

# Report to Cabinet

**20 July 2022**

<b>Subject:</b>	Harmful Gambling Workplace Charter, Policy and Guidance
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Deputy Leader – Cllr Bob Piper Cabinet Member – Finance & Resources
<b>Director:</b>	Neil Cox, Director – Business Strategy and Change
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Head of Human Resources, Victoria Lee <a href="mailto:Victoria_Lee@sandwell.gov.uk">Victoria_Lee@sandwell.gov.uk</a> Assistant HR Policy Officer, Ian Markham <a href="mailto:Ian_Markham@sandwell.gov.Uk">Ian_Markham@sandwell.gov.Uk</a>

## 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That approval be given to implement a Harmful Gambling Workplace Charter and its accompanying policy and guidance, in accordance with the details contained within this report.

## 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 Adopting a Harmful Gambling Workplace Charter and introducing a supporting policy and guidance makes clear the council's commitment to tackling gambling related harm in the workplace.
- 2.2 The policy and guidance are to assist managers who are supporting and managing employees who are suffering from gambling related harms to such an extent that it affects their health, work performance, conduct and relationships at work.



### 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<b>People live well and age well</b> - raising awareness and providing the appropriate support and advice will enable employees to live healthy well and age well.
	<b>One Council One Team - Organisational Development</b> – reducing stigma, breaking down barriers and enabling our employees to support their own wellbeing will ensure they have to tools to fulfil their potential.

### 4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 Harmful gambling is behaviour related to gambling which causes harm to the gambler and those around them.
- 4.2 Sandwell Council takes the health and wellbeing of its employees very seriously. In this regard, the Council will work collaboratively to tackle gambling related harms in the workplace and community.
- 4.3 Harmful gambling is a social concern for all, and as a council we want to ensure the issue is given the appropriate awareness and exposure and pledge our full commitment to supporting employees who may be affected.
- 4.4 Harmful gambling can affect anyone at any time. This can often be far reaching for individuals and those around them. Harmful gambling may impact on employees mental and physical health, and can cause or contribute to debt, poverty, domestic abuse, isolation, homelessness, crime and suicide.
- 4.5 The effects on the workplace may include poor engagement and performance levels, changes in behaviour, poor conduct and relationships with colleagues, and increased absence.
- 4.6 Sandwell Council should provide the appropriate support to employees who are suffering from gambling related harms. The Council has a responsibility to create a stigma-free environment that encourages open discussion and disclosure; this will encourage employees suffering from harmful gambling to not suffer in silence, and discuss the practical steps needed to support their full recovery.



## Current Position

4.7 A Harmful Gambling Workplace Charter (Appendix 1) and its associated policy (Appendix 2) and guidance (Appendix 3) have been developed and should be read in conjunction with this report.

4.8 The Workplace Charter outlines seven key principles:

- We will make a commitment
- We will build our approach
- We will promote a positive culture
- We will support and train
- We will provide the right support
- We will help people to recover
- We will seek parity and handle issues with sensitivity

4.9 The policy and guidance have been developed to reinforce the charter and aims to:

- Support employees and managers by setting out the responsibilities and key principles to follow in relation to harmful gambling.
- Foster an environment in which colleagues feel confident disclosing gambling related harms to their line managers and peers.
- Provide direction and clarity on how the Council will deal with issues relating to gambling related harm.

## Consultation

4.10 Sandwell Council is committed to working with its recognised Trade Union colleagues to ensure support is available for employees suffering from gambling related harm.

4.11 The charter, policy and guidance were developed in conjunction with Sandwell Council's recognised Trade Union colleagues and with the assistance of Sandwell Council's Occupational Health team.



- 4.12 The proposal to implement a Harmful Gambling Charter, policy and guidance was endorsed by members of the Joint Consultative Panel (JCP) on 10 March 2022.
- 4.13 The Council will continue to review the policy and guidance in consultation with the Trade Unions to ensure it is in line with current best practice and any future legislation.

## 5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 The Council is not obligated to implement a Harmful Gambling Workplace Charter and its accompanying policy and guidance. However, as part of its corporate and social responsibility, the Council has a commitment to carry out its practices in an ethical way which supports the development of employee relations.

## 6 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	There are no specific financial implications arising from the contents of this report.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	There are no specific legal implications arising from the contents of this report. The proposed charter, policy and guidance do not create any risk of discrimination claims, as they can be applied equally to all employees. They do not affect any other statutory employment right.
<b>Risk:</b>	The corporate risk management strategy has been complied with to identify and assess the risks arising from the decisions being sought. This has concluded that there are no red risks that require reporting. All risks identified have suitable measures in place to mitigate risks to an acceptable level within the council's appetite for risk.
<b>Equality:</b>	<p>An initial screening was undertaken in February 2022, it was agreed at this time that the subject of the statement did not meet the criteria for undertaking a full EIA.</p> <p>The information assessed had a positive impact on one of the nine protected characteristics or groups –</p>



	<p>namely sex. The remaining characteristics were not adversely affected, as the policy will be applied equally and consistently to all employees.</p> <p>Although this policy applies equally to all employees, managers should have due regard to the personal circumstances of individuals.</p>
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	<p>By taking a proactive approach to supporting employees suffering from gambling related harm, the Council can ensure that employees are able to ask for help and support. This in turn, can reduce absenteeism by providing the appropriate support.</p> <p>A sympathetic and appropriate approach from managers is crucial to provide employees with the support that they need. This should ensure employees feel confident to discuss their concerns, enabling them to continue to be successful in their roles.</p>
<b>Social Value</b>	<p>Supporting employees suffering from gambling related harms could reduce the associated financial, health and unemployment costs.</p>

## 7. CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The Council, like all employers, has a duty of care to its employees, by providing workers with a safe and effective work environment.
- 7.2 It is important to make it clear through a workplace charter and its associated policy and guidance, that employees suffering from gambling related harm will receive the appropriate levels of support and that Sandwell MBC has a positive attitude towards this subject.
- 7.3 Once agreed, the Council will communicate to employees that the charter, policy and guidance has been created.
- 7.4 Senior Managers, Line Managers, the Occupation Health team and Human Resources will also be informed of their responsibilities under this guidance.



7.5 Sandwell Councils Workplace Wellbeing Board and Wellbeing Champions will also be informed that the charter, policy and guidance has been created.

## 8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1 – Harmful Gambling Workplace Charter

8.2 Appendix 2 – Harmful Gambling Policy – HR88

8.3 Appendix 3 – Harmful Gambling Guidance – HR88.1

## 9. Background Papers

None

