



<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Performance and Resources Board</b>	Agenda Item	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	30 October 2019	Report Number	
<b>Report Author:</b>	Natalie Quickenden, Assistant Director of HR		
<b>Presented By</b>	Karl Edwards, Director of Corporate Services		
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Approach to Mental Health in the Workplace</b>		
<b>Type of Report:</b>	Decision		

## 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Service's 'Approach to Mental Health in the Workplace', attached in draft, is adopted as one of the key Safety, Health & Wellbeing elements contained within our developing People Strategy for 2020 and beyond.

## 2. BACKGROUND

Work is a key part of our lives and can provide a sense of wellbeing, purpose, social contact and status. We recognise the link between the control of health risks, the general health of employees and the success of the service itself.

Essex County Fire & Rescue Service (ECFRS) are faced with an employee population which is predominantly male, white and late 30s to mid-fifties; traditionally guarded about discussing mental health – due to both generational influence and the stigma attached to mental health still prevents some from coming forward to seek help and support, as they feel that it is a sign of weakness or failure.

In the past 3-5 years, work has been done to break down the barriers of stigma around mental health and importantly, both real and perceived peer opinions and attitudes. Key to this is reassurance that it is actually a courageous step to take control of mental health and want to make positive changes.

Work has also been done around trauma and the introduction of Trauma Risk Management (TRiM) in 2016 has gone a long way to inform and reassure our people that they will be supported when facing some of the more horrific and challenging aspects of the fire service role. Specialist trauma therapy is promptly available should there be any complications with trauma reactions.

Inclusion and Diversity are now firmly embedded and on track to provide further open and supportive forums and conditions of work which can only help to improve overall wellbeing and mental health.

There is a genuine feeling of more openness in terms of mental health and this has been evidenced by some individuals coming forward and wanting to publically tell their story around their mental health; this has been so valuable in reinforcing the message around reassurance and support being available.

### 3. PROPOSED APPROACH

Our proposed approach to Mental Health in the Workplace sets out our continuing commitment for supporting (ECFRS) employees as part of the health, safety and wellbeing element of our future People Strategy and is set out in the following document:



Approach to  
Mental Health in the

It is important that the approach to Mental Health in the Workplace is delivered as part of a wider strategy; and that our wellbeing priorities are integrated throughout our organisation, embedded in our culture and supported by consistent policies. Therefore this proposed approach will be adopted as part of our People Strategy which is currently being developed for 2020 and beyond. The People Strategy will include a number of Safety, Health and Wellbeing dimensions including physical and mental health, and other aspects which directly and indirectly contribute to health and wellbeing. These are likely to encompass healthy lifestyle, financial wellbeing, good work and personal growth.

Adoption of this proposed approach to Mental Health ahead of the People Strategy for 2020 will provide the necessary direction of travel; and importantly will help to **signal our continued commitment to promoting a positive culture in the workplace.**

This proposed approach also specifically contributes to achieving our **health, safety and wellbeing priorities** *and is recommended to SLT for approval.*