruit more LFB MHFA volunteers** so that there is one on each Watch/each fire station/each team/each department

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **September 2021***

- Begin the **Wellbeing Dog** pilot initiative and use this as an opportunity to engage with staff on a face to face basis to better promote wellbeing messaging

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **September 2022***

- Work more closely with **United MINDs**  and establish a framework of operation whereby United MINDs members are trained to be LFB MHFAs

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **September 2021***

- Work more collaboratively with the **Firefighters Charity**  and make better use of their resources to promote wellbeing messaging

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **October 2022***

### **Review our policies and guidance to make them more supportive**

- Establish **clear wellbeing messaging** in LFB policies to ensure they are aligned with a more supportive approach to wellbeing matters. This will include, but is not limited to, updating the existing Managing Attendance Policy (PN889)

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **September 2021***

- Establish whether a **Wellbeing** element can be added to the **Impact Assessment** process so that wellbeing has a similar governance standing in LFB and is considered from the outset of projects

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **April 2023***

### **Identify employment/career stages where we can engage directly with our staff**


- Use specific **employment/career stages** to promote wellbeing messaging to the workforce, specifically
  - Induction and onboarding for new FRS joiners, Trainee Firefighters and operational transferees
  - Promotions
  - change of job or role
  - completing their career with LFB

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **January 2023***

## 8. PREVENT

8.1 - what we do **NOW** to help prevent staff from experiencing episodes of poor psychological, physical and workplace wellbeing, is to provide

### Training

- **dedicated time during duty hours** for operational staff to use LFB gym facilities to maintain their levels of physical fitness
- a **121-fitness training** service with LFB Fitness Advisers available to all staff to address physical fitness concerns
- access to an online (Big Learning) **Mental Health Awareness** training package for all staff that provides an overview of the signs and symptoms of poor mental health and what support is available for staff in LFB who may be experiencing such difficulties
- specific **training programmes and wellbeing resources via LFB Wellworks**  (Virgin Pulse) to help operational staff prepare to undertake their periodic fitness assessment
  - **DSE assessment** facilities to support safe office working practice for all staff
  - Ongoing practical and personal skills **training courses or programmes** so that staff are able to discharge their work-related role responsibilities safely and effectively

### Direct advice and support

- having officers available from the Wellbeing Team, CTS, LFB MHFAs, Fitness Advice Team, Health and Safety Services and LFBs occupational health service who can provide direct group or individual interventions to staff on all matters related to psychological, physical and workplace wellbeing

### Resource availability – provision of

- **role/job specific equipment** for all staff to be able to undertake their duties in a safe way
- **gymnasium equipment and facilities** that allow staff to maintain and improve their physical wellbeing

### Policies and guidance

- providing **specific processes and procedures** linked to life events or personal need to support staff wellbeing

## 8.2 - what we want to do GOING FORWARD is to

### Provide more training

- Have in place a training programme that specifically addresses the matter of **Recognising and Managing Stress Anxiety and Depression** in an LFB context that all people managers will be required to attend

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: April 2022*

- Introduce dedicated wellbeing sessions to **LFBs Firefighter Development Programme** with Trainees being provided with
  - course time to receive support, information and the opportunity to maintain their levels of physical fitness throughout the programme
  - direct engagement with counsellors from CTS so that Trainees better understand mental health and what service provision is in place to support their individual needs during their training and future career
  - a clear support and induction pathway for when Trainees leave training centre and enter the workplace

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: January 2023*

### Expand our use of people and teams

- Work more closely with the **National Suicide Prevention Agency** to provide more information, training and support to our workforce to raise awareness about suicide

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: September 2021*

- Establish a **Peer Trauma Support network** of staff volunteers, complementary to the CTS provision, who will be trained to be able engage directly with, and support staff, who have experienced and/or been witness to traumatic events

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: October 2022*

- Establish **LFB MHFAs and/or Local Wellbeing Partners** as the main "go to" local sources of information and support, ensuring that these staff are given the appropriate training, resources and access to central wellbeing teams to make wellbeing an integral part of day to day life in LFB

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **January 2023***

- LFB to become **self-sufficient in being able to provide mental health first aid training** by having 4 in house mental health first aid instructors trained to the accredited standard set by Mental Health First Aid England

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **January 2023***

- Establish **Wellbeing Allies** amongst our leaders who will be advocates of wellbeing; able to role model and share their own stories (via the Building Bridges initiative) and ensure that decision making in LFB accounts for wellbeing matters

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **December 2022***

- Introduce **mental health reviews** as part of Routine Periodic Medicals for operational staff and Well Persons clinics for FRS and Control staff so that early intervention is available for staff that may be experiencing mental health difficulties

