

Executive Committee

No Specific Ward Relevance

6th January 2010

CORPORATE SICKNESS STATISTICS

(Report of the Head of Human Resources and Communications)

1. Summary of Proposals

To bring to Members' attention the current sickness statistics for the Council for the period July 2009 – Sept 2009 and to outline the work programme by Officers to assist in the reduction of these statistics.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to **RESOLVE** that

- 1) the statistics be noted; and
- 2) the programme outlined in the report to reduce sickness absence be approved.

3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Sustainability Implications

Financial

- 3.1 There is a health and safety budget available. In addition funding can be obtained to target specific health promotions. There is a Service Level Agreement in place with WCC for the provision of Occupational Health services.
- 3.2 Additional costs could be incurred through agency staff to cover sickness absence.

Legal

- 3.3 The Council has a current Sickness Absence Policy. There are legal implications for the Council under Health and Safety at Work Act, "duty of care" for employees.

Policy

- 3.4 The sickness absence policy is currently under review as part of the Harmonisation of Polices we are undertaking with Bromsgrove District Council.

Risk

- 3.5 There is a risk to service delivery and performance if there are high sickness levels in the organisation.
- 3.6 There are a number of changes taking place within the authority that could impact on the future absence levels. For example Job Evaluation and Shared Services.
- 3.7 The current outbreak of Swine Flu is likely to impact on future sickness absence levels

Sustainability / Environmental

- 3.8 None

Report

4. Background

At the meeting of this Committee on 11 June 2008 Members requested a brief report be brought to alternate future meetings, outlining the current sickness absence statistics within the authority.

5. Key Issues

- 5.1 Overview of sickness absence statistics are shown as Appendix 1. Details of current sickness absence statistics per department are shown at Appendix 2. A breakdown of reasons per department is shown as Appendix 3.
- 5.2 Sickness absence target for 09/10 is set at 8 days per FTE, the 1st quarter 1.83 and the 2nd quarter sickness absence outturn was 2.02 days per FTE, however the targets are not yet profiled to account for those quarters during the year when higher sickness absence levels are anticipated.
- 5.3 The numbers of employees who have been absent from work due to suspected or confirmed swine flu is 40 employees.
- 5.4 Payroll have issued a reminder to all employees and Managers to ensure sickness absence paperwork is completed and returned promptly as this impacts on the reporting of accurate sickness statistics .
- 5.5 Members requested at the Executive meeting in August for the figures to be compared to statistics available. The comparable data is shown below.

The DLA Piper benchmarking survey 2009

- 5.6 The survey directly compares Redditch absence levels to that of the average for Districts and All local authorities.
- 5.7 The survey identifies that we are comparable to other Districts and lower than that of the average for all Local Authorities.

Redditch **9.19 days** (June 2008 - May 2009)

Districts Average 9.1 days

All Local Authorities Average 10.5 days

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) Absence Survey for 2009 reports

- 5.8 Public Sector 9.7 days per employee per year a slight decrease from the previous years figures of 9.8.
- 5.9 Private Sector 6.4 days per employee a decrease from previous year at 7.2 days.
- 5.9 CIPD report that a possible reason for the decrease in sickness levels was identified by employers are possibly due to increased employee concern over job security. 56% of organisations that participated in the survey have made redundancies in the last 12 months and 4 in 10 employers use absence data as part of the criterion when selecting for redundancy. Restricted sick pay is also identified as a contributing factor to the reduction in absence levels.
- 5.10 Sickness absence toolkit has been developed to assist managers managing staff through the sickness absence policy. The toolkit is available on the intranet.
- 5.11 Stress risk assessments have been introduced for all employees returning following a stress related absence. Managers are required to undertake the risk assessment with advice from Human Resources.
- 5.12 A trigger process has been implemented to ensure there is communication between, Payroll, HR Officer and Line Manager when an employee is absent with a stress related absence.

- 5.13 A close working relationship had been developed with the PCT and are working in partnership to promote health awareness and signpost employees to where specific support is available. In partnership with the PCT, a Breast Awareness talk for staff took place in October, further Health promotion events will be arranged throughout the year.
- 5.14 We are introducing letters to staff in recognition of their exemplary attendance record.

Future Development

- 5.15 The Sickness Absence policy will be reviewed in conjunction with BDC as part of the harmonizing of employment policies.
- 5.16 The payroll team will be embarking on reviewing payroll processes using the LEAN principles, sickness recording will be reviewed as part of the exercise to improve the recording of sickness absence to enable real time data to be available.
- 5.17 Sickness reporting will be reviewed when the HR21 (Kiosk system) which is planned to be introduced next year. The HR21 facility will enable the development of electronic forms and self service for employees.
- 5.18 A stress toolkit is being drafted to support managers who are working with employees who are absent from work due to stress. This will be referred to Health and Safety Committee.
- 5.19 The costs of a stress audit are currently being investigated.

6. Other Implications

Asset Management - None.

Community Safety - None.

Human Resources - Resources to support managers in the process, and arrangement of referrals.

Social Exclusion - None.

7. Lessons Learnt

None.

8. **Background Papers**

Records within Human Resources (some of which may be exempt).

9. **Consultation**

9.1 This report has been prepared in consultation with relevant Borough Council Officers.

9.2 Trade Union Representatives are also consulted.

10. **Author of Report**

The author of this report is Becky Barr, (Human Resources & Development Manager) who can be contacted on extension 3385 (e-mail: becky.barr@redditchbc.gov.uk) for more information.

11. **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 - Overview of sickness absence statistics.
- Appendix 2 - Details of current sickness absence statistics per department.
- Appendix 3 - A breakdown of reasons per department.