

Title of meeting:	Employment Committee
Date of meeting:	27 September 2019
Subject:	Sickness Absence - Quarterly Report
Report by:	Rochelle Kneller - Assistant Director of HR
Wards affected:	N/A
Key decision:	No
Full Council decision:	No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. 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 and promote employee wellbeing.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Members are recommended to:

- **Continue to monitor sickness absence, and ensure appropriate management action is taken to address absenteeism**
- **Note the wellbeing activities undertaken to support attendance**

3. Background

- 3.1. The Business intelligence system is now being used by managers to assist in the management of absence across the authority. This is the first quarter that the new data will be used to draw a comparison between last quarter's figures and this quarter's figures. It should however be noted that the change to some directorates' structures (following the senior management review) have impacted on the availability of some comparative data for this reporting period (in Appendix A).
- 3.2. The following section of the report notes this quarter's sickness absence figures compared to last quarter:
 - The level of sickness absence for this quarter has decreased slightly from 10.91 to 10.47 average days per person per year
 - Working time lost has decreased from 2.98- 2.88 per cent (excluding schools)
 - Long term absence has decreased from 6.70 to 6.29 average days per person per year. Short term absence has decreased from 2.81 to 2.76 average days per person per year.

- Out of 12 directorates, seven (excluding schools) are over the corporate target of an average 7 days sickness per person per year
- The highest reasons for sickness absence remain to be due to psychological (stress, anxiety and depression), virus and gastrointestinal
- Musculoskeletal absences are divided into three categories; if these were collated they would become the second highest ranked reason for absence (as was the case last quarter).

3.3. Absence levels by directorates for the period from Sept 2018 to August 2019 are attached in Appendix 1. A summary of reason for sickness absence for the last year is attached in Appendix 2.

3.4. As requested during June Employment Committee a new category has been added to measure Psychological - stress, anxiety and depression (work related). This will be reportable for the next report.

4. Wellbeing

4.1. The new Occupational Health provider, Cordell Health, commenced their contract for the Council this quarter. Cordell Health are a social enterprise specialising in providing early intervention and support on health and wellbeing at work. During their implementation process they gave a useful insight into their service and provided training sessions to over a 100 managers. This included a demonstration of their Occupational Portal, which is the new system for referring and managing employee cases. The Occupational health intranet pages have also been updated with user guides, a webinar on how to use the portal and information on Cordell Health's Clinicians. Further information on how to access the new Occupational health provider can be located on the intranet for managers under 'Occupational Health and back care'.

4.2. Workplace Wellness were successful in their bid for the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provider and have continued to deliver the EAP service for the council. As part of their new contract they ran a number of workshops during June with over 200 employees attending over the 2 days, the sessions were aimed at providing managers and employees with details on the full breadth of legal, financial and emotional support that is available. They will also be providing a recorded webinar in the coming months for those unable to attend in June.

4.3. A number of initiatives were promoted throughout this quarter with the main themes being physical activity and healthy lifestyles. During July, Nuffield Health offered employees a free weekly pass to use their facilities. August included national cycle to work day, to promote this campaign, a competition was run to invite more employees to use their bikes to get to and from work. This resulted in an 11% increase in the number of staff members taking part in the event from across all sites. The day was also used as an opportunity to launch a new after

work social cycle ride for staff. This will continue to run on the second and fourth Thursday of the month. Energie Fitness provided free mini health checks to staff at the Civic Offices and all appointments were booked. The option to offer the checks at other council localities are now being explored.

4.4. Supporting mental health and wellbeing in the workplace training has now been procured. Solent Mind were successfully awarded the contract to deliver 6 sessions over the next 12 months to managers throughout Portsmouth City Council. To date we have had over 50 attendees and the upcoming training sessions in September, November and December are fully booked with nearly 30 additional managers on the waiting list. These managers will be offered training between January and June 2020.

4.5. For the next quarter the following campaigns will be promoted:

- **Mental wellbeing**

This includes promotion of information and activities for employees on World Mental Health Day and a promotion of e-learning training for employees to promote National Suicide Prevention day in September.

- **Stopping smoking**

In October the awareness campaign 'Stoptober' will be promoted to support individuals to quit smoking

- **Flu vaccinations**

As with previous years, a campaign will be run to promote flu vaccinations with clinics and vouchers being made available to staff to obtain free flu vaccinations.

5. Reasons for recommendations

5.1 To increase employee attendance at work. To do this through monitoring sickness absence and improving employee wellbeing, which in turn, will increase productivity, improve engagement and build a more resilient workforce.

6. Equality impact assessment (EIA)

6.1. A preliminary Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

7. Legal implications

7.1. There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report.

8. Finance comments

8.1. 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 - September 2019

Appendix 2: Summary of reasons for sickness absence - September 2019.

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: