



REVISED ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK
REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE – CORPORATE DIRECTION

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL WARDS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present the updated Attendance Management Framework, following a review of the policy.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That members of the committee approve the revised policy.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 3.1 The council first introduced a new Attendance Management Framework in early 2007. The policy was developed at a time when sickness absence was particularly high averaging 12.49 days per employee, per year.
- 3.2 The table below shows the average sickness days lost since the policy was first introduced in 2007:

Year end	Average Sickness Days, Per Employee, Per Year
2007	12.49
2008	8.86
2009	8.53
2010	7.80
2011	6.49
2012	6.20
2013	8.94
2014	10.37
2015	8.45

4. SUMMARY OF CHANGES TO THE POLICY

- 4.1 This is the first detailed review of the policy since implementation in 2007.

5. Trigger Points

- 5.1 The trigger points have not been reviewed since the policy was first introduced. It is suggested that the trigger points change to:
- 3 occasions of absence (whether certified or uncertified) in a 3 month rolling period (no change)
 - 4 occasions of self certified absence in a 12 month rolling period (was 5 occasions)
 - 8 days absence in a 12 month rolling period (this may comprise of a single or multiple absences certified or uncertified) was 10 days

- 5.2 As shown in the table above sickness absence has started to decrease. Triggers have been reviewed to align to the current corporate target of 8 days per employee per year and will be reviewed annually.

6 Equality Act

- 6.1 The Equality Act came into force in October 2010 and was aimed to streamline and bring together existing protection into one place. The Act offers protection to people with 'protected characteristics'. There are 9 protected characteristics, and the main focus for this policy is disability related discrimination.
- 6.2 Under the Act the council has a duty to make reasonable adjustments where a workplace 'provision, criterion or practice (PCP)' puts a disabled employee at a substantial disadvantage compared to others.
- 6.3 One of the major changes to the policy is more detailed support for managers who manage disability related absences. Previously, disability absence was all managed under the long term procedure regardless of whether it was for short or long term absences. The new policy advises to manage all absences either under the short or long term procedure depending on the number of day's absence. A guidance note has been produced to assist managers when supporting a disabled employee.
- 6.4 Managers are required to think broadly of adjustments that could be made and to give the matter serious thought. It is crucial disabilities are managed appropriately to prevent possible discrimination claims from employees through an employment tribunal. There is no statutory limit to the amount of compensation an employee can claim for Disability Discrimination which could be very costly to the Council if an employee won their case.

7. Fit Note & Fit for Work

- 7.1 Fit Note - The GP doctors note has been replaced by the 'Fit Note'. This change has been introduced to provide employers more focus on what an employee may be able to do at work rather than what they cannot do. A GP can suggest ways of helping an employee get back to work by a phased return to work, flexible working, amended duties, and workplace adaptations.
- 7.2 By the GP's using the fit note to its full potential it will mean that employees maybe able to return to work sooner with temporary adjustments/ adaptations
- 7.3 Fit for work – Is an additional mechanism for seeking medical advice for an employee who has been absent from work for 4 weeks or are likely to be off for this length of time. The referral is made via HR or the employee's GP to gain an assessment that will provide advice on interventions and steps on a return to work plan. There is no cost to use this service.

8 Training

- 8.1 Full training will be given to all new managers on the new policy. For existing managers refresher training will be provided.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [DW]

- 9.1 The cost of the training will be met from the corporate training budget. It is estimated that the cost will be under £3,000. Additionally there may also be a cost if the number of occupational health referrals were to increase. If required these costs will also be met from existing resources.

- 9.2 High sickness absence levels can have a detrimental effect on the delivery of council services. Effective sickness absence management ensures that the cost of sickness absence is kept at a minimum whilst improving capacity, service improvement and workforce morale.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [JB]

- 10.1 The legal implications are contained in the report.

11. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Corporate Aim 2 – Empowering communities – Improve health and wellbeing.

12. CONSULTATION

- 12.1 Full consultation with staff (not limited to just Unison members) has taken place and the responses have been coordinated by the Branch Secretary.

13. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 It is the Council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

- 13.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

- 13.3 The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
S.19 - Failure to improve sickness absence	Management of Absence is part of Performance SLB meetings	Steve Atkinson

14. KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 The policy is compliant with the Equality Act

15. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community Safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset Management implications
- Human Resources implications
- Planning Implications
- Voluntary Sector

Background papers:

Appendix 1 - Unison comments on revised policy

Appendix 2 – Updated Attendance Management Framework

Appendix 3 – Guidance for Managers on 'reasonable adjustments'

Contact Officer: Julie Stay, HR and Transformation Manager, Ext 5688
Executive Member: