

Report to Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:

A.2

Meeting Date: 15th October 2020
 Portfolio: Finance, Governance and Resources
 Key Decision: No
 Within Policy and Budget Framework: Yes
 Public / Private: Public

Title: Update on Attendance Management Task and Finish Group
 Report of: HR Manager
 Report Number: RD.31/20

Purpose / Summary:

This report provides an update on the Task and Finish group established to review the Council's Attendance Management Policy.

Recommendations:

- 1) Consider and comment on the update

Tracking

Executive:	Not applicable
Scrutiny: BTSP	15 October 2020
Council:	Not applicable

1. BACKGROUND

The Council has an Attendance Management procedure which was written and implemented in 2004.

At Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel on 13th February 2020, it was resolved that a Task and Finish Group would be established to assist the HR Manager in reviewing the Attendance Management Policy with the aim of more effectively managing absence.

Aims of the Task and Finish Group:

- Review existing policy, seek advice from HR team on strengths and challenges of existing policy
- Research examples of good practice
- Develop recommendations to share with Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel (BTSP)

Members of the Task and Finish Group are:

Members:

Cllr Bainbridge (Chair)
Cllr Allison,
Cllr Mrs Bowman,
Cllr Mrs Birks,
Cllr Tickner

Co-opted Members:

Antonette Cullen (HR Adviser)
Sue Kaveney (HR Manager)
Sophie Nixon (HR Adviser)

2. MEETINGS

Three meetings have been held to date – 17th June 2020; 8th July 2020 an 19th August 2020. The meetings have been really positive and engaging; the first two focussed on the review of the current policy, areas HR would like to improve, benchmarking sickness rates and costs of absence against private and public sector, discussions around training and management support and capability, discussions around systems and how we can make efficiencies in reporting, the role of occupational health, redeployment and trigger points.

An online shared One Drive area was setup for all members to access, share information and to publish notes and thoughts.

A target deadline of a new policy and associated toolkit was agreed for the end of December 2020 (subject to required approval routes).

The third meeting on 19th August resulted in agreement of the proposed trigger points and flowcharts for managing both long-term and short-term absence.

At this meeting it was also discussed and agreed that we would like to rename the policy Improving Attendance – this feels like a more supportive title and something which has been adopted by other local authorities.

It was agreed that following the approval of the flowcharts and key trigger points, that these be shared with the Trade Union representatives prior to work starting on the actual policy rewrite. This was to ensure the Trade Unions were fully informed of the intention to implement new triggers and a new process for managing them.

The flowcharts were circulated and subsequently discussed with the Trade Unions at an informal Union meeting on Friday 11th September 2020. Some minor suggestions were made from the GMB, predominantly additional detail that can be considered as part of the actual policy rewrite. The Trade Unions have expressed an interest to continue providing feedback as the HR team develops more material i.e. the policy and associated manager's toolkit.

During September and October 2020, the HR team will work on the new policy and toolkit and the Task and Finish Group are scheduled to meet again to discuss these late October/early November.

Sue Kaveney
HR Manager

3. PROPOSALS

None

4. RISKS

None

5. CONSULTATION

The new policy and toolkit will need consulted on with staff and the Trade Unions and will also require approval from SMT and Employment Panel.

6. CONCLUSION

The Panel are asked to review and comment on the progress of the Task and Finish Group. The HR team would like to thank the members involved for their invaluable input to date and look forward to continuing to work with them.

7. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

Improved sickness monitoring and management to help maximise efficiency and ensure the required level of staff resource is available to help deliver the Carlisle Plan.

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**Appendices
attached to report:**

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government Act 1972 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- **None**

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL - This report raises no explicit legal issues.

FINANCE – This report raises no explicit financial issues

EQUALITY – This report highlights the positive interventions taken around mental health in the workplace. This work demonstrates our commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty and is consistent with the Equality Policy and Action Plan.

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE – This report raises no explicit issues relating to Information Governance.