

**WIRRAL COUNCIL
EMPLOYMENT AND APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE
24 SEPTEMBER 2012**

SUBJECT:	MANAGING ATTENDANCE
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF LAW, HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR ADRIAN JONES
KEY DECISION	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of the report is to update The Employment and Appointments Committee on the current position around attendance management.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

2.1 The Employment and Appointments Committee is asked to:

- Note the content of the report and current sickness absence data.

3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

3.1 To update The Employment and Appointments Committee on ongoing improvements.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 Analysis of Performance

The final outturn BVPI absence figure for the year to 31st March 2012 was 9.52 days (see Appendix 1) demonstrating a significant reduction in absence from 2010/11's figure of 10.22 days.

A breakdown of sickness absence figures for Quarter One and comparative data for 2009/10 and 2010/11 and 2011/12, by quarter and by full year, is shown at Appendix 1.

- 4.1.1 Although sickness absence figures for 2011/12 have improved significantly, Quarter One figures for 2012/13 are disappointing (2.46 days) showing an increase on last years figure of 2.14 days but an improvement on the previous two years (2.52, 2.49). With the exception of Teachers and Managed Schools, all departments have shown an increase for Quarter One with the Department of Adult Social Services showing the highest increase (4.17 days for 2012/13 compared with 2.77 for 2011/12).
- 4.1.2 We reported to September 2011's Employment & Appointments Committee the absence levels in The Department of Adult Social Services, reasons for absence and actions to be taken forward to address higher than average sickness levels within the department. The end of year figure for DASS for 2011/12 was 15.03 days, a significant improvement of nearly 3 days per employee on the 2010/11 figure of 17.93 days per employee.

4.2 Reasons for Absence

Appendix 2 shows the reasons and the rank order for absence for the Council as a whole together with a breakdown by department. Appendix 3 shows this information based on Quarter One absence figures. The tables show that mental health issues continue to be the most frequent cause of absence across the Council. This includes anxiety, stress and depression.

4.3 Benchmarking Data

North West Employers have recently published the North West region's sickness absence figures for District, County, Metropolitan and Unitary Councils. The average sick days figure per FTE for 2011/12 including schools for County, Metropolitan and Unitary Councils was 8.66 days, a reduction on last year's benchmark figure of 9.15 days.

4.4 Improving Performance

- 4.4.1 The Council's revised Attendance Management Policy and Procedure and Health and Well Being Framework were approved at The Employment and Appointments Committee on 23 March 2011, and the policy implemented from April 2011. These initiatives have started to show some improvement in levels of attendance which have been reflected in the improved outturn figures for 2011/12 of 9.52 days,. However as outlined above Quarter 1 figures are disappointing and we need to continue to drive performance, lower the rates of absence, apply the policy and deliver the well being agenda to maintain the momentum.
- 4.4.2 A case management system has recently been developed and introduced across the authority to ensure consistent management, monitoring and reporting of case work including those related to sickness absence from work. This enables us to better target trends and issues across the workforce.

4.4.3 The move to specialist HR teams will enable us to better prioritise the targeting of support for managers to manage absence appropriately.

4.4.4 Further detailed proposals are being considered to review the current offer of stress management tools for managers and employees. The current tools are as follows:-

- Stress Awareness E-learning for staff and managers
- Attendance Management E-learning
- 30 Days to Fantastic Management
- Stress Risk Assessment
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Occupational Health
- Targeted support for managers through Stress Focus Groups

4.5. Employee Health and Well Being

Work continues to deliver the health and well being agenda across the authority. A report was taken to Executive Team in August to outline key achievements for the last twelve months.

The Fit4Wirral Implementation Plan for 2012/13 has been agreed and work has commenced to deliver key actions during the next 12 months with a range of partners.

The John Parry Memorial Trophy Pedometer Challenge commences this month to encourage staff to get active and walk as many steps as possible during a four week period. This year, Wirral Council staff will compete against NHS Wirral employees for the John Parry Memorial Shield. Uptake for the challenge which started on 3rd September has been excellent with double the amount of participants signing up so far this year.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

5.1 Failure to pro-actively manage sickness absence through early intervention, improved management information and health and well being initiatives could leave the Council open to legal challenge and increased costs.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 None

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 Consultation with the Trade Unions has taken place regarding the revised Attendance Management Policy.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 There are no specific implications arising out of this report.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

9.1 There are no specific implications arising out of this report.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no specific implications arising out of this report.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no specific implications arising out of this report.

11.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(a) Is an EIA required? No

(b) If 'yes', has one been completed?

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no implications arising out of this report.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no planning and community safety implications arising out of this report.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1	BVPI Absence figures by Quarter for Departments
Appendix 2	Reasons for Absence across the Council and by department by percentage of days lost, with rank order for 2011/12
Appendix 3	Reasons for Absence across the Council and by department by percentage of days lost, with rank order for Quarter 1 2012/13

REFERENCE MATERIAL

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
A Managing Attendance Report is submitted to The Employment and Appointments Committee quarterly	
The Employment and Appointments Committee	23 June 2012

