

Report sponsor: Nicola Sykes, Service Director for HR and OD

Report author: Liz Moore, Head of HR

## **Attendance management update**

### **Purpose**

- 1.1 To provide an update on the Council's performance on attendance management at Quarter 1 2020/21.
- 1.2 To provide an update that the future focus on attendance management will be as an outcome of the Council's leadership and wellbeing approach, as part of the HR and OD Strategy.

### **Recommendations**

- 2.1 To note that the Council's performance on attendance management Quarter 1 for 2020/21 was 2.24 days lost for each full-time equivalent colleague (FTE) against a target of 2.36 days lost per FTE for the period.
- 2.2 To note the future focus on attendance management will be as an outcome of the Council's leadership and wellbeing approach, and that future reports will be within the context of this approach.

### **Reasons**

- 3.1 To ensure that Personnel Committee is aware of the Quarter 1 performance on attendance and is also aware that attendance management performance is an outcome of the Council's approach to great leadership and of our wellbeing strategy.

### **Supporting information**

- 4.1 **Attendance management performance for Quarter 1 2020/21**
  - 4.1.1 The Quarter 1 2020/21 period actual of 2.24 days shows a decrease from the Quarter 1 2019/20 period actual where the result was 2.89 days lost per FTE. The Quarter 1 result of 2.24 days lost is below the quarterly target of 2.36 days.
  - 4.1.2 The top three absence reasons (non-schools) in this period were Stress/Anxiety at 31.02% absences; Coronavirus: COVID19 (Suspected and Confirmed) which was 12.27%; and Depression/Psychological Illness at 6.66% of all absences.

- 4.1.3 The Quarter 1 period falls at the height of the global COVID-19 pandemic, and therefore Coronavirus:COVID-19 (Suspected and Confirmed) as the second highest reason for sickness absence during this period is perhaps not surprising.
- 4.1.4 The number of days lost due to stress and anxiety has decreased very slightly in Quarter 1 in 2020/21 compared to the same period last year. Managers continue to offer support and advice to colleagues absent due to stress/anxiety and to support their return to work. Significant effort has been made during the pandemic to provide colleagues with an extensive wellbeing offer, as outlined in paragraph 4.2, below.
- 4.1.5 Many frontline services and key workers have continued to provide excellent services in person throughout the pandemic. At the same time, following the government's initial advice to stay at home and save lives, many colleagues whose roles enable them to do so have been working from home since 23 March 2020 and have been carrying out their full contractual hours from home, rather than from their usual work location. It has been suggested that the significantly increased homeworking may have had a positive impact on the sickness absence figures during Quarter 1, compared to the same period last year. We don't hold data about how many colleagues worked from home in Quarter 1 2019/20 and how many in Quarter 1 2020/21. We therefore can't draw a correlation between increased working from home and a reduction in sickness absence for this period.

## 4.2 **Wellbeing approach**

- 4.2.1 During the pandemic, the Council has continued to provide colleagues with information, advice and signposting to a range of internal and external wellbeing advice and support. The Council's intranet pages on coronavirus COVID-19 include specific pages on wellbeing during the coronavirus outbreak and the pages are regularly updated.
- 4.2.2 A short on-line wellbeing survey was carried out in June 2020, primarily aimed at those colleagues who were working some, or all, of their contracted hours on a remote basis. There were approximately 900 responses, and the encouraging headline results from respondents are as follows:
- 91% of respondents knew how to access wellbeing support
  - 80% felt connected to their teams/service
  - 88% felt valued and supported by their manager
  - 83% felt well-informed about what was happening in the council

The majority of respondents felt supported and knew how to access support from a wellbeing perspective. A follow up on-line wellbeing survey will be issued shortly, to get updated feedback from colleagues.

Creating a wellbeing culture where we offer a range of wellbeing information and advice, and where we take personal accountability for our own wellbeing, supports a culture where colleagues feel valued and appreciated.

- 4.2.3 In supporting the Council's mission and purpose to improve lives in the city, a key aspect of the HR and OD Strategy is a focus on leadership and embedding positive change, in addition to a focus on wellbeing. There will be a number of outcomes, including attendance management performance, from this approach. Future reports to Personnel Committee about attendance management performance will be set in the context of a redefined approach on leadership and also wellbeing.
- 4.2.4 The future focus on wellbeing will include promoting early intervention and increasing resilience and personal ownership of wellbeing, as well as embedding the extensive virtual wellbeing offer. Signposting to relevant advice and information, as well as preventative wellbeing methods and interventions will help to embed a culture of seeing the whole person.

## **Public/stakeholder engagement**

- 5.1 Council senior managers on the focus on leadership development and wellbeing.

## **Other options**

- 6.1 Do nothing. This is not considered to be a viable option, as the Council is committed to supporting colleagues to take personal ownership of their wellbeing, and also developing great leadership skills.

## **Financial and value for money issues**

- 7.1 None directly arising.

## **Legal implications**

- 8.1 None directly arising.

## **Other significant implications**

- 9.1 None identified.

**This report has been approved by the following people:**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of sign-off</b>
<b>Legal</b>		
<b>Finance</b>		
<b>Service Director(s)</b>	Nicola Sykes, Director of HR and OD	26/10/2020
<b>Report sponsor</b>	Nicola Sykes, Director of HR and OD	26/10/2020
<b>Other(s)</b>	Liz Moore, Head of HR	26/10/2020

<b>Background papers:</b>	None
<b>List of appendices:</b>	None

