



**Notice of a public meeting of
Sickness Absence Management Task Group**

To: Councillors King, McIlveen and Steward

Date: Monday, 28 January 2013

Time: 4.45 pm

Venue: The Guildhall, York

AGENDA

1. Declarations of Interest

At this point, Members are 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 this agenda.

2. Public Participation

At this point in the meeting members of the public who have registered their wish to speak can do so. The deadline for registering is **Friday 25 January 2013**.

**3. Managing Sickness Absence - Draft Final (Pages 3 - 60)
Report**

This report presents the findings of the Sickness Absence Management Scrutiny Review and the arising draft recommendations. It asks the Task Group to agree any revisions/additions to the report ahead of its presentation to the Corporate and Scrutiny Management Committee on 11 March 2013.

4. Urgent Business

Any other business which the Chair considers urgent under the Local Government Act 1972

Senior Democracy Officer:

Name: Jill Pickering

Contact Details:

- Telephone – (01904) 552061
- Email – jill.pickering@york.gov.uk

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Sickness Absence Management Task Group 28 January 2013

Sickness Absence Management Scrutiny Review – Draft Final Report

Summary

1. This report presents the findings of the Sickness Absence Management Scrutiny Review and the arising draft recommendations and asks the Task Group to agree any revisions/additions to the report ahead of its presentation to the Corporate & Scrutiny Management Committee on 11 March 2013.

Background to Review

2. At a Scrutiny Event for Members in July 2011, the Committee agreed to carry out a scrutiny review on staff sickness, specifically to identify ways of reducing sickness absence levels across the organisation.
3. At a meeting in September 2011, Members received a briefing on City of York Council's (CYC) current sickness absence procedures and policies together with statistics and information on actions previously taken. The Committee agreed to set up a Task Group to gather information on the potential areas of focus for the review for the full committee's consideration.
4. The Task Group met twice to receive information on a range of associated issues including:
 - National survey of annual absence & labour turnover
 - Recent scrutiny reviews carried out by other Local Authorities
 - Comparative figures from other Local Authorities
 - Comparisons with other organisation types
 - CYC Attendance at Work Policy
 - HR Management Information Digests
 - Headlines from CYC Quarter 1 2011
 - Statistics on long and short term sickness & ill health retirements
 - iTrent – new CYC HR management system
 - Occupational Health – NHS Contract & Costs

- CYC sickness absence management training for managers
- Induction programme for new staff
- CYCs current procedures for recording and monitoring sickness absence

5. In January 2012, this Committee received a scoping report for the review detailing the Task Group's initial findings and as a result, agreed the following objectives for the review:

Objectives:

- To revise the Council's Absence Management Policy & 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
 - the induction programme for all new staff
- To explore ways of introducing a change in culture within the workforce moving away from a policy of 'managing absence', towards one of 'encouraging attendance'.

Review Findings to Date

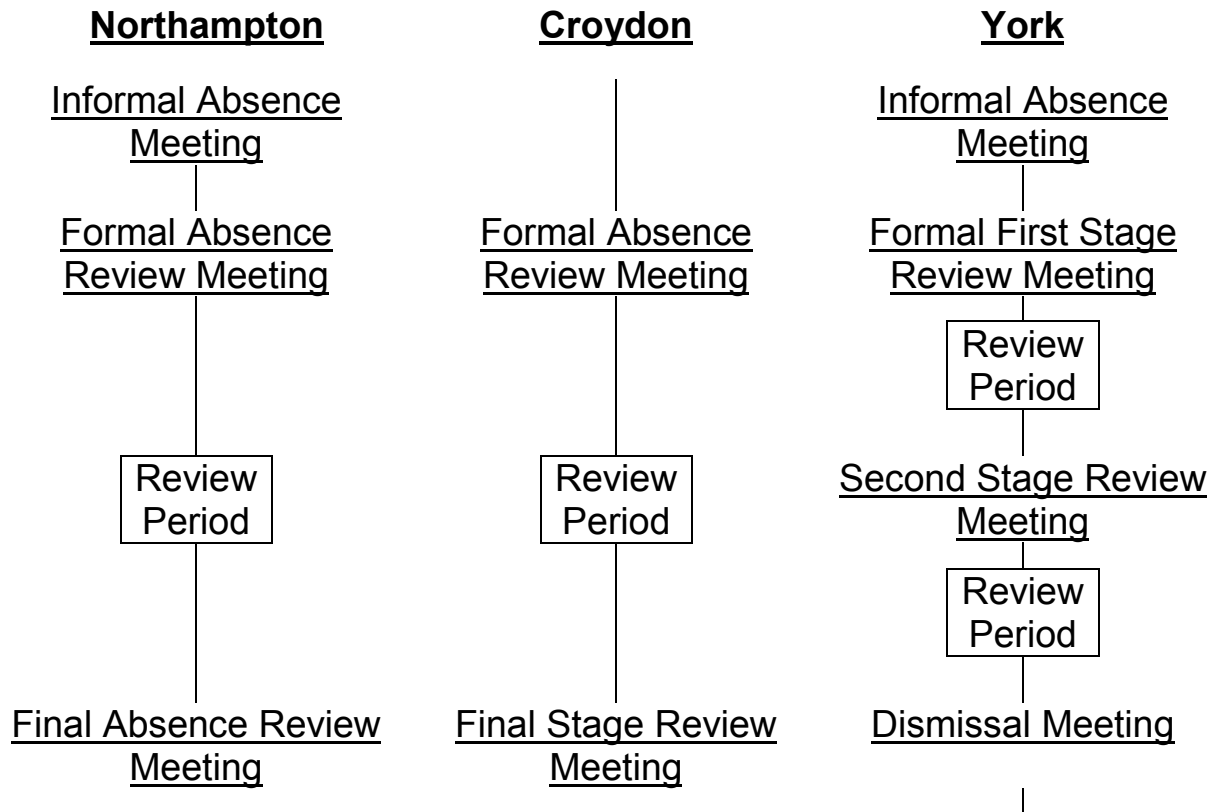
6. Objective i – To revise the Council's Absence Management Policy & procedures to ensure they take account of iTrent, are in line with best practice, and written in a more formal assertive language

As part of their initial investigation, the Task Group looked at a number of previously completed scrutiny reviews on managing sickness absence, carried out by other Local Authorities. They identified that a review completed by Northampton Borough Council in 2011 had been based on a similar remit as that set for this review and therefore agreed to look closely at their review findings. The changes they subsequently made to their policy were based on the best practice they identified as part of their review. Their final report also referred to Croydon Council's Sickness Management Policy which had been noted as another example of best practice, and which had resulted in a significant drop in staff absence since its introduction (see paragraph 9 below). The Task Group therefore agreed to use the policies from both those councils to carry out a comparison with CYC's policy.

7. In March 2012 the Task Group met to consider and compare the policies. Their initial finding was the need for more assertive, clear and formal language within CYCs policy. HR officers confirmed that the council's

current working practices and the policy would need to be revised to take account of the introduction of iTrent, and therefore the change in style suggested by the Task Group could be incorporated into the revised policy at that time.

8. In addition, the Task Group received detailed information on the trigger points and different stages within each Council's policy.



9. The Task Group learnt that following Croydon Council's scrutiny review of their processes which led them to introduce their current trigger points and formal stages shown above, they had managed to reduce their levels of sickness absence from 9.07 days per employee in 2005/6 to 5.9 in 2007/8. Members noted the difference in their trigger points and their limited number of stages, in comparison to those in place in both York and Northampton.
10. The Task Group also noted that:
- Croydon have no informal stage
 - Only York allows for a second stage review period before considering dismissal
11. In order to support a revision of CYC's policy, the Task Group carried out a detailed comparison of the wording of the three Council's policies. Having previously agreed that the language used in City of York Council's (CYC) policy needed to be clearer and firmer, in line with the others

looked at, the Task Group also noted that CYC's policy was lengthy, repetitive, in parts not in plain English, and trying to be all things to all parties. For example, the main body of the policy included links to letter templates for Manager's use, employee's guidance notes, flowcharts etc. The Task Group also found it difficult to find and access the policy on the Council intranet site.

12. As a result of their comparison work, the Task Group identified a series of amendments in regard to wording and format (as highlighted in Annexes A & B). They also agreed with the current policy which allows a Line Manager to use their discretion to either progress to the next stage of the process or extended the review period as appropriate. The Task Group acknowledged CYC's formal process for a further review period between the second stage review meeting and a dismissal meeting, but agreed that in their view this should remain in place.
13. Objective ii - To identify improvements in the provision of Management training & the induction programme for all new staff
In the early stages of the review, the Task Group queried whether there was anything relating to managing staff absence in the Council's training programme for Managers and Team Leaders, and whether as a matter of course, the council's sickness absence process was included in the induction procedures for new officers.
14. They learnt that the Council used to run a corporate induction programme which covered health and safety but made no specific reference to the sickness absence procedures. They also identified that there was currently no compulsory absence management training for managers. And, although there was a specific module on managing absence within the Effective Manager Programme, only 21 managers had participated since its re-launch in September 2010. However, at their meeting in February 2012 the Task Group was informed that the Corporate Management Team had recently agreed that a revamp of management training at the Council was required.
15. In regard to new staff induction, the Task Group learnt that the Council currently provides an induction checklist for managers to use and an employee evaluation form, both of which are made available to officers via the Council intranet. However, as they only cover absence reporting, Human Resources (HR) had already identified there was a need to provide new starters with information on the council's sickness absence procedure as a whole, particularly in terms of expectations of attendance and how the Council manages non attendance.

