

Title of meeting: Employment Committee

Date of meeting: 04 December 2018

Subject: Sickness Absence - Quarterly Report

Report by: Jon Bell - Director of HR, Legal and Performance

Wards affected: N/A

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to update Employment Committee about levels of sickness absence across the council and actions being taken to manage absence.

2. Recommendations

Members are recommended to:

- **Continue to monitor sickness absence, and ensure appropriate management action is taken to address absenteeism.**

3. Background

- 3.1 In the period since the last update in September 2018 the level of sickness absence has increased marginally from 8.49 to 8.61 average days per person per year. This is against the corporate target of an average 7 days per person per year.
- 3.2 Analysis of data indicates that since the last report long term absence has increased marginally from 4.82 to 4.84 average days per person per year. Short term absence has increased from 2.40 to 2.46 average days per person per year over the same period.
- 3.3 Absence levels by directorates for the period from 01 November 2017 to 31 October 2018 are attached in Appendix 1.
- 3.4 Of the 12 directorates, five (excluding schools) are over the corporate target of an average 7 days per person per year. Since the last update the average sickness absence per person in Public Health has decreased from 11.08 to 9.81.
- 3.5 There are three directorates that are over an average 10 days per person per year. The average sickness absence per person in Adult Services has increased from 12.30 in November 2017 to 13.36 in October 2018. Average sickness absence within

this directorate in January 2017 was 15.63 days. The Senior Management team have identified the functions across the Directorate where long-term and medium-term sickness absences are of concern. The main reason for absence is Musculoskeletal followed by anxiety/stress/psychological. Significantly, Cancer is the fourth reason.

Average sickness absence in Children's Social Care has decrease slightly from 11.25 days to 11.11days since the last quarterly report.

The Port has seen an increase of average absence per person from 16.37 days in November 2017 to 17.19 days in October 2018. This is largely due to a small number of continuing long term absences which are being actively managed.

- 3.6 The analysis of the data indicates the main reasons for sickness absence has remained unchanged, with anxiety/stress/psychological, musculoskeletal and colds/flu/viruses accounting for 57.54% of absences in the last 12 months.
- 3.7 A summary of reason for sickness absence for the last three years is attached in Appendix 2.

4. Wellbeing

Since the last update on wellbeing activities the following workplace health initiatives are being promoted, implemented, or are under development:

- The 'Winter Wellness' campaign has started.
 - An initial indication is that an addition 200 employees have had a flu vaccination compared to the last year.
 - The 6 week pilot lunchtime walk has finished and due to the popularity will continue every Tuesday.
 - Plans are in place to communicate the top tips for staying well during the winter that includes information on SAD (seasonal affective disorder), Yoga, physical activity and NHS stay well information.
- Funding has been awarded for the 'Well @ Work project'. This a joint programme with Southampton City Council and looks to help individuals suffering from mental health or musculoskeletal disorders that may be at risk of losing their jobs.
- Mental Health First Aid training is being trialled within the Community and Communications directorate. This should assist staff dealing with distressed members of the public following the implementation of the Universal Credit.
- Two Stress Awareness sessions have been arranged in November for 20 managers within Children's Social care. These sessions will provide managers with information and techniques on how to deal with workplace stress but also discuss with their employees on how best manage their resilience.

5. Reasons for recommendations

The continued monitoring of sickness absence and the identification of good management practices is an important part of maximising attendance, which will in turn increase productivity, improve engagement and build resilience.

6. Equality impact assessment (EIA)

A preliminary Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

7. Legal implications

There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report.

8. Finance comments

There is no significant cashable saving resulting from the reduction in sickness absence. However there will be an improvement in productivity in terms of total days worked.

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Signed by:

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Sickness Absence by Directorate 31 October 2018

Appendix 2: Summary of reasons for sickness absence - 31 October 2018

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

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Signed by: