



## PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Date: 16 March 2017

Report of the Strategic Director of Organisation and Governance

# ITEM 8

## Managing Attendance Absence target reduction strategy

### SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council continues to experience high levels of sickness absence in comparison to other public sector organisations. Although it is recognised that the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy and planned triage service will support employees to attend work on a regular basis, greater emphasis on proactively managing attendance needs to be given by Directorates.
- 1.2 In addition and further to the recent commitment at COG, Directorates supported by HR, should develop action plans for managing departmental attendance. A standard action plan which can serve as a template for Directorates has been produced.
- 1.3 The HR service has committed to providing pro-active advice and support to departments with a key emphasis on the top 10 cases by length of absence and the top 10 by frequency of absence in each Directorate. Regular updates on progress against the HR action plan will be reported to COG bi-monthly.
- 1.4 This also supports the Council's proposed pledge to reduce absence to 9.9 days per FTE by October 2017.

### RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To note the HR action plan and that further bi-monthly updates are to be considered by COG.
- 2.2 To note the standard action plan template.

### REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Council must improve its attendance figures if it is to meet the expectations of the "Delivering Differently/Our People" strategy. With a smaller workforce and continuing demands on services, regular attendance at work is a key priority for the Council.
- 3.2 There is a need to change embedded cultures and behaviours around the management of attendance and the proposed actions will ensure this is applied

consistently.

<b>SUPPORTING INFORMATION</b>
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- 4.1 Implications (Appendix 1)
- 4.2 Action plan template (appendix 2)
- 4.3 HR action plan (appendix 3)

<b>OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED</b>
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- 5.1 The Councils current and predicted absence rates without being proactively managed will continue to affect both service delivery, cost and staff morale. There is no other reasonable alternative offer other to proactively partner at Director level to achieve a favourable outcome.

**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, Strategic – HR Manager
<b>For more information contact:</b> <b>Background papers:</b> <b>List of appendices:</b>	<a href="mailto:Claire.benajmin@derby.gov.uk">Claire.benajmin@derby.gov.uk</a> HR Advisor 01332 643666 Appendix 1 - Implications Appendix 2 - Action plan template

	Appendix 3 - HR Action plan
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<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>
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**Financial and Value for Money**

- 1.1 The current cost to the Council of over 3 million pounds a year is set to increase given the forecast for further increases in absence rates.
- 1.2 Any reduction in absence will be both beneficial to the organisation in terms of occupational sick pay, performance and service delivery.

**Legal**

- 2.1 Providing proactive support and interventions at an early stage will assist the authority to defend any future tribunal or civil/criminal court claim.

**Personnel**

- 3.1 It is widely reported that a proactive absence management approach with a focus on health and wellbeing can prevent employees from being absent due to sickness and increase employee engagement. Providing the relevant support and interventions will assist employees to attend work regularly.

**IT**

- 4.1 None

**Equalities Impact**

- 5.1 The Managing Attendance policy and guidance promotes the exploration of reasonable adjustments to support employees to attend work regularly. Proactive attendance management will ensure reasonable adjustments are identified early to support employees.

**Health and Safety**

- 6.1 Managing Attendance effectively and consistently will support the authority to defend future civil or criminal court proceedings.

**Environmental Sustainability**

- 7.1 None

**Property and Asset Management**

- 8.1 None

## **Risk Management and Safeguarding**

- 9.1 There are significant risks that any further increase in absence will result in poor performance, low morale and decreased employee engagement, with an increase in financial costs relating to performance, occupational sick payment and claims against the council.

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

- 10.1 Affective Attendance Management will have a positive impact on an employee's health and wellbeing.



**TEMPLATE DIRECTORATE ABSENCE MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN 2017**

**Appendix 2**

Action	Specific	Measurable	Accountability and progress	Timescales	Outcomes
Action plan is launched at DMT'S	HR can support in presenting action plan and to facilitate any Q&As	Plan is launched	HR to ensure that all are fully briefed on agreed joint actions	Asap	All aware of HR support and the appropriate agreed actions to enable attendance to be managed more effectively
Monthly detailed absence stats produced for Strategic/Service Directors	HR presents prepared stats for discussion including top 20 case information and reference to other HR procedures where applicable each month	Stats are produced each month, cases are progressed and monitored	HR to ensure stats are available and up to date	Asap	Absence is managed appropriately by cases being progressed. Departmental and HR outcomes measured
Monthly absence stats are delivered to HOS at DMTs	Stats to include days lost, cost and reason	Report are distributed at DMTs	HR to ensure reports are collated and the relevant information provided	Issued January 2017- on going	HOS take accountability and devolve to line managers for appropriate actions

Action	Specific	Measurable	Accountability and progress	Timescales	Outcomes
Practical Absence and stress management sessions are delivered to key managers	HR to prepare and deliver sessions to support effective absence management	Appropriate sessions are delivered	Attendance at sessions to ensure absence can be managed more effectively	March/April	Key Managers are confident in managing attendance
Nominated HR Advisors to review stats and proactively engage with line managers for updates	HR Advisors are accountable for advising on all absence management cases with a key focus on the top 20	Cases are progressed	Strategic HR Rag reports and updated case management is completed	March	Cases are tracked and reported each month
Line Managers to engage with HR Advisor on all cases	Managers to ensure that up to date case management information is available to the HR Advisor and that they seek appropriate advice and guidance	Cases are progressed	Any cases not progressed are escalated at DMT's	March	Cases are continually managed and progressed
Absence management to be included as a standing item at all management meetings	Attendance stats are reviewed and discussed	Decisions are actioned in a timely manner	Managers to proactively manage attendance and take the necessary actions	March	Attendance is proactively managed