16. The Task Group endorsed HR's view, and agreed that in order to enable managers to properly monitor absence within their individual service areas and allow them to properly support their staff through periods of absence, all managers should be required to carry out relevant training. They agreed that suitable absence management training for managers and induction for new officers should be introduced to coincide with the introduction of the absence management module which is part of phase II of the introduction of iTrent, as it could incorporate the new working practices as appropriate. The Task Group have requested that HR draft some proposals for such training and induction for their consideration.
17. Objective iii - To explore ways of introducing a change in culture within the workforce moving away from a policy of 'managing absence', towards one of 'encouraging attendance'
The Task Group acknowledged that changing the culture of any organisation is difficult and takes time, and that there is no 'quick fix'. They agreed their suggested amendments to the current CYC Attendance at Work Policy and the introduction of appropriate training and induction, would be a good start to making a positive change within the organisation, particularly in conjunction with the introduction of iTrent. The Task Group also agreed that it would be helpful if the Corporate & Scrutiny Management Committee continued to closely monitor sickness absence levels following the completion of this review, and revisited the question of how best to create a change in culture once the revised policy and change to working practices had been embedded throughout the organisation.

Progressing the Review

18. In June 2012, the Corporate & Scrutiny Management Committee (CSMC) received an interim report detailing the Task Group's work on the review to date and agreed to reform the Task Group to enable work on the review to be completed. CSMC agreed the following additional tasks for the Task Group :

Task 1 - To consider and comment on officer's suggested revisions to:

- Staff induction
- Absence management related training

Task 2 - To consider and comment on officers draft revisions to the council's 'Attendance at Work' policy, which should incorporate the Task Group's earlier findings.

Task 3 – To facilitate some initial (informal) consultation with a number of managers, employee representatives and suitable external organisations– CSMC acknowledged that any revisions to the

policy would require wider consultation with officers and the unions in line with the council's HR procedures and wanted it made clear to all interested parties that any consultation carried out by the Task Group would not in any way hinder/undermine or effect that formal process.

Task 1 - Revisions to Induction & Training

19. In September 2012, the Task Group met to consider a re-drafted 'Introduction to Team York' Training Programme which included the changes they had previously proposed. The relevant slide and the accompanying notes are shown at Annex C.
20. The 'Introduction to Team York' training programme is a half day seminar aimed at introducing employees to the organisation, its core priorities and vision. It welcomes employees into the council and provides them with an understanding of what's expected from them and how they will be supported.
21. The Task Group were pleased to see that there was also a manager's checklist linked to the programme, for managers to use when they have new employees, to ensure they receive all the appropriate information they need to be successful in CYC's employment. This had also been revised to include changes previously proposed by the Task Group - see copy at Annex D.
22. In regard to absence management related training, the Task Group learnt it had previously been run completely separate to the induction training above, as part of an Effective Manager Programme of training. It was confirmed by HR that they were carrying out a review of that training programme and therefore the courses previously delivered as part of it were on hold.

Task 2 - Revisions to the 'Attendance at Work' Policy

23. The Task Group recognised there was a complex set of dependencies around the timing of the work to revise the Attendance at Work policy, including the further development of iTrent. Phase II of iTrent's implementation would see the introduction of further features such as employee self service, people manager, e-recruitment and health and safety. As part of that phase, officers would also be expected to complete timesheets, submit leave requests, record their sickness absence and complete travel and subsistence forms via iTrent.

24. As the policy was made up of a number of different policies relating to absence(s) from work, the Task Group recognised that for those to work successfully across the council, HR would need to fundamentally review all of them, whilst taking into account the findings from this scrutiny review, and agree the principles which underpin the policy with the Unions. And, that this would need to happen prior to the amending, redrafting, formal consultations and process changes which would be required, for implementation within and alongside the new iTrent system.
25. The Task Group were informed that in terms of timelines, pending Union consultations, HR aimed to have all the changes made to the CYC Attendance at Work Policy by the end of this financial year. In understanding more about HR's formal procedures, the Task Group recognised it would not be possible for them to present a revised draft of the CYC Attendance at Work Policy as part of the final report arising from this review i.e. the formal consultation process would need to take place before the revised policy was presented for sign off and implementation. Also the Task Group noted that whilst their scrutiny review final report would be presented to Cabinet for approval, the revised CYC Attendance at Work Policy would be sign off by the Corporate Joint Consultative Committee following Union negotiations etc .

Task 3 – Informal Consultation

26. With the above timeframe in mind, the Task Group agreed to proceed with their informal consultation to support their work on this review. They invited representatives from all of the Unions to meet with them to discuss any issues they might have with the council's current policy and CYC's handling of staff sickness absence in general.
27. The **Unison** representative highlighted a number of issues their Members had raised:
 - Levels of understanding and confidence in dealing with staff sickness issues vary amongst Managers across the organisation.
 - Managers are not confident enough to use their discretion
 - Managers are not facilitating the appropriate adjustments to the workplace to enable a staff member to return to work.
 - It was unclear whether all Managers were aware that there was funding available to make permanent adjustments. It was later confirmed by HR that funding for reasonable adjustments for disabled staff was held within departmental budgets. The Task Group asked that HR remind Managers aware the funding exists and who the budget holders are.

28. The Task Group recognised that the issues were all a good indication of the lack of understanding amongst Managers of what they are empowered to do and of the lack of appropriate management training.
29. They agreed with the Unison representative that to enable a sick staff member to return to work, Managers should consider temporary or in some cases permanent changes to working hours and workload/tasks. The acknowledged that although the existing policy allowed them to do that, in practice, it was not always happening.
30. The Unison representative queried whether the council was aware that Unison had a national policy on Disability Absence, and suggested that this could be looked at to ensure the Council's policy enabled the appropriate management of disability related absence, and its proper identification. The Unison representative cited an example of a staff member with Diabetes, who had experienced instances where their sickness absence arising from health issues associated with their diabetes, had been treated in the same way as other general sickness absences. The Task Group noted that Managers currently have the discretion to handle those types of absence differently but questioned whether all managers were applying it.
31. In regard to short term dependant care leave and bereavement leave, the Unison representative suggested they were not always properly identified and that a different approach to handling them needed to be adopted. In her view, it should not be lumped into an employee's sickness statistics, which she believed had previously happened in some cases.
32. In regard to stress, the Unison representative highlighted the knock on negative effects of back filling to cover sickness absence, and of workforce numbers being reduced due to budget cuts etc and suggested that Team Stress Risk Assessments could be carried out early to identify stress points in order to try and circumvent the effects of stress.
33. The Union Rep questioned whether CYC HR was providing the right level of support to staff and Managers in regard to stress, and the Task Group suggested HR may be able to provide access and/or links to MIND, to allow staff to consider their simple ideas for relieving stress. Another option may be to offer staff a 'GO TO' Person / Listener / Mentor.
34. In regard to staff Personal Development Reviews (PDRs), it was suggested that there needed to be more equality in the process because they appear to focus more on what the employee can do for the Council and less about the employee.

35. Finally, the Unison representative highlighted the long term benefits of pro-active workforce development, stating the Council needed to accept that the cost of training is necessary as it would be more cost effective in the long run.
36. The Task Group also met with representatives from the University of York and Aviva to discuss their company's approach to managing staff sickness absence.
37. The **University of York** provided a written briefing on how they manage absence (see Annex E), and a flowchart showing their management of short term sickness absence. This included 4 trigger points which Managers are responsible for identifying:
- Informal stage – Trigger 1 - covering infrequent short term absences periods totalling 8 days or 3 instances in a rolling 12 month period
 - Formal stage – Trigger 2 = 3 or more instances of sickness absence or a continuous period of absence amounting to a total of more than 10 days in a 12 month period (including those handle under the informal stage). A formal meeting will be held and may result in the issue of first written warning
- Their formal stage allows for consideration of the potential underlying health conditions that may be dealt with under long term sickness absence management, including referral to Occupational Health, reasonable adjustments such as increase in length of trigger points, discounting of sickness absence as a result of diagnosed conditions
- Trigger 3 = further infrequent short term absences within the rolling 12 month period. A further formal meeting will be held which may result in the issue of a final written warning.
 - Final Stage (Dismissal) – Trigger 4 = 3 or more further instances of sickness absence, or a continuous period of absence, amounting to a further 10 or more days in 12 months. Considered under ill Health Dismissal Process. Other options will be considered i.e. being given a different role (if one available), a pay cut, reduction in hours.
38. The Task Group learnt that in order to get managers to own the issues and address them, the University had recently:
- brought in 1-2-1's with staff in order to build trust and confidence (held every 4-6 weeks), and quarterly PDRs

- Invested in Leadership in Action' programme, providing the appropriate training to Managers to give them confidence. The Task Group queried whether an annual absence management training refresher could be provided to CYC Managers?
- Brought in induction training for managers so they know what is expected of them
- Provided a copy of their absence management policy to all new staff as part of their induction

39. In regard to stress, university staff have access to a confidential stress questionnaire to help them understand what their stress relates to. The University has also entered into a contract with an external provider for the provision of anonymous confidential support for all their staff, offering financial/debt/health advice and counselling – www.well-online.co.uk

40. The Task Group were interested to learn that elsewhere in the country, some universities have entered into a joint contract with their local authority for this type of external provision, and the University representative questioned whether a similar joint contract would be of interest to the Council.

41. Finally, the Task group learnt that the University also has:

- An in-house Occupational Health Nurse and buy in a physician for ½ a day a month.
- An Equality & Diversity Team which offers support to staff in harassment cases.
- A range of discretionary leave - some are paid leave but the majority are unpaid. The University also has a generous sick pay policy entitlement (after 5 years of service) – 8 months at full pay and 4 months at half pay.

