



RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Panel Report

Public

Date of Meeting: 18 October 2012

Title: SICKNESS ABSENCE 2012/13

Report of: Chief Executive

Report reference: CE 17/12

Summary:

This report provides the Panel with an update about the City Council's sickness absence in 2012/13 with end of year predictions. A summary of the level of sickness absence in each directorate is provided along with actions being taken to address and reduce the level of absenteeism.

Recommendations:

The Panel is requested to:

1. Consider and comment on the information on sickness absence provided in the report.

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1. Background

Last year's 11.1 days lost per full-time equivalent employee (FTE) to sickness absence was the highest experienced by the Authority in 5 years.

As a consequence, efforts were made to address the increasing levels of absenteeism. A Lean¹ Systems Review of sickness absence was initiated and managers were provided with further support to help reverse the trend. A full update on the Lean Systems Review is provided below.

2. 2012/13 Performance

The following tables show the sickness absence levels for the months April to August 2012. Based on the first five months of the year sickness absence could fall by over 25% in 2012/13 in comparison to last year. This can be attributed to five out of six directorates experiencing a drop in absenteeism and the proportion of the absences that is long term (over 28 days) falling significantly.

A forecast for the whole year has been calculated by profiling the last three year's sickness absence data for each remaining month.

As of 5 October 2012, 87% of return to work interviews had been completed by managers of staff returning after a period of sickness since April.

¹ Lean is a philosophy of continuous, incremental improvement that aligns the organisation to deliver customer value and eliminate waste. It is one of the methodologies currently being used by the Authority as an approach to delivering service reviews that ensures services are fit for purpose and affordable.

3. 2012/13 SICKNESS ABSENCE

1. All Directorates

PI Code	PI Name	2010/11	2011/12	Apr-Aug 2012	2012/13
		Value	Value	Value	Forecast
CC912	Working days lost due to sickness absence per Full Time Equivalent employee (FTE)	9.29	11.1	3.67	8.30
CC912_num	Number of working days lost due to sickness absence	5910	6201	2155	4875
CC912b	Working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE (Exc. Revs & Bens Allerdale & Copeland Staff)	N/A	9.9	3.40	7.69
CC912b_num	Working days lost due to sickness absence (Exc. Revs & Bens Allerdale & Copeland Staff)	N/A	4910	1796	4063
CC923	Proportion of sickness absence that is long term (over 28 days)	47.1%	58.4%	38.8%	N/A
CC923b	Proportion of sickness absence that is long term (over 28 days) (Exc. Revs & Bens Allerdale & Copeland Staff)	N/A	54.6%	47.3%	N/A

2. Community Engagement

PI Code	PI Name	2010/11	2011/12	Apr-Aug 2012	2012/13
		Value	Value	Value	Forecast
CE912	Working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE	9.2	14	3.37	7.62
CE912_num	Number of working days lost due to sickness absence	-	2701	661	1495
CE912b	Working Days Lost Due to Sickness per FTE (Exc. Revs & Bens Allerdale & Copeland Staff)	-	10.8	2.20	4.98
CE912b_num	Working Days Lost Due to Sickness (Exc. Revs & Bens Allerdale & Copeland Staff)	-	1409	302	683
CE923	Proportion of sickness absence that is long term (over 28 days)	-	67.3%	27.6%	N/A
CE923b	Proportion of sickness absence that is long term (over 28 days) (Exc. Revs & Bens Allerdale & Copeland Staff)	-	62.4%	63.1%	N/A

3. Economic Development

PI Code	PI Name	2010/11	2011/12	Apr-Aug 2012	2012/13
		Value	Value	Value	Forecast
ED912	Working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE (average)	5.7	4.7	1.89	4.28
ED912_num	Number of working days lost due to sickness absence	-	206	92	208
ED923	Proportion of sickness absence that is long term (over 28 days)	-	28.9%	0%	N/A

4. Governance

PI Code	PI Name	2010/11	2011/12	Apr-Aug 2012	2012/13
		Value	Value	Value	Forecast
GV912	Working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE (average)	5.8	5.1	0.37	0.84
GV 912_num	Number of working days lost due to sickness absence	-	108	11	25
GV923	Proportion of sickness absence that is long term (over 28 days)	-	50.9%	0%	N/A

