



PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
15 September 2022

ITEM 06

Report sponsor: Simon Riley, Strategic Director
of Corporate Resources
Report author: Amy Stevens, HR Advisor, Policy
and Strategy

Changes to Attendance Management Policy

Purpose

- 1.1 The Attendance Management Policy has been updated to accurately reflect the Council's approach to managing sickness absence and achieving the good attendance of all colleagues.
- 1.2 The policy defines a transparent and supportive attendance management framework for all colleagues, complementing existing health and wellbeing provisions, and giving clarity on key responsibilities.
- 1.3 The policy captures both what is expected of all colleagues in terms of reporting and evidencing sickness absence as well as the process that will be followed if a colleague is off work long-term or has persistent short-term absences.
- 1.4 Approving the revised policy will provide all colleagues with a clear, consistent, and supportive approach to managing attendance.

Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the revised Attendance Management Policy (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 To note that subject to Personnel Committee approval, the policy will proceed to CJC for ratification. To note that, subject to this ratification, the revised policy will be published on the Council's intranet site and a communications roll out of the changes will be shared with colleagues.

Reasons

- 3.1 The policy has been revised in line with the Council's requirements for periodic policy review and updated to ensure that it accurately reflects the Council's approach to managing attendance.
- 3.2 To enable all colleagues and managers to better understand their responsibilities in relation to managing, respectively, their own and their team's health, wellbeing and attendance.

- 3.3 To help drive improvements in key attendance management metrics, such as average number of days lost to sickness absence, by providing a consistent and effective attendance management framework.

Supporting information

- 4.1 The Council is fully committed to promoting the health, safety, and wellbeing of all colleagues.

Helping our colleagues to maintain good attendance is a top priority. It contributes to us delivering our services effectively.

As well as the direct costs associated with sickness absence, the increased workload that covering sickness absence can create poses a risk to workforce morale. Therefore, it is essential that absence is managed appropriately and in line with our policies.

- 4.2 Key proposed changes to the Attendance Management Policy:

- Inclusion of key responsibilities for all colleagues and line managers. In clearly summarising the key responsibilities early in the policy the tone is set for individual accountability of health, wellbeing and attendance and for proactive support, expectation setting and prompt action from line managers.
- Inclusion of the Council's target for completion of return to work conversations; within three days of a colleague's return to work from sickness absence. This clearly lays out the expectation of management to carry out this conversation promptly, which is widely recognised as one of the most effective ways to reduce absence.
- Inclusion of early Occupational Health intervention to provide expert advice on implementing fit note recommendations.
- Inclusion of a specific section related to pregnancy-related sickness absence. This provides clarity that absences related to pregnancy will be disregarded for the purpose of absence triggers, in line with the Equality Act 2010.
- Clear references to the differences in managing long-term absence and short-term absence.
- Inclusion of zero-absence targets for instances of persistent short-term absence. This will provide clarity on the Council's expectation and aid in consistency of approach.
- Reference to the Dying to Work Charter which was signed by the Council on 5 October 2018

- Inclusion of attendance management capability hearing stage. The revised policy clearly shows the three stages of managing long-term or persistent short-term absence; informal stage, formal stage and attendance management capability hearing stage. Arranging this section of the policy in this way ensures it is clear to follow, accurately describes the process used, and removes ambiguity.
- Addition of interactive signposting to support and guidance throughout the policy and in a dedicated section at the end of the policy.
- Addition of Role Definitions and Glossary appendices. These will aid the policy reader in understanding some of the terminology used throughout.

Public/stakeholder engagement

- 5.1 The revised draft Attendance Management Policy has been developed with feedback and support from the HR and OD Management team, including Occupational Health, and also from Legal Services.
- 5.2 Consultation has also taken place with Trade Union colleagues through the Policy Working Group.
- 5.3 The Lead on Equalities and Diversity has been consulted on the draft Policy and EIA (Appendix 2).

Other options

- 6.1 To continue with the Attendance Management Policy in its current form. This option is not recommended as the opportunity for improvement of the policy in the form of the proposed changes would not be achieved.

Financial and value for money issues

- 7.1 None arising.

Legal implications

- 8.1 None arising.

Climate implications

- 9.1 None arising.

Other significant implications

- 10.1 None arising.

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal Finance Service Director(s) Report sponsor Other(s)	Liz Moore, Head of HR	31 August 2022

Background papers:	
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Draft Attendance Management Policy Appendix 2 – Draft Equality Impact Assessment