42. In regard to **Aviva**, the Task Group learnt they have on average 8-9% sickness absence days per annum, although levels vary across teams within the company. Also, that their sickness policy is made up of two stages:

- Informal Stage – following 3 sickness absences or total of 4 days or more within a rolling 26 week period.
- Formal stage – 2 further absences or a total of 2 days or more sickness absences

43. Responsibility for recording sickness absence at Aviva lies firmly with Managers. Managers are expected to have a feel for what is happening with their staff members, and to hold an informal 'return to work' interview after every absence. They are expected to complete a return to work form which should include information on the absence, and dates and reasons for any absences in the previous 26 weeks. The Manager is responsible for keeping those records up to date.
44. In addition, Aviva has a Management Advice Team that sits within HR. Primarily it is a telephone based responsive service, but there is a move towards it being more face to face and pro-active. The Team have looked at pockets of high levels of sickness absence across the organisation to try to identify root causes. In one instance it was found that annual leave was being denied to staff due to the computer system calculating how many staff was needed on any given day. This had led to leave being denied and as a result sickness absence had risen. The work of the HR Team led to a change to the system for calculating appropriate staffing levels thus allowing more leave to be granted.
45. New managers are inducted by fellow managers and therefore Aviva recognise that their induction is only as good as the manager giving it. There is some other training available for new managers but this is not offered as a matter of course. It comes in the form of a ½ day workshop which includes role playing and policy sharing. There is also some web-based training available for groups of managers but again this is not mandatory.
46. In 2011 Aviva ran a pilot scheme which trialled on-site Occupational Health and lifestyle clinics. They also offered more pro-active intervention e.g. offering to pay for physio, cognitive behaviour therapy, counselling etc, and ran sessions for managers on managing absence and stress. Since then, the organisation has seen the benefits of Managers working more closely with Occupational Health.
47. The Task Group were interested to learn that as with the University of York, Aviva also has a contract with an external provider for the provision of anonymous confidential support for all their staff. The service offers financial/debt/health advice and counselling etc. Aviva confirmed that they see it as a way of reducing stress amongst their staff thereby reducing sickness absence levels caused by stress related illness.
48. Outside of sickness absence, the Task Group were informed of Aviva's other categories of time off –some of which are paid; some unpaid. They were interested to hear that in an effort to reduce false sickness absence claims, Aviva had taken a pro-active approach to non-sickness absence

which they felt was beneficial to the company. For example, the Company highlights forthcoming events to their staff e.g. the Olympics, recognising that staff may want to be more flexible in their working hours during that time, and they encourage managers to make appropriate arrangements to enable staff to do so.

HR Response to Task Groups Findings from Consultation

49. In response to the issues raised by the Unison Representative, HR confirmed that:
- Short term dependent leave or bereavement leave should not be counted as sickness absence (see paragraph 31), and agreed to investigate any such instances brought to their attention.
 - In regard to stress (see paragraph 32), the Health and Safety Team confirmed they had been working with managers on delivering both training on Stress Risk Assessments and on Managing Workplace Stress. The Staff Survey carried out in 2011 incorporated the HSE's stress survey questionnaire and resulted in a breakdown against the six standards (demand, control, role, relationships, change and support) for each department and directorate. This information had been used to identify teams and departments who were required to undertake Team stress risk assessments and this work is ongoing. Equally work has been undertaken by the Occupational Health provider and Health & Safety team to carry out team stress risk assessments in areas that have been identified through sickness absence figures and OH referrals.
 - In regard to providing the right level of support to staff and Managers (see paragraph 33), HR recently ran a course on Building Personal and Organisational Resilience for managers but it was poorly attended. However HR intends to put learning points from the course on line so that staff can access them whenever they want to. The H&S team has designed and ran Mental Health in the workplace for line managers – to date there have been 5 sessions (12 delegates per session) each run in targeted areas identified from the risk assessment and survey process. They have also offered open courses for managers to sign up to but those too have been poorly attended. HR have also held drop in sessions open to any member of staff to come for a one hour session to discuss stress and its effects etc. However, although they have organised numerous sessions and advertised them on Colin and in Buzz they have only ever had one person attend. Currently, they are preparing to launch a CYC wellbeing web portal to help inform employees of help and advice on

a wide variety of wellbeing initiatives ranging from debt management; stress; healthy eating and exercise. As well as containing a lot of help and advice the webpage will act as a gateway to link to external organisations such as MIND; Macmillan Trust etc.

- In regard to offering staff a 'GO TO' Person / Listener / Mentor, the Council has recently relaunched its First Contact Network that performs the same function. First Contacts are Council employees who are trained to offer confidential support and information. They are there primarily to listen and to talk to staff about ways in which they can deal with bullying or harassment, and signpost them to relevant help or processes within the Council.
- the purpose of a PDR process (see paragraph 34), is to measure an employee's contribution and agree their development needs to help them to do their jobs and prepare them for promotion if that's what they want.
- They endorse the views of Unison expressed in paragraph 35, that the cost of training and pro-active workforce development is necessary to ensure the council reaps the long term benefits. Also, that training needs to be monitored and managed to ensure that people attend the training they require, and that it is kept up to date. Non attendance at training is monitored and reported as it is costly to the council – see paragraphs 57-58 below. The Task Group suggested that it would also be useful to look at positive ways of promoting good attendance, for example recognition for those employees who had no or low rates of absence.

50. Following the Task Group's discussion with the University representatives, HR confirmed that:

- In regard to stress, every member of staff can complete a confidential individual stress risk assessment which is used in the same way as the University's confidential stress questionnaire i.e. to help staff understand what their stress relates to (see paragraph 39). These individual stress risk assessments are submitted to the health & safety team who along with HR officers, respond to each one on a case by case basis to find the solution to support the employee in work whilst maintaining business performance – for more information on handling stress and the counselling service, see: http://colin.york.gov.uk/beSupported/health_safety/SMS/compliance_notes/stress/

- The Council already offers a confidential Counselling Service as part of its Occupational Health (OH) Contract, which staff can self refer to for a range of issues including stress related matters. This is similar to the service offered by the University via an external provider, referred to in paragraph 39. The counselling service at York Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust Centre is an external organisation contracted to the council to provide a counselling service for staff. The service is free of charge, completely independent of management, completely confidential, and can be used for personal and/or work related difficulties. Staff can contact the service directly by telephone or email.
- In regard to the suggestion of a joint contract (see paragraph 40), HR are already in the process of talking to the York St John University about such a contract. The opportunity for which was promoted through the Higher York – health & safety and procurement groups.

51. In regard to the University's other provision (detailed in paragraph 41), HR confirmed they also provide an on site Occupational Nurse full time on CYC sites - she has two and half days of clinics, with the remainder of her time spent dealing directly with HR and managers, and a range of discretionary leave in line with legislation. In addition, they have just rewritten and started training managers on the Council's Dignity at Work Policy.
52. In response to the findings from the meeting with the representatives from Aviva, HR confirmed they offer a number of courses for managers e.g. on Stress Risk Assessments, Managing Mental Health in the Workplace (see Annex F), and Promoting Dignity at Work. They have also held a number of wellbeing events see paragraph 56 below.
53. In addition, CYC also provides information on its intranet site on a range of health issues. For example, before Christmas the importance of flu vaccination for vulnerable groups, and World Aids Day was highlighted. And in the New Year, campaigns are running to highlight sources of help for staff in debt or facing a relationship breakdown after the festive break is being provided and on how to prevent the norovirus.

CYC Occupational Health Provision

54. York Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust provides CYC Occupational Health provision to the Council. The contract was a 3-year contract that started in April 2008, with an annual review built in to allow for review of the

service levels and pricing. The Council has extended the contract for one year and is currently testing different options for service delivery before going back out to tender.

55. The contract was made up of three main elements:

- i. Pre-employment screening - Members noted that the cost of pre-employment screening was £23 per person. Recently consideration was being given to putting in place a system whereby HR would filter the completed pre-employment health forms and only forward forms to the NHS where further consideration was required. The Task Group supported this suggestion to refine the processing of the pre-employment checks and this system has since been implemented.
- ii. On-going health surveillance looking at occupational disease lung function, noise, skin, hand arm vibration (havs) as well as immunisation such as Hepatitis b and flu vaccinations for frontline social care staff – a legal requirement under the control of substances hazardous to health and the health and safety at work etc act 1974
- iii. Ill-health referrals following either an accident at work or long term illness etc - from CYC premises and the NHS Offices enabling colleagues more choice for their appointments

56. During the period of the contract, the Occupational Health Service has increased the resources they were providing CYC to 58hrs per week to enable both a reactive and proactive service. In summary, the service has provided:

- Three Proactive health fairs in the past year - blood pressure, cholesterol checks and weight management (these events were also attended by other external organisations)
- A flu vaccination campaign for front line social care staff
- a self referral counselling service
- Health profiling to identify suitable health promotion campaigns for CYC staff

57. The CYC Lead Occupational Health Nurse is seconded to work full time with CYC. She reports into CYC's Health & Safety Manager and the Occupational Health's Clinical Nurse Manager. She meets weekly with HR colleagues on sickness absence cases, and is currently carrying out a proactive intervention in targeted areas to help to reduce sickness absence. This work was targeted from CYC sickness absence figures.

