



Derby City Council

**Personnel Committee  
4 Sept 2018**

Report of the Strategic Director of Corporate  
Resources

# ITEM 06

## Attendance Management Project update

### SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Attendance Management Project Group continue to work together to provide direction in order to reduce sickness absence rates in the Council and update the collective action plan to attempt to achieve this aim.
- 1.2 The absence levels continue to reduce and at the end of July 2018 the absence per FTE was 11.30 days. The reported absence when previously presented to this committee was 12.8 FTE days. Mental health remains the primary reason for absence at 24.99% of absence and musculoskeletal reasons are second at 14.7%. (These are both the 'parent' reason and are broken down further for reporting purposes).
- 1.3 Sickness absence has been presented at the Corporate Leadership Team meeting and the new Chief Executive has given direction in order to take this project forward and manage it effectively.
- 1.4 There have now been approximately 500 Managers attend the Managing Health, Wellbeing and Attendance training and 340 have attended the Stress Management Training.
- 1.5 The Attendance Management Strategy has been developed to drive a cultural change, focusing on the health and wellbeing of our employees through improved leadership capability, in order to bring about improved attendance.

### RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 For the Committee to note the progress on the action plan, specifically all points in action 3 and action 6.1.
- 2.2 For the Committee to support the aims of the project and note the reduction in absence rates, to date.

### REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Improved performance in attendance management continues to be a priority for the Council and is being 'championed' by the new Chief Executive.
- 3.2 Continued support is critical to the success of achieving a reduction in absence. This

is in addition to achieving the longer term culture change required in managing employee wellbeing and attendance.

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| <b>SUPPORTING INFORMATION</b> |
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- 4.1 There has been a reduction in absence from 12.8 days per FTE to 11.30 FTE.
- 4.2 The Project Group continues to meet and focus on the actions within the plan. See Appendix 2 for details.
- 4.3 There are two major elements to the work of the Project Group; case management to prioritise and reduce absence cases and a longer term culture change required in managing employee wellbeing and attendance.
- 4.4 Following a review of how priority cases are managed, HR continue to proactively support managers in addressing critical cases which require more in-depth understanding and a more consistent approach. The latest figures are attached at appendix 3.
- 4.5 A longer term culture change requires a shift in thinking about employee wellbeing and putting interventions in place that support employees in the workplace. The latter will focus particularly, on developing a partnership approach to attendance between managers and employees. Significant training and development support has been introduced to help achieve this. Further details are given below.
- 4.6 Approximately 500 Managers out of approximately 600 have now attended the mandatory Health, Wellbeing and Attendance Management training. The deadline for Managers to attend has now been extended to the end of September. A review will be completed of those services that have not been able to attend and consideration given to providing training in alternative locations, to allow easier access for those managers who do not work in the Council House.
- 4.7 340 managers have attended the mandatory Stress Management training; this can only be attended once managers have attended the Health, Wellbeing and Attendance Management training.
- 4.8 Employee road shows are to be rolled out from 7<sup>th</sup> September. These will be an opportunity for employees to access the services directly who assist with Health and Wellbeing, including Workwell and the Counselling Service. The Health, Wellbeing and Attendance team will also be providing information about all the opportunities available to staff.
- 4.9 The training is part of a wider proposal on leadership development training which has been developed by Organisational Development and sees the introduction of the Professional Derby Manager (PDM). The PDM Programme offers a significant number of leadership workshops, delivered in-house.

