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## **Attendance Management Project update**

### **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Attendance Management Project Group commenced in summer 2017. It was established to provide direction and policy on reducing the sickness absence rate in the Council. An action plan was developed to attempt to achieve this and work towards a Council target of 8.4 days as quickly as possible. COG has received regular reports on progress.
- 1.2 The Project Group has updated its format to reflect the on-going work which is needed to address attendance management in the medium to long term, in line with the Attendance Management Strategy. Appendix 3 details the Strategy. The group now consists of senior representatives for Health, Wellbeing and Attendance (HWB&A), Human Resources (HR) and Organisational Development (OD).
- 1.3 The continued focus of the project will be for all support services to work in collaboration to deliver the Attendance Management Action Plan, detailed at appendix2, which underpins the strategy.
- 1.4 Interventions over the past 12 months have achieved a reduction in reported absence from 14.2 in 2016/17 to 12.8 days per fte. The support of Chief Officers and Members is critical to the effectiveness of the project and further reductions in absence.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 For the Committee to note the progress on the action plan, specifically all points in action 3 and action 6.1.
- 2.2 For the Committee to support the aims of the project and note the reduction in absence rates, to date.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 Improved performance in attendance management is a priority for the Council.
- 3.2 Continued support is critical to the success of achieving the project aim of 8.4 days per fte. This is in addition to achieving the longer term culture change required in managing employee wellbeing and attendance.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 There has been a reduction in absence from 14.2 in 2016/17 to 12.8 days per fte in 2017/18. There is still progress to be made to achieve the target of 8.4 days per fte.
- 4.2 The Project Group, chaired by Head of HWb&A continues to meet monthly with set agenda items and recorded actions. A review of the group was carried out at the end of the financial year to ensure the proposed Action Plan supports the Council's aim. The group will continue to update Personnel Committee and COG to provide progress and enable discussion and feedback.
- 4.3 There are two major elements to the work of the Project Group; case management to prioritise and reduce absence cases and a longer term culture change required in managing employee wellbeing and attendance.
- 4.4 There has been a review of how priority cases are managed, and HR will support managers to address critical cases which require a more in-depth understanding and consistent approach. The latest figures are attached at appendix 4.
- 4.5 A longer term culture change requires a shift in thinking about employee wellbeing and putting interventions in place that support employees in the workplace. The latter will particularly focus on developing a partnership approach to attendance, between managers and employees. Significant training and development support has been introduced to help achieve this. Further details are given below.
- 4.6 Approximately 450 Managers out of approximately 600 have now attended the mandatory Health, Wellbeing and Attendance Management training. Extra sessions have been arranged and email alerts have been sent through PAs to reach those managers who have yet to attend. The deadline for Managers to attend has now been extended to the end of June.
- 4.7 220 managers have attended the mandatory Stress Management training, this can only be attended once managers have attended the Health, Wellbeing and Attendance Management training.
- 4.8 There are also optional training sessions which have been developed, and are due to start being rolled out to managers by the end of June:
- Return to work interviews
  - Effective Health, Wellbeing and Attendance Conversations
  - Effective Occupational Health referrals
- 4.9 The training is part of a wider proposal on leadership development training which has been developed by OD and sees the introduction of the Professional Derby Manager (PDM). The PDM Programme offers a significant number of leadership workshops, delivered in-house.