58. In conjunction with the health and safety team, the Lead Occupational Health Nurse also provides:

- Case conferences with Managers;
- Manager training on Managing Sickness Absence;
- Review CYC's inoculation and Health Surveillance program's;
- Co-ordinate health promotion campaigns and wellbeing events
- Ensure current policies and procedures represent best practice

59. The NHS invoiced for all services delivered and this was then recharged to each Directorate. The recharge levied for each directorate included a 10% uplift on the charge from the NHS, as agreed by CMT with the revenue-raised being ring fenced for proactive occupational health usage.

60. In 2008-2009, the Council paid on a charge per appointment basis. In 2009-2010 CYC paid an all inclusive price of £133,440, but received a service costing the NHS Trust £178,033.91. A breakdown of the cost for 2009-10 is shown below:

- Health Surveillance - £38,981.31
- Ill Health Referrals/Manager referrals - £53,505.60 (including £12,532 on follow up appointments)
- Counselling- £37,280.00
- Pre-employment health questionnaires £34,523
- Do Not Attend and missed appointments £13,744.00

61. The Task Group were concerned to note the costs incurred by the council when employees did not attend NHS appointments arranged through the council's Occupational Health contract. They agreed it should be made clear within the council's Managing Absence Policy that failure by an employee to attend an appointment without having provided a reasonable excuse may be considered a disciplinary issue. Within the contract the health and safety team has negotiated with the OH provider that all employees who provide a mobile number on their referral form receive a reminder text message; also due to current contract negotiations CYC have in the extension period secured a reduction in the amount charged for missed appointments.

62. HR are due to take an options paper to the Corporate Management Team, that outlines the different mix of services that can be incorporated in the next occupational health contract as well as the financial implication of each model. HR have confirmed that one of the potential options in the next OH contract will include health profiling, to ensure that the OH provider undertake proactive health promotion work most relevant to the CYC workforce, based on the health challenges staff are likely to face. They would also welcome feedback from the Task Group for CMT on 30 January 2013 who are currently considering a report on services which may be included in the new contract.

Review Conclusions

63. In response to the objectives of this review, the Task Group concluded that:
- a) The current policy document covering everything for all was not suitable and that a short, clear and succinct policy for employees, together with a separate guide for managers would be more appropriate
 - b) The organisation would benefit from all new starters receiving information on the council's sickness absence procedure and all managers receiving the relevant training.
 - c) Overall, the Task Group concluded that improvements in training and induction, an updating of the policy and a rise in staff morale (there needs to be mutual respect and support to enable all staff to perform to the best of their ability), would over time assist in changing the culture of the organisation. They recognised that this would be difficult and take time, and that there was no 'quick fix'. They therefore agreed it would be necessary to revisit the question of how best to create a change in culture once the revised policy and change to working practices had been embedded throughout the organisation.

Options

64. Members may choose to:
- i) Agree revisions and/or additions to this draft final report
 - ii) Agree additional recommendations to those shown below in paragraph 68

Implications

65. Implications associated with the recommendations arising from this review will be identified and included in this report, once the Task Group have agreed the recommendations they wish to propose to the Corporate & Scrutiny Management Committee. Outside of this, the implications associated with the introduction of a revised policy will be identified once the work to revise the policy has been completed.

Council Plan 2012-15

66. The Council Plan recognises that staff are the most important resource of the Council and without them it could not deliver its services and priorities.

Ensuring staff receive the proper levels of support in times of illness etc is one way in which staff can be made to feel valued and engaged.

Risk Management

67. There are no known risks associated with the recommendation below.

Recommendations Previously Identified by the Task Group

68. Having considered the current CYC Attendance at Work Policy and all of the information gathered, the Task Group has previously agreed to recommend that:
- i) The Council's policy be rewritten as two separate documents – one to be a short, clear and succinct policy for employees, and one to be a separate guide for managers
 - ii) Both documents be written in a clear, assertive and more formal language
 - iii) Both new documents incorporate the amendments identified in Annexes A & B as appropriate
 - iv) Suitable absence management training for managers, and induction for new officers should be introduced to coincide with the introduction of the absence management module in iTrent.
 - v) CSMC should continue to closely monitor sickness absence levels following the completion of this review.
 - vi) CSMC should re-visit the question of how best to create a change in culture once the revised policy and change to working practices had been embedded throughout the organisation.
 - vii) HR should look at positive ways of promoting good attendance, for example recognition for those employees who have no or low rates of absence.
 - viii) It should be made clear within the council's Managing Absence Policy that failure by an employee to attend an OH appointment without having provided a reasonable excuse, may be considered a disciplinary issue.

Additional Recommendations

69. The draft final report arising from this review is now due to be considered at a meeting of CSMC in March 2013. Having considered all the information provided, the Task Group is recommended to agree:

- Any revisions required to this draft final report
- Agree feedback to CMT to inform their decision-making on the new OH contract
- Any additional recommendations they would like to make for CSMC's consideration.

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

Contact Details

Author:

Melanie Carr
Scrutiny Officer
Scrutiny Services

Tel No.01904 552063

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Andrew Docherty
AD Governance & ICT

Report Approved

Date

18 January 2013

Wards Affected:

All



Background Papers: Task Group Interim Report dated June 2012

Annexes:

Annexes A & B – Suggested Amendments to the Council's Absence Management Policy & procedures

Annex C – Relevant Slide & Accompanying Notes From Re-drafted 'Introduction to Team York' Training Programme

Annex D – Managers Checklist Linked to 'Introduction to Team York' Training Programme

Annex E – University of York Briefing on Managing Absence

Annex F – Example of Management Training Module

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Best Practice Local Authority Sickness Absence Policies - Trigger Points & Stages

<u>Short-Term Absence</u>		<u>Long-Term Absence</u>	
Definition	Northampton Absences that are intermittent and sporadic and are usually unconnected and normally last for a period of less than four weeks	Croydon Applies to short term sickness absences or health concerns	York Defined as any absence lasting no more than 4 weeks Task Group prefer definition in use by Northampton
Definition	Northampton A continuous absence of 4 weeks or more.	Croydon A continuous absence of 4 weeks or more.	York Absence which lasts more than 4 weeks, is continuous and can usually be traced to an underlying medical condition.
Informal Procedure			
Absence Meeting Trigger Points	An employee is required to attend an Absence Meeting with their LM when their level of absence meets any of the trigger points below: > 10 days absence within a rolling 12 month period (either single, or multiple absences self-certified or certified), or > 3 periods of absence within a 6 month rolling period (either self-certified or certified), or > Any unusual pattern of absence i.e. Friday, Mondays, day after a bank holiday	An employee is required to attend an Absence Meeting with their LM when their level of absence meets any of the trigger points below: > 7 days absence in the previous 12 months, or > 5 occasions of sickness absence in the previous 12 months These should be adjusted for part time staff and for those with a flexible work pattern	A review of an employees attendance at work will be triggered by the LM informally in the first instances, taking into account all the circumstances, when their level of absence meets any of the trigger points below: > 3 periods of absence in a rolling 3 month period, or > 4 or more periods of absence in a rolling 6 month period, or >10 or more days in a 12 month period, or or > a trend or an unacceptable pattern of absence e.g. Regular Mon/Fri
Informal	Purpose of the meeting to:	Croydon Council do not hold 'informal'	Purpose of meeting to:

<p>Absence Meeting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > discuss employees attendance record and reasons for absence > seek to identify any underlying causes for the absence > consider whether to offer any independent advice, or additional support > consider whether any reasonable adjustments are appropriate > consider whether OH advice should be sought > reiterate the standards of attendance expected of all employees > put together an agreed action plan and targets if appropriate, for improved attendance <p>In the case of a long term absence, consideration should also be given to the extent of the employee's illness, the treatment they are receiving and the</p>	<p>absence meetings as a first stage in their process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Offer advice, guidance and support in order to reduce the absence level > consider changes to working practices > identify if additional support in the workplace is needed e.g. training or workplace adjustments > consider use of flexible working or other similar policies > Set specific targets and clarify attendance will be monitored over the next 6 months > reaffirm the standards of attendance expected and to be achieved > Issue where appropriate, an informal warning, indicating formal procedure will be implemented if the necessary improvements in attendance are not achieved. <p>Persistent short term absence could lead to the formal process being invoked</p>
<p>Formal Procedure</p> <p>Formal Absence Review</p>	<p>If there is insufficient improvement in attendance or where the attendance has improved for a period of time but has not been maintained, a formal Absence Review Meeting will be conducted.</p>	<p>A formal meeting will be arranged with an employee whose absence has reached a trigger point or whose pattern of absence or health is a concern although none of the trigger points have been reached, or following a long term absence.</p>	<p>If the employee's absence record does not improve to a satisfactory level during an 'informal' review period, a formal first stage review meeting will be arranged</p>

