

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Resources Performance and Development
Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date of Committee 13th November 2007

Report Title Employee absence management

Summary This report is the latest in a series of quarterly reports which describes the latest performance information on employee absence levels.

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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? No

Background papers None

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- Details to be specified

- Other Committees
- Local Member(s)
- Other Elected Members Councillor Hicks
 Councillor Booth
 Councillor Atkinson
- Cabinet Member Councillor Fowler
- Chief Executive
- Legal
- Finance
- Other Chief Officers
- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police

Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

Further consideration by this Committee Recommendation that this Committee continues to receive quarterly progress reports

To Council

To Cabinet

To an O & S Committee

To an Area Committee

Further Consultation

Agenda No

Resources Performance and Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

13th November 2007

Employee Absence Management

Report of the Strategic Director of Performance & Development

Recommendation

That the Committee notes the latest available performance information on absence levels and continued progress in relation to absence management.

1. Background

- 1.1 This report provides information on absence figures for year ending June 2007. It forms part of a regularly quarterly update for Members on this key issue.

2. Comparative Absence Figures

- 2.1 A summary of comparative absence figures over the last three years is as set out below: -

Year Ending	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	June 07
Days Lost per Employee*	12.47	10.12	10.57	9.51	9.30

* based on full time equivalent

- 2.2 The following specific issues are brought to the attention of Members: -

- It is pleasing to note that the overall trend in relation to absence levels remains downwards. Days lost through sickness absence have decreased by 1.27 days per employee since the end of financial year 2005/2006.
- Sickness absence levels have also decreased by 0.21 days per employee since the last reporting period (year ending March 2007)
- Current absence levels remain lower than the latest national local government figures (9.6 days absence per FTE employee) but higher than the CBI National average for public sector employers (9.0 days) and the average for County Councils (8.47 days).

- Over the last financial year approximately 35% of employees had no sickness absence.
- Long-term sickness (i.e. absence of more than 4 weeks duration) continues to account for approximately half of all working days lost through sickness.

2.3 An analysis of absence by service area is attached at Appendix A.

2.4 Members will note that for the first time the report splits absence levels within the Children Young People & Families Directorate between schools and non-schools.

2.5 This above distinction is appropriate given the volume of staff in schools and the distorting effect absence levels have on the overall directorate and corporate figures. Whilst schools absence levels need to be reported as part of the wider BVPI reports it is true to say that corporate policy cannot, in practice have the same influence as in other service areas. Members will also be aware of the historical difficulties in recording sickness absence within schools and the continuing efforts to improve the process. It is interesting to note, however, that if the available school based absence were omitted from the report then the corporate figures would increase to 9.6 days per employee.

2.6 Members will also note that the sickness rates within the Adult, Health and Community Services Directorate have been refined to reflect more accurate recording protocols within that Directorate and in particular to reflect the actual working patterns of part time/part week employees.

3. Improving Absence Management

3.1. Members will be aware that a full review of absence levels was undertaken by this Committee on the 4th September and an action plan was agreed for the continued management of sickness absence. This included the extension of training for managers, the development of a performance management framework in all directorates, the streamlining of the recording and input of absence and learning the lessons from a current “Promoting Well-Being” research study being undertaken in partnership with the University of Warwick Medical School. The affect of the above action plan will be reviewed over the next 12 months and reported to this Committee.

4. Conclusion

5.1 It is encouraging that the trend in relation to absence levels continues to be downwards. There is, however no room for complacency. Absence levels remain higher than key comparator groups and we need to work hard to ensure a continued and sustainable improvement. It is expected that the action plan as agreed on the 4th September will help deliver this improvement.

David Carter

Strategic Director of Performance
and Development

October 2007

Shire Hall
Warwick

Absence levels (average numbers of day's absence per FTE employee) for the previous reporting periods.

Department *	Directorate*	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7	June 07(**)
CAMS		6.9	6.7	6.8		
Treasurers	Resources	10.0	9.8	6.1	8.42	8.09
Property Services		5.8	4.6	7.4		
Education (schools)	CYP&F (schools)	-	-	-	8.30	9.20
Education (non schools)	CYP&F (non schools)	-	-	-	7.70	7.30
Chief Executives	Performance & Development	6.9	8.9	6.6	9.20	6.24
Fire and Rescue	Community Protection	8.2	8.0	9.8	8.31	8.12
LHTS		11.3	11.1	8.4		
Social Services	Adult Health & C. Services				18.77	13.04 (***)
PTES	Environment & Economy	11.1	8.4	6.5	7.53	7.39
TOTAL		12.47	10.12	10.57	9.51	9.25

(*) The former nine departments have been identified for general guidance, but do not give a strictly "like for like" comparison of absence data between employees in the "old" and "new" service areas.

(**) These figures include absence data for "year ending" June 2007

(***) Refined figures reflecting actual working patterns of part-time employees and therefore more accurate sickness rates