

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Resources Performance and Development
Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date of Committee 22nd January 2008

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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 (Employee Relations)
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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 Haynes
 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

Resources Performance and Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

22nd January 2008

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 September 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	Sept 07
Days Lost per Employee*	12.47	10.12	10.57	9.51	9.30	8.65

* based on full time equivalent

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

- The overall trend in relation to absence levels remains downwards. Days lost through sickness absence have decreased by 0.86 days per employee since the end of financial year 2006/2007.
- Sickness absence levels have also decreased by 0.65 days per employee since the last reporting period (year ending March 2007)
- The decrease in levels for year ending September 2007 is, in the main, due to a sharp reduction in reported schools based absence (from 9.20 days per employee to 8.23 days per employee) and, to a lesser extent, a reduction in reported absence rates in the Environment and Economy Directorate.

- The decrease in schools based absence has been attributed to improvements in the reporting process across schools. This will be monitored and validated over the next two reporting periods.
- Current absence levels are now lower than both the latest national local government figures (9.6 days absence per FTE employee) and the CBI National average for public sector employers (9.0 days). Absence rates remain higher, however than the average for County Councils (8.47 days).
- Over the last financial year approximately 35% of employees had no sickness absence.

- 2.3 A more detailed analysis of absence by service area is attached at Appendix A.
- 2.4 Members will note that the report has again been refined to split absence levels within the Children Young People and Families Directorate between schools and non schools. If school based absence were omitted from the report then the corporate figures would increase to 9.47 days per employee.
- 2.5 A table showing absence across service areas in terms of the percentage of short term absence (less than 4 continuous weeks) and long term absence (longer than four continuous weeks) is given at Appendix B. Members will note that long-term sickness absence accounts for approximately 43% of all working days lost through sickness.

3. Improving Absence Management

- 3.1. Members will be aware that continued action is being taken to improve attendance and absence levels in accordance with the action plan agreed by this Committee on the 4th September 2007. This includes the streamlining of the absence recording process in the new HR Service Centre, the extension of a performance management framework in all directorates and the participation in a “Promoting Well-Being” research study being undertaken in partnership with the University of Warwick Medical School. Trade union colleagues are involved in the development of the overall action plan and are key members of the Warwick Medical School research study group. The affect of the above action plan will be reviewed over the next 12 months and reported to this Committee.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 It is encouraging that the trend in relation to absence levels continues to be downwards. There is, however no room for complacency and we need to work hard, together with our trade union colleagues 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
 Shire Hall
 Warwick
 January 2007

ABSENCE LEVELS (AVERAGE NUMBERS OF DAY'S ABSENCE PER FTE EMPLOYEE) FOR THE PREVIOUS REPORTING PERIODS.

DIRECTORATE	2006/7	JUNE 07	SEPT 07
Resources	8.42	8.09	8.84
CYP&F (schools)	8.30*	9.20*	8.23*
CYP&F (non schools)	7.70	7.30	7.56
Performance & Development	9.20	6.24	7.20
Community Protection	8.31	8.12	8.11
Adult Health & C. Services	18.77	13.04 **	13.06**
Environment & Economy	7.53	7.39	6.87
	9.51	9.25	8.65

(*) Based on headcount figures (rather than FTE) in order to retain comparative base (over the last two years) and in order to balance the difficulties in recording term time/part time absence data

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

APPENDIX B

ABSENCE LEVELS (AVERAGE NUMBERS OF DAY'S ABSENCE PER FTE EMPLOYEE) LONG AND SHORT TERM ABSENCE

Directorate	Total Absence Days lost per employee	% Short Term * Less than four weeks	% Long Term * Four weeks or more
Resources	8.84	57%	43%
CYP&F (Schools)	8.23	-	-
CYP&F (Non Schools)	7.56	51%	49%
Performance & Development	7.20	44%	56%
Community Protection	8.11	-	-
Adult Health & Com Services	13.06	41%	59%
Environment & Economy	6.87	55%	45%
TOTAL	8.65	57%	43%

* The percentages are based only on data from the first 2 quarters of 2007