Conducted by...	Conducted by the Senior Manager of the department with advice from HR.	Conducted by Manager	Chaired by LM
Notice Given...	Employee will be given a minimum 5 day's notice in writing of any formal absence review meeting, be advised of the reason for the meeting and of their right to be accompanied by a representative.	Employee will be given at least 7 working days written notice of any meetings they are required to attend. The outcomes of all formal meetings will be confirmed in writing.	Employee will be given no less than 5 working days notice in writing of the meeting, and the key contents and outcomes should be confirmed in writing within 5 working days of the meeting.
Purpose of Meeting...	<p>Purpose of meeting to reaffirm the issues discussed at previous meetings and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > up-to-date medical advice > the likelihood of improved attendance as advised by OH, where appropriate <p>> Actions taken by the employee and LM to enable the employee to continue in employment</p> <p>> The employee's overall absence record for the 12 month period</p>	<p>Purpose of meeting is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > set a review period of 3 months, during which time the attendance or effect of ill > set a target for improvement of no uncertified absence in the next 3 month review period. If any absence occurs during that period a medical certificate will be required & manager will consider the reasons, duration, frequency and pattern of absence before taking further action. > Formally caution the employee that a meeting under the Final Formal stage will be arranged if during or at the end of the review period, the required improvement was not made to the manager's satisfaction (which could lead <p>Once OH advice is received, a Formal meeting will be arranged. Action may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > establishing a time-limited sickness rehabilitation programme accompanied by a formal caution that if the required 	<p>Purpose of meeting to encourage open discussion between LM and Employee on reasons for absences causing concern, to enquire into the health and wellbeing of the employee, to identify work related factors causing absences and to take action on those inc. risk assessments, to offer advice and support, to reaffirm standards of attendance and clarify attendance will be monitored.</p>
In the case of long term sickness absence...	<p>If the absence continues a Formal Absence Review Meeting will be conducted. The likely outcomes of this meeting are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > no further action, or > a further referral to OH and a 		<p>Following options will be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Rehabilitation > Phased return to work > Permanent reduction in hours > Return to different or less onerous duties for a set period of time

<p>reconvened date to review the</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > a further Absence Review Meeting within a specified period, or > where no return is expected within a reasonable period the case may be referred to a Final Absence Review Meeting, and/or > a formal warning may be issued and held on the employee's personnel file for 12 months (employee has right to 	<p>improvement is not made, a meeting under the Final Stage will be arranged, or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > referral to Final Stage where the matter is sufficiently serious and the employee is unable to return to work within a reasonable timeframe, taking into account service needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Adjustments to the job > Provisions of adaptations/aids > Additional Support > Alternative employment > A further review period > Termination of employment > Ill-health retirement due to permanent incapacity
<p>The employee will also be asked to provide further information or any change in circumstances since the last meeting was held. The Senior Manager will also need to consider the impact of the absence/s on service provision.</p> <p>The employee should be told that failure to improve their absence during any review period could result in the termination of their employment.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>A review period will be set, & the employee warned that if the options agreed do not result in a successful return to work and their sustained attendance, further actions will be taken. However if progress is satisfactory and employee returns to work, no further action will be taken.</p>
<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>If the agreed actions have not resulted in a return to work in the agreed timescale, a second review meeting should be convened.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) decide what further action is needed such as setting targets for improvements during next 12 months and, b) to set an action plan to achieve
<p>Likely Outcomes...</p>	<p>> No further action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > a further review period with targets if appropriate, and a timescale for improved attendance is set. The 	

<p>employee should be told that failure to improve their absence during any review > a formal warning is issued - to be kept on the employees personnel file for 12 months.</p>	<p>improvement in attendance and set review Under normal circumstances an employee will also be issued with a formal warning. However, if exceptional circumstances are identified it will be at the manager's discretion, in consultation with HR, not to issue a formal warning</p>	<p>Where it becomes evident that an employee has met the targets set during the review period, employee will be advised in writing but will continue to be monitored.</p>	<p>Where an employee has not demonstrated sufficient and/or sustained improvement, LM should move onto next step of the procedure.</p>
<p>End of Review Period...</p>	<p>No mention</p>	<p>If satisfactory improvement has been made in level of sickness absence, the employee will be advised in writing and reminded of the need to sustain the improvement.</p>	<p>if during the 12 months following a successful review period, the employee's absence reaches one of the trigger points, or further health concerns arise, they will be automatically referred to the Final Formal Stage.</p>
<p>Second Stage Review</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>If the agreed actions have not resulted in a return to work in the agreed timescale, a second review meeting should be convened.</p>
<p>Conducted By...</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Service Head, LM & HR Rep</p>	<p>To explore again the reasons for the continued poor attendance and why the employee has been unable to show a significant and/or sustained improvement.</p>
<p>Purpose of Meeting...</p>	<p>N/A</p>		

<p>Potential Outcomes...</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>If there is still some prospect of the employee returning to work, options for support and adjustments will again be explored. Alternatively, if it is now evident that the employee will not return to work or respond to the adjustments and support already offered, and ill health retirement is not possible, then the employee will be advised that they will be referred for a dismissal hearing.</p>
			<p>In addition: > an immediate and significant improvement in attendance is required, which has to be sustained > an action plan and review dates will be set as appropriate - this may include a further referral to OH > the absence record will continue to be monitored A formal (final) warning lasting 2 years will be also issued that if the required improvement does not take place, the employee will be referred to the Head of Service with a view to termination of employment. Where an employee has a history of persistent absence, the 'final' warning may be required to last upto 4 years.</p>

	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>If at this stage however, exceptional circumstances are identified, it will be at the manager's discretion, in consultation with HR, to extend the review period of the first stage warning rather than proceed to a further (final) warning.</p> <p>Key contents and outcomes from second stage formal review meeting will be confirmed in writing within 5 working days of the meeting.</p>
<p>Final Absence Review In the case of persistent short term absences...</p>	<p>If the absence does not improve during the period of formal warning, a referral to OH will be sought and a Final Absence Review meeting arranged.</p> <p>Where there is no immediate return to work, a further review should be carried out no later than 3 months after the Absence Meeting</p>	<p>A final stage meeting will be arranged if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > the targets or timescales set during the First Formal Stage have not been met to the manager's satisfaction, or > the initial improvement made at the end of the First Formal Stage has not been sustained over the following 12 months > medical advice suggests that the employee will not within a reasonable 	

<p>In the case of a long term absence...</p>	<p>Where OH advise that the employee will not be able to perform the duties of their substantive post in the future, even with reasonable adjustments, management needs to consider the options available and discuss this with the employee, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > any further reasonable adjustments that could be made to the employee's current post to assist a return to work > redeployment to a suitable alternative post > eligibility for Ill Health Retirement subject to OH recommendations <p>Once all options and the factors above have been considered, a Final Absence Review meeting will be convened.</p>	
<p>Conducted By...</p>	<p>Conducted by a Head of Service with guidance from HR</p>	<p>Conducted by a panel of at least 2 officers including a HR rep. Meeting will be chaired by the Director or designated Senior Officer</p>
<p>Purpose of the Meeting...</p>	<p>To consider whether there is any further action the Council can take to assist the employee in continuing their employment, or whether employment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > confirm the facts of the case, the action taken to date, any developments since > ensure proper consideration is given to the factors

	<p>should be terminated due to the employee's incapability to undertake their duties effectively due to their absence record.</p>	<p>> consider any representations made by or on behalf of the employee and any statement of intent they wish to make regarding their future attendance</p>	
<p>Likely Outcome...</p>	<p>A decision is reached whether: > further actions are possible to enable the employee to continue in employment, or > the employee's employment is terminated due to their incapability to undertake their duties effectively</p>	<p>Notice of dismissal is issued. In exceptional circumstances such as new information becoming available, the panel may set a final review period of 3 months (during which the employees attendance will be monitored on a monthly basis) and a final caution will be issued. If the required improvement is not met, the panel will reconvene to</p>	
<p>Dismissal</p>	<p>Where all options have been explored without success: > In the case of short term absence, the employee will be dismissed with immediate effect on the grounds of Ill Health Capability, or > In the case of long term absence, retirement on the grounds of Ill health or termination of employment on the</p>	<p>Where the panel consider the level of absence is unacceptable, that sufficient opportunity to improve has been provided and adequate warnings of the consequences given, the employee shall be given notice of dismissal. In the case of long-term absence the panel will also consider, timescales within which the employee may be able</p>	<p>If there continues to be no improvement during the further review period a further meeting should be arranged. Employee will be given a min 14 calendar days notice in writing of a Dismissal meeting. To be conducted by LM's Chief Officer, and a HR advisor must be present.</p>

	<p>grounds of Ill Health Capability.</p>	<p>to return to work, the impact of the continuing absence on the organisation and what alternatives to dismissal may be appropriate under the circumstances.</p>	<p>The employee will be dismissed if the Chief Officer is satisfied that the employee is unable to maintain an acceptable attendance level and all reasonable measures have been taken to assist the employee. However, if the circumstances are such that a dismissal is not an appropriate sanction the Chief Officer may issue a further 'final warning' instead advising that dismissal may arise if there is not a sustained improvement for a further 2 years.</p>
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Annex B

Best Practice Local Authority Sickness Absence Policies - Key Points

	Northampton	Croydon	York
Introduction	Contains Key principles and information on who the policy applies to	Contains similar key principles to Northampton, and information on who the policy applies to and the responsibilities of Employees and Management	Includes purpose, objectives and the responsibilities of Directors and Service Managers, LMs, HR, Payroll and Employees.
Notification of absence	Within 1 hr of normal start time on 1st day of absence to either Nurse led Absence Service (NLAS) or Line Manager (LM)	As near to usual start time as possible but no later than one hour after to LM or if unavailable to senior manager - details not to be left with colleagues.	Personally notify Supervisor or LM asap, preferably by normal start time but no later than 1 hr after this, giving reason, possible date of return, and info on work that needs covering
	If unwell at work and need to leave, must inform both LM and NLAS	No mention	If unwell at work and need to leave, must inform both LM and NLAS
	For absence longer than 1 day, employee must contact NLAS on 2nd, 4th & 8th day, & as advised thereafter.	If absence is longer than 1 day, employee must contact LM on 4th and 8th calendar day, and every working week thereafter (or as agreed with LM) to report on health and indicate when they expect to return to work.	For absences longer than a day, employee must contact LM or Supervisor on 4th day giving possible date of return. Contact must continue to be made in person on a regular basis. Absence of 7 calendar days or less inc. w/ends require a self-certification form - to be completed on 1st day of return and signed by both employee and LM.
	Must inform NLAS of date when they know they will definitely return to work or on day of return, to close absence	No mention	As soon as the employee knows a definite return date, they must inform LM giving 1 days notice if poss, so that temp cover arrangements can be ended.