5. Local Environment

PI Code	PI Name	2010/11	2011/12	Apr-Aug 2012	2012/13
		Value	Value	Value	Forecast
LE912	Working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE (average)	10.2	11.8	4.27	9.66
LE912_num	Number of working days lost due to sickness absence	-	2436	882	1995
LE923	Proportion of sickness absence that is long term (over 28 days)	-	57.7%	53.0%	N/A

6. Resources

PI Code	PI Name	2010/11	2011/12	Apr-Aug 2012	2012/13
		Value	Value	Value	Forecast
RS912	Working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE (average)	10.2	8.4	5.53	12.51
RS912_num	Number of working days lost due to sickness absence	-	636	494	1117
RS923	Proportion of sickness absence that is long term (over 28 days)	-	42.7%	37.0%	N/A

7. Chief Executive's Team

PI Code	PI Name	2010/11	2011/12	Apr-Aug 2012	2012/13
		Value	Value	Value	Forecast
CT912	Working days lost due to sickness absence per FTE (average)	10.7	6.7	0.87	1.97
CT912_num	Number of working days lost due to sickness absence	-	114	16	36
CT923	Proportion of sickness absence that is long term (over 28 days)	-	60.7%	0%	N/A

4. IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS

A small team of officers with the required knowledge and skills commenced a Lean Systems Review of sickness absence in January 2012.

Improvements and findings

Initial research and discussion with SMT, DMTs, line managers and staff identified the need for:

- timely, accurate and accessible sickness figures; and
- ensuring staff feel valued through regular contact and consistent application of policy and procedures.

This has resulted in managers inputting sickness absence directly into Trent to improve timeliness of sickness statistics being available and reduce administrative duplication. Trent training for managers will be complete by end of October. Managers have also been reminded of the importance of regular contact with staff during sickness absence.

There has been an improvement in sickness absence information available to managers.

There are now:

- Monthly reports for managers to show sickness levels by service area. Managers have been encouraged to use this report at team meetings and Directorate Management Team meetings and to have sickness absence as a fixed agenda item at these meetings.
- Quarterly reports to Senior Management Team (SMT) in an agreed and consistent format. Trent is now directly producing the figures. This has reduced the requirement for manual calculations.
- Annual SMT reports which provides further analysis including reasons for absence and cost implications.
- Information relating to the proportion of Return to Work Interviews carried out in each directorate.
- Individual's sickness absence history over the last three years available to line managers.
- Trigger reports to show manager's performance against adhering to the Attendance Management Policy.

Further to the annual SMT report, it is proposed that a group will be set up to share good practice in relation to sickness absence management. . The group will consist of a manager who it is perceived manages absence well, the manager(s) with the poor attendance, an HR Advisor and an independent manager (suggestion is Policy and Communications Manager).

A revamped Attendance Management Policy and Procedures document is currently being developed and consultation is expected to commence by the end of October. The Lean Systems Team has made some proposals to be included in the policy these include:

- Line manager to contact employee on 1st, 4th and 8th day of absence and weekly contact thereafter.
- Make the policy easier for managers to use with the development of checklists, new forms and more example letters.
- Encourage referrals to the Employee Assistance Programme, especially with employees absent due to the reason of 'Stress, depression, anxiety, neurasthenia, mental health & fatigue syndromes' as all advice and statistics show that early intervention is essential.
- Reduction in the process of managing short term sickness absences by immediate referral to Absence Support Meeting when triggers are met.
- All Carlisle City Council staff, including those within Carlisle hosted shared services, to be included under one policy.
- Mandatory e-learning packages, one for managers and one for staff, to be completed every 3 years and written into the policy.

Actions still to be completed:

- Payroll implications in relation to sickness absence to be calculated and run straight from Trent (currently use a ledger).
- Consultation on revised policy.
- Consultation on one policy for all Carlisle City Council staff.
- Paternity logged on Trent.
- Occupational Health (OH) report linked to person on Trent electronically. All electronic linkage of personal documents to Trent is currently being investigated.
- Additional reporting on Physiotherapy, OH and Counselling. There is currently none for missed appointments for example.

- Development of e-learning packages.
- Monthly drop in sessions to provide managers with assistance in the use of Trent.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel is requested to:

1. Consider the information on sickness absence provided in the report with a view to reducing the level of absenteeism.