

# **Report to the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel**



## SCRUTINY



**Date of meeting: 9 December 2010**

**Subject: Sickness Absence**

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**Committee Secretary:** Adrian Hendry (01992 564246)

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**That the Panel notes the report on sickness absence.**

### **Executive Summary**

1. At the September 2010 Panel members requested quarterly sickness absence reports and this is the first of those reports.
2. The report provides information on the Council's absence figures for Q1 and Q2 2010/2011, it includes absence figures by Directorate and includes the number of employees who have met the trigger level and those who have more than 4 weeks absence.
3. Currently, under the Council's Managing Absence Policy there are trigger levels for initiating management action in cases of excessive sickness absence. These are:
  - (i) during any 'rolling' twelve-month period an employee has had 5 or more separate occasions of absence; or
  - (ii) during any 'rolling' twelve-month period an employee has had at least 8 working days of any combination of un/self certificated, or medically certificated absences.
4. The Council's target for sickness absence under LPI28 is an average of 8 days per employee (2 days per quarter). The quarter outturn figures for 2010/2011 are Q1 = 1.88 days and Q2 = 1.81 days.
5. Over both quarters 9% of staff met the trigger levels or above, 46% had sickness but did not meet the trigger levels and 45% of staff had no sickness absence.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision**

To enable members to make decisions regarding actions to continue to improve the Council's absence figures

### **Other Options for Action**

For future reports the Panel may wish to include other information.

**Report:**

## Introduction

6. The Confederation of British Industry reported that in 2009 the average number of days taken as sickness absence in the public sector was 8.3 days and in the private sector 5.8 days. The figures for the public sector include the NHS, police, fire and rescue etc.

7. The latest figures published by the Industrial Relations Service (for 2009) show that the average number of days taken as sickness absence in Local Government was 8.6 compared to 7.6 days across all sectors. In manufacturing and production the average number of days was 6.2 and in private sector services the average was 7.2 days.

8. Currently, under the Council's Managing Absence Policy there are trigger levels for initiating management action in cases of excessive sickness absence. These are:

- (i) during any 'rolling' twelve-month period an employee has had 5 or more separate occasions of absence; or
- (ii) during any 'rolling' twelve-month period an employee has had at least 8 working days of any combination of un/self certificated, or medically certificated absences.

9. In addition to the above a manager should consider referring an employee to Occupational Health when an employee has been absent from work for at least one month if there is no estimate when they will be fit to return, or if this is unlikely to be within a reasonable period.

### Quarterly Figures 2009/2010 - 2010/2011

10. The outturn figure for 2009/2010 was 8.35. The outturn figures for Q1 and Q2 are both below the 2 day target per quarter.

Table 1 below shows the absence figures for each quarter since 2009/2010.

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Outturn	Target
<b>2009/2010</b>	2.29	2.02	1.88	2.16	8.35	8
<b>2010/2011</b>	1.88	1.81				8

Table 1

### Directorate Figures 2010/2011

11. Table 2 shows the average number of days lost per employee in each Directorate. The figures show that Corporate Support Services, Finance & ICT and Housing have decreased from Q1 to Q2.

Directorate	Average FTE	2010/2011 Average Number of Days Absence				Total
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
<b>Office of CE</b>	20.87	0.25	0.51			
<b>Office of DCE</b>	46.91	0.92	2.09			
<b>Corporate Support Services</b>	69.69	2.06	1.81			
<b>Environment &amp; Street Scene</b>	112.97	1.70	2.10			
<b>Finance &amp; ICT</b>	115.62	1.15	0.87			
<b>Housing</b>	183.8	3.11	2.42			
<b>Planning</b>	68.20	1.07	1.48			

Table 2

## Long Term Absence 2010/2011

12. For this purpose long term absence has been defined as 4 weeks or over. Over both quarters there were a total of 25 employees who had 4 weeks or more absence, 21 of these had a continuous period of 4 weeks or more. Table 3 provides further detail on the 25 employees.

Left	Returned to work	Dismissed	Proposed return date	Still absent
8% (2)	60% (15)	4% (1)	12% (3)	16% (4)

Table 3

## Conclusion

13. In Q1 a total of 523 employees had no absence in Q2 this increased to 539. A total of 210 employees had sickness in Q1 and which decreased to 194 in Q2.

Quarter	Staff with no absence	Staff with 7 days or less	Staff with 8 days or more
1	71.4% (523)	24% (176)	4.6% (34)
2	73.7% (539)	22% (162)	4.3% (32)

Table 4

## Resource implications:

N/A

## Legal and Governance Implications

N/A

## Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications

N/A

## Consultation Undertaken

None

## Background Papers

N/A

## Risk Management

Failure to manage sickness absence results in loss productivity and if it is significantly high could adversely affect the reputation of the authority.

## Equality and Diversity

Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications?

No

Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken?

N/A

What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?

N/A