Industrial Injury	Absences resulting from a reported industrial injury are still recorded and employees need to notify their absence. These are not included for the purpose of calculating trigger points.	Absences due to a recognised industrial injury whilst working for the Council to be managed in the same way as other absences.	To be managed in the same way as other absences. LM must follow laid-down Industrial Injury procedures. For reporting and investigating such occurrences inc. referral to H&S and/or OH. Payroll should also be informed so that OSP is implemented correctly.
Maternity Absence	Pregnancy related absences are still recorded. Employees need to notify their absence, inc time off for antenatal care. Pregnancy related absences are not included for the purpose of calculating trigger points	Pregnancy related absences to be managed in the same way as other absences.	Needs referring to - needs cross referencing to appropriate procedures
Sick Whilst on Annual Leave	No mention	No mention	Employees who become sick whilst on annual leave will be regarded as being on sick leave from the date of any medical cert or equivalent provided. Employees should notify LM as normal, where possible
Disability Related Absences	Disability related absences of disabled employees inc time off for disability related specialist treatment are still recorded and employees need to notify their absence. These are not included for the purpose of calculating trigger points.	Due consideration should be given to the Council's responsibilities under the Equalities Act	Some level of absence form work may be considered a reasonable adjustment under the Disability Discrimination law for a disabled employee.

	<p>Where all reasonable adjustments have been made to accommodate an employee's disability, in liaison with GPs and HR, but the absence is still cause for concern, it may be appropriate to use the absence management procedure.</p>	<p>Need to consider reasonable adjustments</p>	<p>Other reasonable adjustments to improve an employee's attendance may include adaptations of equipment, retraining, adjustments to working hours/duties /place of work, discounting of disability related absence,</p>
<p>Long Term Absence - Important Actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Maintaining Contact > Referral to Occupational Health - where a medical condition is clearly established, with a predictable and defined period of time off work, a medical referral may not be necessary. However, in some 	<p>Referral to OH and advice from HR.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >LM will keep in regular contact either by telephone, letter or face to face. LM to > Referral to OH unless it is clear that the employee will return to normal employment in the not to distant future.
<p>Fit Notes</p>	<p>Contains brief para on Fit Note replacing GP sick note</p> <p>If absence continues for more than 7 calendar days, employee must provide a Fit Note</p> <p>If Fit Note is issued, employee must inform NLAS so records can be updated and advice given</p> <p>If absence continues for longer, employee must continue to provide medical certs to cover absence. These must be consecutive and cover all days inc. w/ends. Failure to do so, will effect employees entitlement to SSP</p>	<p>No mention</p> <p>On 8th day, employee must provide a fit Note</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>No mention</p>	<p>No mention</p> <p>If absence continues for more than 7 calendar days, employee must provide a Fit Note to LM</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>If absence continues for longer, employee must continue to provide consecutive medical certs to cover absence</p>

	<p>Any period not covered by a self-cert or Fit Note, will not be paid and will be considered unauthorised leave - a reasonable time will be given to obtain a retrospective Fit Note</p> <p>An employee cannot return to work prior to the expiry of a Fit Note</p>	<p>No mention</p>	<p>Unauthorised absence should be dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedure</p>
<p>Costs Incurred for Fit Note</p>	<p>Any costs incurred in obtaining a Fit Note requested by Council will be reimbursed on production of a receipt</p>	<p>Reasonable costs incurred by the employee will be reimbursed.</p>	<p>No mention</p>
<p>Sick Pay</p>	<p>Council policy to pay employees full or part salary for defined periods of time during periods of sickness absence - this is conditional upon the employee following the absence reporting procedure, attending a return to work interview and producing a medical certificate where appropriate</p>	<p>No mention</p>	<p>Where an employee is absent sick but repeatedly fails to follow the reporting of absence, consideration should be given to suspending sick pay and disciplinary action being taken. Council policy to pay employees full or part salary for defined periods of time during periods of sickness absence - this is conditional upon the employee following the absence reporting procedure, attending a return to work interview and producing a medical certificate where appropriate. Sick pay will also be stopped if employee fails to visit OH when referred.</p>
<p>Maintaining Contact</p>	<p>More than 4 continuous weeks - shared responsibility for Council, NLAS and employee to maintain contact at agreed intervals to help and support employee</p>	<p>No mention</p>	<p>Beyond 3rd day, contact must continue to be made in person on a regular basis.</p>

	<p>If employee does not make contact during absence and absence is unexplained, LM will take all reasonable steps to contact employee (tel, letter, home visit), in order to:</p>		<p>If employee fails to follow adopted reporting of absence procedure, following actions should be implemented: If employee does not make contact during absence and absence is unexplained, LM will take all reasonable steps to contact employee (tel, letter, home visit), in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > employee contacted and identify reason sought why they have not followed procedure > employee should be reminded remind them of their obligation to follow procedure as a condition of the entitlement to sick pay
<p>Home Visits</p>	<p>LM will plan to visit employees to discuss wellbeing and anticipated return to work. Where an employee feels their LM would not be appropriate, an employee can request a different Manager attend with a rep from HR. The employee can also request a suitable venue and ask for a trade union rep to be present.</p>	<p>In recognising Council's duty to care to employees, managers are expected to address concerns as soon as they arise. Informal reviews including home visits and referrals to OH may therefore take place before trigger points are reached.</p>	<p>During long term absence, manager will arrange a home visit. If the employee does not wish to have a home visit, the manager will arrange a meeting at another mutually agreed place. Employee will also be given info on support available in the Council.</p>

<p>Referral to Occupational Health</p>	<p>If GP has recommended restrictions to duties the NLAS will advise Line Manager of necessary adjustments - could lead to a referral to OH to ensure app adjustments are made in workplace</p>	<p>Referral to OH at first formal stage if not already done so</p>	<p>Persistent short term absence could lead to a formal warning process and ultimately dismissal. During this process employees can expect to be referred to OH for assessment. In the case of long term absence, employee will be referred to OH to explore various options available. This may be done after 1 month's absence and will certainly be done after 3 months. Employees will be informed why the referral is being made and the process involved.</p>
<p>Return to Work</p>	<p>NLAS will notify LM of when the employee is to return to work</p>	<p>Required to fill out a return to work form for each period of sickness. Failure to do so may result in loss of pay.</p>	<p>In certain circumstance a doctor will advise an employee that they may be fit for work earlier than would normally be</p>
<p>Return to Work cont...</p>	<p>All Managers must carry out a routine return to work interview each time an employee has a period of absence on the 1st day of return - LM may nominate an appropriate Manager to do this on their behalf.</p>	<p>LMs should contact employees asap following return to work. This may take the form of an informal discussion or a more structured meeting depending on circumstances, and LM should ensure form has been completed.</p>	<p>Managers will carry out a return to work interview & update employees on work developments where appropriate</p>

<p>Purpose of interview to establish reason for absence, to check the employee is fit to return, and what if anything can be done to support the employee</p>	<p>No mention</p>	<p>Purpose of interview to allow LM to welcome back and express concern for employees wellbeing, explore and confirm reasons for absence especially where triggers for action have been met, and ensure they are properly recorded. Purpose of interview to establish reason for absence, to check the employee is fit to return, and what if anything can be done to support the employee.</p>
<p>If LM thinks employee is unfit to return for any reason, the employee can be medically suspended and/or referred to OH for a medical assessment - LM should seek advice from HR</p>	<p>No mention</p>	<p>If LM thinks employee is unfit to return for any reason, the employee can be medically suspended and/or referred to OH for a medical assessment - LM should seek advice from HR. If OH feel an employee is permanently unfit to carry out their duties the employee may be redeployed to other work. HR will help facilitate this. Alternatively, or in the event that no alternative employment is available, employees in the pension scheme may apply for ill health retirement.</p>
<p>Employee is entitled to remain on full pay whilst on Medical Suspension. Council may request details from OH on specific condition of employee</p>	<p>No mention Managers should seriously consider any medical advice given before making decisions. Whilst action is taken in light of medical advice, the decisions</p>	<p>No mention Decisions about an employees sickness absence are managerial not medical, even where an OH report has been obtained.</p>
<p>Medical Advice/ Evidence</p>		

<p>Purpose of referral to establish employee's health & how Council can support employee & make appropriate decisions re their employment</p>	<p>themselves are management responsibilities, not medical ones.</p>	<p>Purpose of report is to establish the true medical position so that an informed and fair decision can be made.</p>
<p>Employee will be asked for their permission to contact GP/ Consultant via Medical Consent Form. They will be informed of the reasons why info is being sought and can request to see a copy or referral docs</p>	<p>No mention</p>	<p>employee will be asked to sign a consent form allowing OH to contact their GP.</p>
<p>Content of report will be discussed with employee before any further action is taken</p>	<p>No mention</p>	<p>If OH report indicates there is an underlying medical problem, a formal first stage review meeting should be convened by LM</p>
<p>If an employee refuses to co-operate in the obtaining of medical evidence or undergo a medical assessment, Management will make decisions based on the info available at the time.</p>	<p>No mention</p>	<p>Employee is responsible for attending agreed appointments - if they cannot attend because of health, alternative arrangements will be made</p>
<p>Employee is responsible for attending agreed appointments - if they cannot attend because of health, alternative arrangements will be made</p>	<p>No mention</p>	<p>Employee is responsible for attending agreed appointments - if they cannot attend because of health, alternative arrangements will be made</p>
<p>Council has the right to recover overpaid OSP and will try to seek agreement with the employee on the amount and method of payment from each salary or wage payment (not exceeding 10% of normal gross pay) until full recovery of overpayment.</p>	<p>No mention</p>	<p>No mention</p>
<p>Recovering OSP</p>		

