
MEETING	SICKNESS ABSENCE MANAGEMENT TASK GROUP
DATE	28 JANUARY 2013
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS MCILVEEN AND STEWARD
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLOR KING

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, any prejudicial interests or any disclosable pecuniary interests which they may have in respect of business on the agenda. None were declared.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that there were no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

3. MANAGING SICKNESS ABSENCE - DRAFT FINAL REPORT

Consideration was given to a report which presented the findings of the Sickness Absence Scrutiny Review and the draft recommendations arising. Members were asked to agree any revisions or additions to the report ahead of its presentation to the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee on 11 March 2013.

Details of the background to the review together with the findings to date were presented in relation to the three objectives for the review, namely:

- To revise the Council's Absence Management Policy and procedures to ensure they take account of iTrent, are in line with best practice, and written in a more formal assertive language
- To identify improvements in the provision of Management training and the induction programme for all new staff and
- To explore ways of introducing a change within the workforce moving away from a policy of 'managing absence', towards one of 'encouraging attendance'.

Following receipt of an interim report in June 2012 the Corporate & Scrutiny Management Committee had agreed the following additional tasks for the Group:

- Revisions to Induction and Training
- Revisions to the 'Attendance at Work' Policy
- Informal Consultation

Progress in respect of each of these areas was also set out in detail in the report. Issues raised by Unison, the University of York and Aviva were highlighted together with the HR responses to the consultation findings.

Following lengthy discussion on all aspects of the report Members raised the following concerns:

- That manager training was optional and
- There appeared to be no overall control of staff development and training, lists of attendees or associated costs.

RESOLVED: i) That the following revisions and additions be made to the draft final report:

Review Conclusions (Para 63):

Amend b) to state that 'All new starters would benefit from receiving information on the Council's Sickness Absence Procedure and all managers receiving the relevant training.'

Add d) The current processes lacked positive rewards and recognition for good attendance.

Add e) The authority did not make adequate use of online training for staff.

ii) That the following amendments and additions be made to the Recommendations (Para 68):

Amend (iv) to read 'Suitable absence management training be arranged for managers.'

Remove recommendation (v)

Move recommendation (vi) to end of recommendations.

Amend (vii) to read ' HR should look at positive ways of promoting good attendance, for example recognition for those employees who have no or low rates of absence, (e.g. Letter from Chief Executive, EXtra Factor Awards) however the detail of this recognition being decided by HR.'

Amend (viii) to read 'It should be made clear within the Council's Managing Absence Policy that Managers will be held accountable for employees in their team failing to attend OH appointments without having provided a reasonable excuse, with the results being reported to the Corporate Joint Consultative Committee.'

Additional recommendations:

- That additional manager training be undertaken which may include an e-learning package and additional use of Team Talk.
- Mandatory induction training for all new staff should be introduced.
- Managers should be required to report sickness absence figures quarterly to DMT.
- Manager training should also include necessity to filter down HR absence management policies to their staff.
- HR to promote/ publicise the Counselling Services on Colin and in Buzz.

- That 2 HR Officers be appointed as First Contact Network 'GoTo' Persons/Listeners/Mentors for staff to ensure adequate cover.
 - To consider the one off purchase of an online training package for managers in an effort to reduce Health Nurse training costs
- iii) That the implications associated with the review be identified and included in the final report to CSMC.

REASON: To conclude the work on this review in line with scrutiny procedures and protocols.

Cllr C Steward, Chair

[The meeting started at 4.45 pm and finished at 6.45 pm].