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **April 2023***

- Work more closely with external **Welfare Co-ordination Group** stakeholders, including LFBs Welfare Fund, Retired Members Association, Chaplaincy Service to update and improve the Pre-Retirement learning package so that it supports all aspects of a person's wellbeing 3 years prior to retirement

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **March 2023***

- Work more collaboratively with the **Firefighters Charity**  and make better use of their preventative resources to support wellbeing messaging

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **October 2022***

- Devolve **periodic fitness testing** for operational staff to local fire stations so that the initiative becomes a mainstream activity

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **January 2023***

## **Publish supportive and more people/wellbeing led policies and guidance**

- Publish a standalone **Mental Health Policy** that outlines what mental health support and service provisions exist for LFB staff

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **October 2022***

- Publish a **Reasonable Adjustments Policy** that clearly outlines adjustments available within the organisation and provides support on discussing adjustments

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **December 2022***

- Publish a standalone **Fertility Treatment Policy** that outlines what support will be available for staff going through such treatment

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **December 2022***

- Use data from LFBs in house **People Survey** to understand and influence what wellbeing information, support and service provision are made available to LFB staff on an ongoing basis

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **January 2023***

- Establish **green spaces/gardens** throughout the LFB property estate so that people have an area that can be used for quiet reflection or social engagement, whilst also encouraging staff to get involved in gardening pursuits to improve their physical and mental health.

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **March 2024***


- Work with colleagues in the **Inclusion Team** to address
  - why more staff from underrepresented group and staff with disabilities present to CTS with wellbeing issues
  - why men are less likely to present or seek support to address episodes of poor wellbeing

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **September 2022***





## 9. TREAT

### 9.1 - what we do NOW to treat staff who present with wellbeing difficulties is

#### Referral/self referral to internal support service

- **CTS** for psychological wellbeing support
- **LFBs occupational health provider**  for physical and workplace wellbeing interventions, inclusive of
  - a physiotherapy service available to all staff
  - a Functional Restoration Programme (FRP) service to assist staff to return back to work within shorter timeframes following injury
- **Fitness Advice Team** – providing direct interventions to support staff
  - returning to duty following absence
  - requiring specific programmes of remedial action to ensure that they are able to remain fit for duty
  - who are going through pregnancy
- **Learning Support Team** – providing direct support and equipment for staff with specific learning needs

#### Providing advice or guidance and support to access external service providers, including

- the **Firefighters Charity**  – a close working partner with a specific and professional psychological service provision offered to all fire service staff
- **Sapper Support**  - a 24/7 Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) support helpline staffed solely by veterans from the military
- **Shout 85258**  - a 24/7 text service for staff that work in the emergency services and require mental health support
- **Samaritans**  - a registered charity aimed at providing emotional support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide
- Offering advice and support to access NHS **self-help interventions**

- Providing **reasonable adjustments** for staff who may have specific psychological, physical and/or workplace wellbeing needs



## 9.2 - what we want to do GOING FORWARD is to

### Re-let our occupational health contract

- Work with stakeholders to **re-let our occupational health contract** to provide a service provision that is an improvement of what already exists

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **April 2023***

### Adapt our Functional Restoration Programme to provide support for staff that have/are experiencing Long Covid

- Work with LFBs occupational health provider to identify interventions that can be put in place to **support staff back to fitness** in cases where they have suffered from the effects of Long Covid

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **October 2021***

### Complete research to determine whether the introduction of a knee brace will reduce related sickness absences and longer-term pension impact

- Work with specialist knee brace supplier Ossur to facilitate research and then report outcomes to LFB via existing governance

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **March 2023***

### Expand LFBs Fitness Advice service to include

- **specific nutrition support to staff** using previous research data available to LFB

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **August 2023***

- promoting the use of the **Headspace** facility as part of Microsoft Teams and supporting LFBs Fitness Advisers to either become qualified Mindfulness practitioners and/or Pilates/Yoga instructors so alternative intervention are available to staff seeking support from this team

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **April 2023***

### Introduce Reasonable Adjustment Passports (RAPs)

- Work with the Learning Support Team to extend the concept of **Reasonable Adjustments Passports** for neuro diversity to cover staff with other wellbeing needs

