

COUNCIL MEETING – 24 APRIL 2018

QUESTIONS FROM ELECTOR UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 9

1. From Mr Steven Gillingwater to Councillor Pantelic

Can the Council join with me, in starting a campaign which will raise awareness for Chronic Regional Pain Syndrome (CRPS) and support me in asking for a debate in the Houses of Parliament so that we can get true national recognition for CRPS and it means future sufferers do not have to be told at 12 that your pain is in your head? I am a CRPS warrior and hope Slough Borough Council becomes a warrior with me. Please remember this as November the 6th is CRPS awareness day and will we work to make CRPS known in our town.

Reply

Steven, thank you for your question – before I answer I understand your request to play a short video on the subject has been granted, so can we please play that now.

For members who are not aware CRPS is a condition that manifests itself as severe and chronic pain which can be felt all over the body. It can be extremely debilitating.

The pain may be a mix of burning, stabbing or stinging sensations, but there may also be a tingling sensation and numbness.

The emotional strain of living with chronic pain can sometimes lead to psychological problems, such as depression and anxiety. During periods of extreme pain, some people may even consider suicide.

So we will of course raise awareness of this issue – as we do with the myriad of health issues that affect our residents. I am more than happy to write to our local MP to support your call for a parliamentary debate.

As a Council we are running 4 targeted Health campaigns through our wellbeing board which will support people suffering from CPRS and alongside residents suffering from other health conditions.

The first campaign was our BeRealisitic campaign which encouraged people to make small changes in their lives to improve their health.

The next campaign will be raising awareness of and tackling social isolation.

2. From Mr Kenneth Wright to Councillor Swindlehurst

Do you consider this Authority has adequate safeguards to prevent any Harvey Weinstein style behaviour by a member to staff and would you expect any allegations of improper conduct to be investigated thoroughly?

Reply

Thank you for your question.

As council Leader I feel I speak for all councillors in saying that people should be able to come for work in an environment that fully supports all people and the council should provide an environment free from any form of harassment, bullying or discrimination.

Our Dignity at Work policy ensures just that. Sexual harassment includes unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. Often, it can cause distress, interfere with job performance, over-emphasise a person's sexuality and fail to respect the rights of others. It demoralises and diminishes people's skills and capabilities.

Breaches of this code are disciplinary offences under the Council's disciplinary policy and procedure. No individual should be subjected to persistent, unacceptable and unreasonable behaviour. Those on the receiving end have the right to seek resolution firstly, through the informal procedure, defined below. If a resolution cannot be found at this stage then the employee can make a formal complaint under the Council's grievance policy and procedure. The employee also has a the right to go directly to the formal stage where there serious breaches of our Dignity at Work code.

So yes I do consider this authority has adequate safeguards in place – but that does not stop us from seeking improvements. We have implemented a cross party approach to refresh our polices and governance arrangements where necessary.

And of course all members in this would expect any allegation to be properly investigated.