	<p>Where an employee claims loss of earnings for a private insurance or medical company for any period of absence from work, the Council reserves the right to make a third party claim or seek repayment of OSP if an employee receives any income exc. compensation payments made.</p>	<p>No mention</p>	<p>No mention</p>
<p>Invoking Disciplinary Procedure</p>	<p>If an employee refuses to speak to NLAS or LM re their absence and without justifiable reason, it may be dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure. Where it is suspected that an employee has misled the Council and has not been absent due to sickness, the matter will be dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.</p>	<p>No mention</p>	<p>Persistent refusal to visit OH may lead to disciplinary action. Where it is suspected that an employee has misled the Council and has not been absent due to sickness, the matter will be dealt with under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.</p>
<p>Return to Work Programme</p>	<p>To reassure the employee on their return to work that their return has been carefully thought through. This should include advice from OH and consideration of a phase return to work, to include the following: > shorter hours > flexible working > training new equipment/processes > new developments in the Council</p>	<p>At formal Meeting stage a time-limited sickness rehabilitation programme to support return may be established. If a return to work or normal duties is achieved within the time specified, the employee will be advised in writing and reminded of the need to sustain the improvement.</p>	

	<p>> how they wish to handle the subject of their absence with work colleagues</p> <p>> lighter duties for a defined period of time</p>		
<p>Risk Assessment / Work-place Assessment</p>	<p>Council has a duty of care to conduct a risk assessment / work-place assessment on the first day of the employee's return to work, to ensure the safety of the work environment</p>	<p>No mention</p>	<p>Employee may return to work earlier than date given on Fit Note if both employee and LM agree. In those circumstances it may will be necessary to undertake a risk assessment</p>
<p>Representation</p>	<p>Employee has the right to be accompanied by a rep of a trade union or a work colleague. The employee is responsible for making the necessary arrangement with their rep. If they are unable to be represented on the date of the meeting an alternative date will be organised.</p>	<p>Employees have a right to be represented by a trade union official or fellow worker at all formal meetings of the procedure. It is the responsibility of the employee to arrange for her/his representation. Legal representation is not allowed.</p>	<p>Employees are entitled to be accompanied by a trade union official or fellow worker at all formal stages of the procedure. Trade union reps are encouraged to contact their local branch for assistance and guidance. Question: Does it have to be an employee - could it be a parent etc??</p>
<p>Right to Appeal</p>	<p>This should be in writing and set out the reasons for the appeal, and needs to be done within 10 days of receipt of the letter confirming the outcome of any formal stage of the process.</p>	<p>Appeals must be submitted in writing within 10 working days from the date of receiving written confirmation of outcome and must specify grounds for appeal.</p>	<p>Appeals must be submitted in writing to the manager who made the decision, within 14 10 working days from the date of receiving written confirmation of the outcome of any formal stage and must specify grounds for appeal.</p>

	No mention	<p>Employees may appeal against a decision to: set targets or timescales for improvement, or give a formal caution, or terminate employment.</p> <p>Employee may appeal on the following grounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the proper procedure was not followed - appeal panel will consider b) considering the info provided the decision reached was unreasonable c) new evidence has become available 	Employee has the right of appeal against any formal review warning or dismissal against them under both the short or long term sickness absence procedures
Purpose of Appeal...	No mention	<p>Before reaching a decision, the panel will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > confirm the facts of the case, the action taken to date, any developments since the last meeting and latest medical > consider any representations made by or on behalf of the employee and any statement of intent they wish to make regarding their future attendance > ensure proper consideration is given to the factors <p>Short of dismissal, appeals will be arranged and heard by a Senior Manager within the department, who has no previous involvement in the case.</p>	<p>To consider whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) there is new or additional evidence not available at the original hearing b) there is evidence to support a conclusion that the original hearing manager made an error of judgement i. whether or not a breach of the Attendance at Work Procedures. ii. The most appropriate action to take c) there is evidence to support a conclusion that the procedure was wrongly applied.
In the case of a formal warning...	If a formal warning is issued as a result of a Formal Absence Review Meeting the employee has the right to appeal to the next level Manager (name to be supplied at meeting).		<p>Upto and including a formal (final) written warning, will be heard by a manager at the same level or above who has not previously been involved in the process.</p>

<p>In the case of a dismissal...</p>	<p>Employee has the right of appeal to the Director (name to be supplied at the Final Absence Review Meeting).</p>	<p>Decisions are not stayed pending the outcome of an appeal, therefore employees who are dismissed will be removed from the payroll and only reinstated if the decision is over-turned.</p>	<p>Appeals will be heard by the Council's Corporate Appeals Committee, and there will be 3 possible outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Appeal will be turned down and original decision will remain b) The appeal will be allowed with conditions c) The appeal will be allowed without conditions
<p>In the case of a long term absence dismissal...</p>	<p>where an employee disagrees with the OH recommendation to retire them on medical grounds, or disagrees with the tier of ill health retirement, the employee will be referred to an independent doctor, to be agreed with the employee.</p>		

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Relevant Section on Absence Reporting from the new 'Introduction to Team York' Training Programme

The Slide

4

We Care About Your Health and Well Being

- ▶ Carry out your work in a healthy and safe way
- ▶ Expectation that you will attend work
- ▶ Suitably trained and informed in your responsibilities to carry out work in a safe manner – see CYC SMS
- ▶ Occupational health support and well being initiatives
- ▶ Attendance at work policy and procedure

Expectation **Support**

Notes to go with the Slide

1. As an organisation – We care about your health and well being
 - We will ensure you are suitably trained and informed in your responsibilities to carry out work in a safe manner
 - CYC Safety Management System which sets out the minimum expected standard for managers and employees to follow in relation to specific topics such as Asbestos or Stress

2. Good health and safety is an essential part of our values
 - All staff need to be suitably trained and informed in their responsibilities to carry out work in a safe manner, mgr should explain during local induction, but check this if you are unsure when you return to work.

- CYC Safety Management System (SMS) sets out the minimum expected standard for managers and employees to follow in relation to specific topics such as Asbestos or Stress.
 - Wellbeing initiatives designed to improve the health & wellbeing of all employees both at work and at home. Eye care, Occupational health, discounted memberships – Health & Wellbeing Fair 12th June 2012 stands representing
 - Expectation that you attend work
3. Understand there may be occasions when you are unfit to attend work – where this is the case you must:
- notify your manager you will not be able to attend work by your normal starting time;
 - Cover your absence by completing a self cert or if 8 calendar days + a statement of fitness for work from your GP or medic;
 - Keep in contact with your manager, so we know how you are doing and how long you are likely to be off for.
4. Attendance at Work Policy & Procedure - Return to work interview
- The Policy and Procedure is there to help your managers support you when you are ill back into the workplace and we will let you know if we have any concerns about the amount of absence, using triggers that apply to everyone.
 - Occupational Health support/ long term sick absence and we run wellbeing initiatives designed to improve the health and wellbeing of all employees both at home and at work e.g. eye care; occupational health; discounted membership

WELCOME TO CITY OF YORK COUNCIL
Local Induction Checklist

This document is intended as a tool for managers and teams to welcome new staff to the Council. It includes most things that all staff should know. However as this covers all areas of the Council, not everything on this list will be relevant to all; please mark N/A where appropriate.

The timescales given are an indication of how quickly certain items should be covered. Not all points are equally urgent, however they can be addressed sooner if appropriate.

There will also be some items that are job or department specific, and that new starters need to know. These can be included in the “LOCAL” sections before saving or printing the document.

This checklist can be:



- 1) Printed out – to allow you or your employee to tick off the items as they are covered. Both should sign it when completed.



- 2) While the document is open on screen – you can click on the links, in order to access other documents or areas on Colin, where you can find out more information.

Since the links can become out of date, please only use the latest live version from Colin each time, rather than a locally saved version.

If you do find links that do not work, or where documents are out of date, please can you email the [HR Business Centre](#) so that they can be corrected. Many thanks.

WELCOME TO CITY OF YORK COUNCIL

Local Induction Checklist

This form is to be completed by the Manager and new starter as appropriate.


It must be sent to HR Business Centre (HRBC) to be saved on the individual's personal file, at the end of the 3 month induction period.

This checklist covers standard information which should be provided for new starters, and may be supplemented by directorate specific information as appropriate to the nature of the post.




Casuals should receive the information that is in the "1st day" column.

Before use, please check that you have the latest version from Colin.