- 4.10 The initial PDM briefing/induction sessions were attended by around 300 managers. They were very keen to receive support to improve their leadership and management capability. The PDM Leadership Workshops will be commencing in early July 2018 and will run for the remainder of 2018/19 and beyond. These workshops will provide leadership development linked to the Leadership Behaviours
- 4.11 The workshops will emphasise the importance of leadership and management in determining the health and wellbeing of employees and the impact of poor leadership on attendance. This is particularly relevant in managing the high levels of stress related absences. A separate report is being brought to the Committee giving details of the PDM workshops.
- 4.12 Resilience training is currently being developed for all employees. Currently the wellbeing counselling service continue to provide 1:1 sessions for employees as well as group sessions and support sessions for managers. Resilience training for both managers and employees is also available on the e-learning platform.
- 4.13 The new Stress Policy has now been soft launched and is available on the intranet. A Mental Health Improvement Plan has been developed and along with the new draft Health and Wellbeing strategy is with the new Chief Executive for her consideration.
- 4.14 The Mental Health First Aid training is due to commence in September. The Health, Wellbeing and Attendance Team already have a waiting list of employees who are interested in attending the training.
- 4.15 COG supported the development of a specific MIP (Managing individual Performance) objective for all managers. Four levels of objectives were created to reflect the various levels of management within the Council, from the Chief Executive to Team Leaders. The MIP objective is now live on MiPeople and all managers are expected to manage attendance within their service area.
- 4.16 The Council invested in a new attendance management system, First Care, in June 2017. The system has now been operational for twelve months and work is currently being carried out to analyse the extracted data. A separate report will be brought to the next Committee.

## OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.2 Do nothing. This is not considered to be a viable option, as the Council needs to reduce the current levels of sickness absence and work towards achieving the current sickness absence performance target of 8.4 FTE days lost.

**This report has been approved by the following officers:**

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| <b>Legal officer</b><br><b>Financial officer</b><br><b>Human Resources officer</b><br><b>Estates/Property officer</b><br><b>Service Director(s)</b><br><b>Other(s)</b> | Liz Moore, Head of HR<br><br>Don McLure Interim Strategic Director of Corporate Resources |
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| <b>For more information contact:</b>                    | Diane Sturdy <a href="mailto:diane.sturdy@derby.gov.uk">diane.sturdy@derby.gov.uk</a><br>Wendy Johnson <a href="mailto:wendy.johnson@derby.gov.uk">wendy.johnson@derby.gov.uk</a> |
| <b>Background papers:</b><br><b>List of appendices:</b> | None<br>Appendix 1 – Implications<br>Appendix 2 – Attendance Management Action Plan 2017/2019<br>Appendix 3 – HR case management progress   |

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| <b>IMPLICATIONS</b> |
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**Financial and Value for Money**

- 1.1 Managing attendance in a more consistent and timely way should reduce costs of covering sickness absence, in addition to significantly improving productivity.
- 1.2 As the action plans for the key lines of activity are developed, any additional resource requirements will be fully costed and developed for consideration.

**Legal**

- 2.1 There may be an increase in legal challenge dependent on any changes in the Council's approach to managing attendance.

**Personnel**

- 3.1 Due to a number of changes there is likely to be an impact on priorities and workload in the appropriate support services. Requests for additional resources may need to be developed.

**IT**

- 4.1 As data is appropriately used by and also shared between departments supporting the corporate project on attendance management, in line with information governance requirements, there may be a requirement for additional support from the ICT service.

**Equalities Impact**

- 5.1 Equalities considerations were taken into account in the development of the revised Attendance Management Policy introduced in January 2017. The partnership approach to attendance management supports the Council's Equality Policy.

**Health and Safety**

- 6.1 Overwhelming research demonstrates that improving the health and wellbeing of employees, has a positive impact on engagement and attendance.
- 6.2 Managers have a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of their employees and developing their leadership capabilities will help this.
- 6.3 The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service, along with HR and OD, are essential to the delivery of the Attendance Management Project. How the services work together, share information (within GDPR legislation) and communicate with each other and the Council is a key part of the project.

**Environmental Sustainability**

7.1 None arising directly from this report.

### **Property and Asset Management**

8.1 None arising directly from this report.

### **Risk Management and Safeguarding**

9.1 The level of absence within the Council has a critical impact on service delivery.

### **Corporate objectives and priorities for change**

10.1 A modern, flexible and resilient workforce