*To be delivered by and ongoing from: **April 2023***

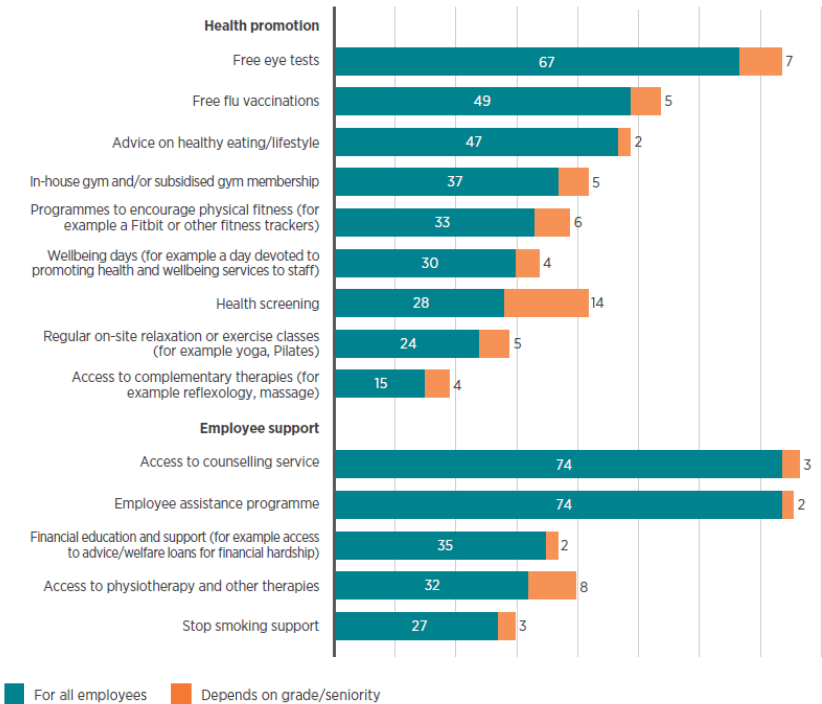
## 10. LFB Wellbeing – measures of success and assurance

To make sure LFB continues to provide a continually improving wellbeing service provision we will measure ourselves against other organisations, define our own measures of success and, importantly, listen to the feedback we get from our people about wellbeing in LFB.

### How do we compare to other organisations?

LFB has been independently assessed under the London Healthy Workplace Charter and awarded an Excellence accreditation, but in developing the actions and activities that make up the strategy it has been useful to review wider industry activities. From data available – see table below – it shows that LFBs wellbeing provision accords with best practice, but in contrast to some organisations all individuals, irrespective of grade or rank, have access to all services.

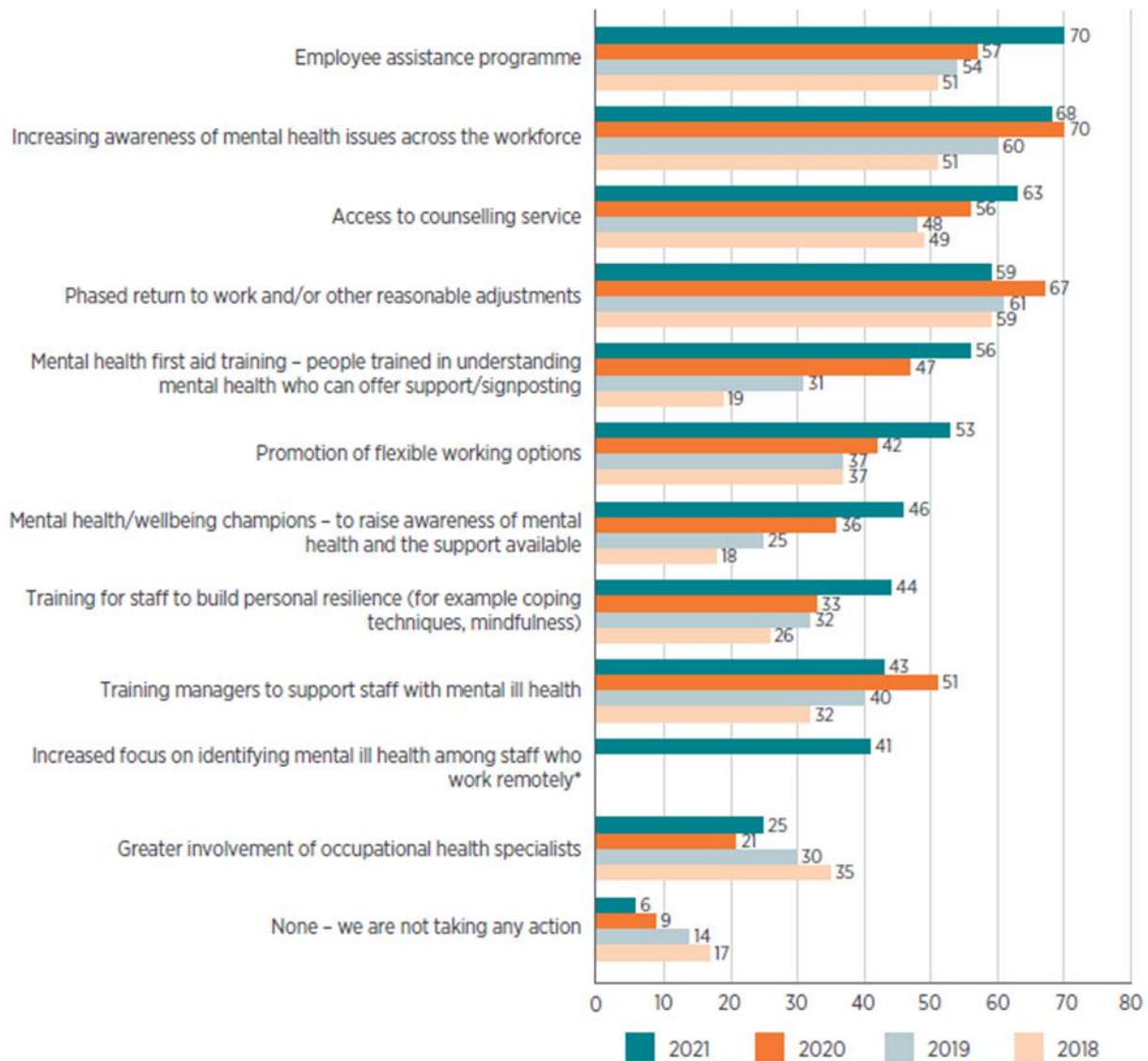
#### Wellbeing provision offered by employers (%)