- 4.10 The initial PDM briefing sessions were attended by around 300 managers. They were very keen to receive support to improve their leadership and management capability. The PDM Leadership Workshops will be commencing in early July 2018 and will run for the remainder of 2018/19 and beyond. These workshops will provide leadership development linked to the Leadership Behaviours.
- 4.11 The workshops will emphasise the importance of leadership and management in determining the health and wellbeing of employees and the impact of poor leadership on attendance. This is particularly relevant in managing the high levels of stress related absences. A separate report will be brought to the next Committee on the PDM workshops.
- 4.12 Resilience training and general health and wellbeing support is to be offered to employees by the end of June. This is to ensure they are aware of the support available internally and external to the Council and to encourage employees to take more responsibility for their health. There is already development support on resilience for both managers and employees, on the Council's e-learning portal.
- 4.13 Direct feedback from managers has indicated an appreciation of the work being carried out towards a positive change to managing attendance and supporting leadership development. Formal feedback is currently being collated to enable more practicable changes, should they be required.
- 4.14 The new stress policy has now been soft launched and is available on the intranet. A Mental Health Improvement Plan is being developed to incorporate the following aims:
- To raise the profile of the Stress Policy and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy
  - Identify the services available to employees which they can access, to help improve their mental health,
  - Set out what is expected of managers and employees.
- 4.15 Mental health issues have a significant impact on employee wellbeing and attendance at work. DCC now have a formal Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) trainer. Livewell Teams will be the first to be trained. The MHFA training will be rolled out to Council employees in the next 2-3 months, once appropriate processes and protocols have been developed.
- 4.16 COG supported the development of a specific MIP (Managing individual Performance) objective for all managers. Four levels of objectives were created to reflect the various levels of management within the Council, from the Chief Executive to Team Leaders. The MIP objective is now live on MiPeople and all managers are expected to manage attendance within their service area.
- 4.17 The Council invested in a new attendance management system, First Care, in June 2017. The system has now been operational for twelve months and work is currently being carried out to analyse the extracted data. A separate report will be brought to the next Committee.

## OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.2 Do nothing. This is not considered to be a viable option, as the Council needs to reduce the current levels of sickness absence and work towards achieving the current sickness absence performance target of 8.4 FTE days lost.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

<b>Legal officer</b> <b>Financial officer</b> <b>Human Resources officer</b> <b>Estates/Property officer</b> <b>Service Director(s)</b> <b>Other(s)</b>	Liz Moore, Head of HR  Don McLure Interim Strategic Director of Corporate Resources
<b>For more information contact:</b>  <b>Background papers:</b> <b>List of appendices:</b>	Diane Sturdy <a href="mailto:diane.sturdy@derby.gov.uk">diane.sturdy@derby.gov.uk</a>  Wendy Johnson <a href="mailto:wendy.johnson@derby.gov.uk">wendy.johnson@derby.gov.uk</a> None Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Attendance Management Action Plan 2017/2019 Appendix 3 – Attendance Management Strategy Appendix 4 – HR case management progress

## IMPLICATIONS

### **Financial and Value for Money**

- 1.1 Managing attendance in a more consistent and timely way should reduce costs of covering sickness absence, in addition to significantly improving productivity.

As the action plans for the key lines of activity are developed, additional resource requirements and fully costed requirements will be developed for consideration.

### **Legal**

- 2.1 There may be an increase in legal challenge dependent on any changes in the Council's approach to managing attendance.

### **Personnel**

- 3.1 Due to a number of changes there is likely to be an impact on priorities and workload in the appropriate support services. Requests for additional resources may need to be developed.

### **IT**

- 4.1 As data is appropriately used by and also shared between departments supporting the corporate project on attendance management, in line with information governance requirements, there may be a requirement for additional support from the ICT service.

### **Equalities Impact**

- 5.1 Equalities considerations were taken into account in the development of the revised Attendance Management Policy introduced in January 2017. The Council would continue to apply the policy in the management of absence.

### **Health and Safety**

- 6.1 The Health, Safety and Wellbeing service are in an integral part of the Attendance Management Project, how the services work together, share information (within GDPR legislation) and communicate with each other and the Council is a key part of the project.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

7.1 None arising directly from this report.

### **Property and Asset Management**

8.1 None arising directly from this report.

### **Risk Management and Safeguarding**

9.1 The level of absence within the Council has a critical impact on service delivery.

### **Corporate objectives and priorities for change**

10.1 A modern, flexible and resilient workforce