<b>Action</b>	<b>Specific</b>	<b>Measurable</b>	<b>Accountability and Progress</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
Absence management becomes a KPI for all line managers	Line managers become accountable for managing attendance	Managed through the MIP process	Line Managers to review progress through performance management	March	Line Managers are accountable for absence management
Local Managers to deliver absence management toolbox talks to staff without access to electronic messages	Deliver tool box talks and place all corporate comms and appropriate material sent by HR in staff rooms	All toolbox talks are planned and delivered	Line managers to deliver sessions	March	All staff fully aware of Absence procedures
Line Managers to accept new Attendance Management policy via E Learning on the DCC portal	ELearning policy now mandatory for all staff	Completion stats from OD	Managers complete the course and are upskilled	April for existing managers up to 6 months for new starters	Attendance is managed more effectively and within the remit of the policy
Line managers ensure all staff accept the new Managing Attendance policy via	ELearning policy now mandatory for all staff	Managers contact OD for completion stats	Employees are fully aware of the new policy and own responsibilities	April for existing staff up to 6 months for	Staff adhere to new policy

ELearning portal				new starters	
All managers to undertake the ELearning package re managing attendance (Acas) on iderby portal	Undertake the 30 minutes session to gain an in-depth understanding of managing absence (best practice)	Completion stats from OD	Line Managers become accountable for their own learning and can manage absence more effectively	April for existing managers up to 6 months for new starters	Line Managers are upskilled in effective Attendance Management

## HR ACTION PLAN – ABSENCE TARGET REDUCTION 2017

### Appendix 3

Action	Specific	Measurable	Accountability and progress	Timescales	Outcomes
Develop a new Attendance Management Policy to meet the agreed Health and Wellbeing strategy	The Health and wellbeing strategy aims to improve employee Health and Wellbeing, attendance and productivity. The policy has been written to support a more people centered approach but also recognises the needs of the business.	Policy fully ratified	Policy guidance and FAQs uploaded to iDerby	Launched 16.1.17	HR to continue to manage and review iDerby material and offer support and advice to all stakeholders.
Provide practical absence management workshop sessions for	To include tips on managing attendance and where to find information on effective stress	Workshops are delivered	HR to design and deliver appropriate workshops to meet the needs of the service	March	Line Managers manage attendance more effectively

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Directors and HOS	management strategies				
HR Advisors to ensure absence cases are progressed	Monthly open ended absence reports are reviewed and cases escalated to HR Advisors	Strategic HR Rag rated report and file progress sheets are completed	Named Advisors to contact service area managers for case updates	Ongoing	Cases are progressed in accordance with Policy
<b>Action</b>	<b>Specific</b>	<b>Measurable</b>	<b>Accountability and progress</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
Provide monthly absence stats to Strategic & Service Directors	Detailed absence report to include absence data, costs and reasons. Reviews on top 20 cases. Progress information provided including any links to other HR procedures	Absence reports are produced and submitted to the appropriate recipients	HR to collate the reports with the relevant information	Ongoing	Absence is highlighted and managed appropriately. Cases are progressed and HR outcomes measured
Provide monthly absence overview information to HOS at DMTs	Reports include days lost, cost, reasons for absence and performance information against DCC target	Absence reports are produced and submitted to the appropriate recipients.	HR to collate the reports with the relevant information	From January	Absence is highlighted and managed appropriately
Provide bi monthly update reports to COG to ensure	Including progress reports, attendance data and stats	Data and statistical information shows outcomes are	HR to collate the reports with the relevant information	From 1.4.17	COG are kept fully informed of Directorate/HR progress

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actions are appropriate and outcomes are achieved		achieved			
Utilise appropriate internal communication channels for absence related matters	In Touch & Manager monthly In Touch iDerby TV screens Direct contact with relevant manager	Communications are produced	HR to design appropriate material to engage the workforce in absence related matters.	InTouch (weekly) Monthly Managers bulletin (1.3.17) Updates to iDerby (on going) AV screens utilised (1.3.17) E-mails as required	Highlight Health and Attendance matters to raise awareness
<b>Action</b>	<b>Specific</b>	<b>Measurable</b>	<b>Accountability and progress</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
Produce tool box talk, FAQs and guidance for managers	Managers to deliver corporate related communications to staff without electronic access	Communications produced and sent to appropriate line managers	HR have produced the relevant material for distribution	From January	An increased focus on employee Health and Wellbeing and knowledge of the revised Attendance Policy is delivered to all staff
Develop ELearning for new Attendance Management policy	ELearning course uploaded to the portal and now mandatory for all staff	All staff accept the policy	All relevant material available on the eLearning portal.	Existing staff by 16/4/17 new staff within 6 months	Completion stats are requested from OD and reviewed
Acas ELearning "Managing Absence" Overview of managing absence (30 minutes)	ELearning corporate course uploaded to the portal and now mandatory for all staff	All managers to accept policy	All relevant material available on the eLearning portal.	Existing staff by 16/4/17 new staff within 6 months	Completion stats are requested from OD and reviewed

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