CIPD 2021

Mental health in LFB is a significant wellbeing factor for our people. Determining what mental health actions/activities should be part of the strategy document have not just relied on analysing available LFB data and staff feedback (via Client Satisfaction Surveys undertaken by CTS), but also on wider industry analysis (see table below - Actions taken to manage employee mental health at work (%)).

This has directed us to focus our efforts to ensure that the wellbeing resources, support and service provision available are, at the very least, comparable to other organisations, and where possible, are in excess of other organisations to reflect the impact that working in the blue light sector can have on individuals.



CIPD 2021

### Measures of success

Wellbeing strategy measures of success will be whether

- the Delivery Dates assigned to each future action point outlined in paragraphs 7.2, 8.2 and 9.2 have been achieved
- the data from the People Survey shows that staff "believe"
  - that LFB has put wellbeing as priority in the way that it deals with people
  - that their managers actively have wellbeing as part of their leadership approach when dealing with them
  - they are able to access/receive the support they need
- feedback received from Local Wellbeing Partners (LWPs) about the effectiveness of wellbeing interventions is positive

- staff take up of wellbeing training courses, use of resources and self-help tools increases
- sickness absence is reduced
- discipline and grievances cases related to accusations of bullying/workloads stress are reduced
- LFB obtains the Mental Health at Work Commitment accreditation advocated by MIND, NFCC and HMICFRS

## 11. LFB Wellbeing – be part of it and get in touch

This strategy document and attached action plan are focused on improving all our wellbeing needs.

With the new initiatives proposed it is hoped that we can continue to develop the wellbeing service provision for our people.

This cannot be achieved alone, we all have a part to play, so if you have a view, or want to be directly involved in making wellbeing part and parcel of what we do on a day to day basis, please think about getting in touch with the Wellbeing Team ([wellbeingmedicalteam@london-fire.gov.uk](mailto:wellbeingmedicalteam@london-fire.gov.uk)) to talk through any ideas you might have about wellbeing, or just step forward and become either a LFB Mental Health First Aider (LFB MHFA) or Local Wellbeing Partner (LWP).

We can all make a difference as long as each and every one of us remembers that we all have psychological, physical and workplace wellbeing needs; so let's not ignore these, and let's all be part of an organisation that has the best people and is the best place to work.



**Richard Mills**

Deputy Commissioner

## Document Version Control

Last Update	Change Made	Reason for Change
14 September 2022	Deletion of "building bridges" initiative	Incorporated as part of ongoing collaboration with ESGs
14 September 2022	Local Wellbeing Partner delivery date amended from October 2022 to January 2023 – page 9 refers	Ongoing discussions with trade unions
14 September 2022	Devolvement of fitness testing delivery date amended from October 2022 to January 2023 – page 13 refers	Ongoing discussions with trade unions
14 September 2022	Addition of research into knee brace introduction – page 17 refers	Product identified as potentially able to reduce MSK lower limb sickness absence
14 September 2022	Change of terminology from <i>Target Delivery Date and Ongoing From</i> to <i>To Be Delivered by and Ongoing From</i>	To make clear that even though an initiative has not commenced there is a due by date
14 September 2022	Change to the description of the Action Plan – page 5 refers	To make clear that the referenced Action Plan is an internal Wellbeing Team resource