Employee Name :		Emp No:
Job Title :		
Department:		Directorate:
Date of Commencement :		Work Location :
Manager's Name :		


PRE-COMMENCEMENT	Things to do:	Completed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Payroll notified of start date, pay details etc and ensure establishment is up to date. See New starter - guidance and forms Meetings with manager diarised + Meet the team Nominate a 'Buddy' to look after them on first day Office equipment / tools / protective clothing made available Place booked on "Introduction to York" briefing. Booking Form Contact ICT to arrange: PC access via ICT self service. Send email to ICT Service Desk Mailbox to arrange Telephone number (+ Pick up or Hunt groups if applicable). Arrange appropriate access to relevant systems eg iTrent, FMS, P2P Appointment made to obtain CYC ID / swipe card(s) Identify appropriate H&S assessments for job see SMS compliance notes Identify and arrange any essential on the job training <i>Other LOCAL action:</i> 	

WELCOME TO CITY OF YORK COUNCIL
Local Induction Checklist

TOPIC	Key Learning Points (tick when completed, or show N/A)	 By end of:			
		1 st Day	1 st Week	1 st Month	3rd Month
OVERVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT	Welcome! 				
Structure	• How the team / department / directorate fit together				
	• Other key teams the jobholder will come into contact with				
	• How the Council operates: be Connected				
Key people	• Names / job titles of supervisors / managers within the department. Show the reporting line up, through to the Director				
	• Link to Corporate Leadership Group page on Colin				
	• Other key names the employee will need as part of their job				
Job Description	• How the job fits into the organisation				
	• Review understanding of the Job Description				
	• Make clear job + team objectives (especially for first few months) + set Personal objectives				
ADMINISTRATION & PROCESSES at CYC	What does that mean for employees? 				
Official paperwork completed and returned to HRBC	• ID card + security				
	• Copy of appointment form signed with Contract No.				
	• Pension form completed, if necessary				
	• Collect P45 / P46 if possible				
	• Ensure all paperwork / iTrent input is completed and forwarded to payroll before monthly deadline				
	• Explain/issue Statement of Main Terms and Conditions including salary progression – ask to sign and return 1 copy				
• Next of kin form (to be completed and returned)					

Administration	• IT user name				
	• phone set up + use (voicemail/transfer/hold)				
	• Stationary / tools + where to access more				
Payroll / Time management	• Break / lunch times				
	• Flexi sheets				
	• Rota / shift work				
	• Holidays, and local rules (eg dates that cannot be taken due to service needs)				
	• Annual Leave card				
	• See Annual Leave entitlement calculator and other useful documents				
	• Overtime claims				
Claims	• Expenses, travel costs, making bookings, training courses / conferences				
Transport Issues where applicable	• See Workplace Transport information to explain the use of CYC cars, or for employees using their own vehicles for work				
	• If using CYC vehicles: check and take copy of Driving licence and Insurance				
	• Explain and issue Car Mileage Sheets see travel & subsistence policy				
	• Explain the use of Pool bikes see e-motion				
Information systems	• Colin + add personal/ team info, inc photo				
	• Outlook calendars				
	• iTrent self service				
	• FMS (if necessary)				
Building	• Open hours + access				
	• Kitchen facilities				
	• Protocols				
	• Re-cycling				
Useful Contacts / Support	• IT helpdesk				
	• Payroll + Benefits				
	• Switchboard / name finder				
	• Medical: York Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust				
	• Employee Counselling service				
	• First Contact Network (FCN)				
	• Trade Unions				
In your team	• Teas/coffee/milk				
	• Emergency contact details				
	• Post in / out				

Further Management Responsibilities (during first three months of employment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet regularly with manager to review progress as part of the probationary procedure. Set objectives in accordance with staff appraisal scheme and review development needs Ensure employee has attended “Working for York” briefing/received notes of briefing 				
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES		How does the Council support its employees? 			
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure employee has received the Voluntary Benefits booklet from Your Rewards - staff benefits and understands how to access benefits, savings and discounts Application / forms for benefits to non-casual staff eg default entry into pension scheme, Staff Lottery etc Pay scales: Where job sits, and how increments work Bus ticket loan Salary sacrifice schemes for Childcare Vouchers and Cycle 2 Work loan 				
Performance management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team York programme PDR’s Learning & Development Capability process 				
Absence management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting absence Self certification + RTW interviews Sickness triggers Employee Counselling (self referral) + Occupational Health service 				
Codes of conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Code of Conduct Declaration of Staff Conflict of Interests Gifts & Hospitality Confidentiality Electronic Communications policy ECP 				
Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CYC’s Equality policy + what to be aware of in this particular job Ensure employee is aware of the Employment of Disabled People procedure and guidelines 				

Dignity at Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and Guidelines • First Contact support 				
Disciplinary & Grievance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of policies and access to HR pages and A-Z on Colin 				
PROTOCOLS & HOUSEKEEPING	Working for the Council 				
Health & Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk assessment – need for job specific training? (eg manual handling / use of specific equipment) • Access to Health & Safety information on Colin • Arranged attendance on specialist training courses e.g. manual handling/food hygiene as appropriate • First Aiders + Accident book • Eye Test examination information - eye test form and recommendation of optician • <i>Other LOCAL specific aspects:</i> 				
Evacuations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Evacuation procedure and test arrangements for <u>all</u> locations they work from • Fire Warden system + last one in office/workplace to take card from blue box 				
SMART working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain Hot-desking • Principles behind Flexible working opportunities • Discuss working from home needs where appropriate (eg Entrust card or other equipment) 				
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team meeting arrangements • Colin + buzz • standard signatures / out of office • Standard formats (CYC logo/departmental and styles) 				
Decision making process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sign off process i.e. what goes to cabinet / members, role of CMT etc</i> 				
Finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Authority to sign off (where relevant)</i> • <i>Who to request authorisation from</i> 				

<p>Other LOCAL requirements:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List local action points here: 				
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Confirmation of Induction process:	
<p>I confirm that all of the above information has been provided to me</p> <p>Signed by Employee _____ Date _____</p>	
<p>I confirm that all the above tasks have been completed</p> <p>Signed by Manager _____ Date _____</p>	

A copy of this signed form must be sent to the HR Business Centre to be added to the employee's file.

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Managing Absence

University of York Brief to City of York Council

Friday 23 November 2012

Background

- Primary area of absence management is sickness absence management.
- University sickness absence provision is generous! Up to 8 months full pay and 4 months half pay – which can encourage absence if not managed properly.
- Important to manage early, appropriately and consistently

Process

- We encourage use of the informal intervention mechanism:
 - Ownership by lowest possible level of manager as early as possible
 - Encourage discussion between line managers and employees at 1:1 meetings to address any particular difficulties that may lead to absence.
 - Creating a good working relationship between line managers and employees so trust and openness occurs
 - Where absence happens using the Return to Work mechanism properly to discuss the absence and identify any potential solutions
- Where absences intermittent we use various trigger points to step up our management of individuals absence – see flowchart:
 - At 8 day point higher level of management gets involved (Team Leaders rather than Supervisors).
 - At 10 day point move to First Formal - Team Leader level
 - At 20 day point move to Final Formal – Facility Manager level
 - At 30 day point move to Dismissal – Head of Section.
- Also have sanctions less than dismissal and Dismissal due to Ill Health

Alex to speak on how it works practically

Management

- Provision of management training to enhance managerial skills.

- Induction training sets expectations.
- On the job training team sessions and away days
- Management in Action programme that covers range of capabilities required by first line managers
- Provision of focussed training on specific issues; sickness absence management to line managers at relatively regular intervals/by request

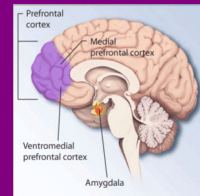
Support

- Use of our Employee Assistance scheme particularly where there are issues outside of work.
- Dedicated HR support which covers operational day to day issues at informal and formal levels – HR Officer.
- Longer term absence support includes Occupational Health service.
- Organisational approach to Stress Management is through line managers and use of Individual Stressor Questionnaire resulting in a Well Being Action Plan (if appropriate).

Other Absence Provisions

- To minimise time taken off as sickness absence where other reason may be more appropriate
- Discretionary Leave – discretion vested in line managers with HR guidance
 - Covers a range of circumstances that may be supported by the University; e.g. public/community leave.
 - However, some are unpaid – e.g. Care for Dependents.
- Use of annual leave and flexitime encourages to support leave that is not sickness based.
 - Note – need to record sickness accurately to identify potential trends/issues (catch 22 !)
- Flexitime system useful to enable where possible for managers and staff to manage time in conjunction with work and home pressures.
 - Defined boundaries of flexitime; e.g. can only save up to 3 days in any accounting quarter, time above that is lost.
 - May only use up to one day as flexileave in any month
 - But can use portions of flexi to start later/finish earlier in agreement with manager.

MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE – SKILLS FOR LINE MANAGERS (CYC/HS/T22)



COURSE OBJECTIVE	WHO IS THE COURSE AIMED AT
<p>The workshop will provide you with sufficient information to help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote mental well being in the workplace by taking an holistic approach to managing your employees • Recognise stress, distress and mental health conditions in the workplace at an early stage • Develop practical strategies to help staff who experience mental health problems to retain their employment • Consider how to maintain or regain good mental health themselves, including strategies to help cope with stress at work 	<p>The training is aimed at Line Managers and will help increase their skills and confidence in managing the mental health of employees</p>
COURSE CONTENT	
<p>Module 1 – Introduction to the programme Module 2 – What is Stress? Module 3 – What is Mental Health? Module 4 – Communication Module 5 – Commonly Diagnosed Health Conditions Module 6 – The Management Standards Approach</p>	
COURSE/WORKSHOP LENGTH	1 Day
METHOD OF DELIVERY	Presentation, practical exercises, discussion, case studies
COURSE SIZE	Maximum 12
PROVIDED BY	Health & Safety Team

COURSE ARRANGEMENTS

There is no charge for this course. A hard copy of the completed booking form is available on Colin or Skillspace/LA Portal, and should be sent to the Training and Development Centre, 20 George Hudson Street, York, YO1 6WR (fax 554216 / tel 554147).

- If you have any queries contact CYC Health and Safety Team on 01904-554131
- Access the SMS system on Colin or Skillspace/LA Portal



“Helping Managers to manage Health and Safety”