

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**SICKNESS ABSENCE**

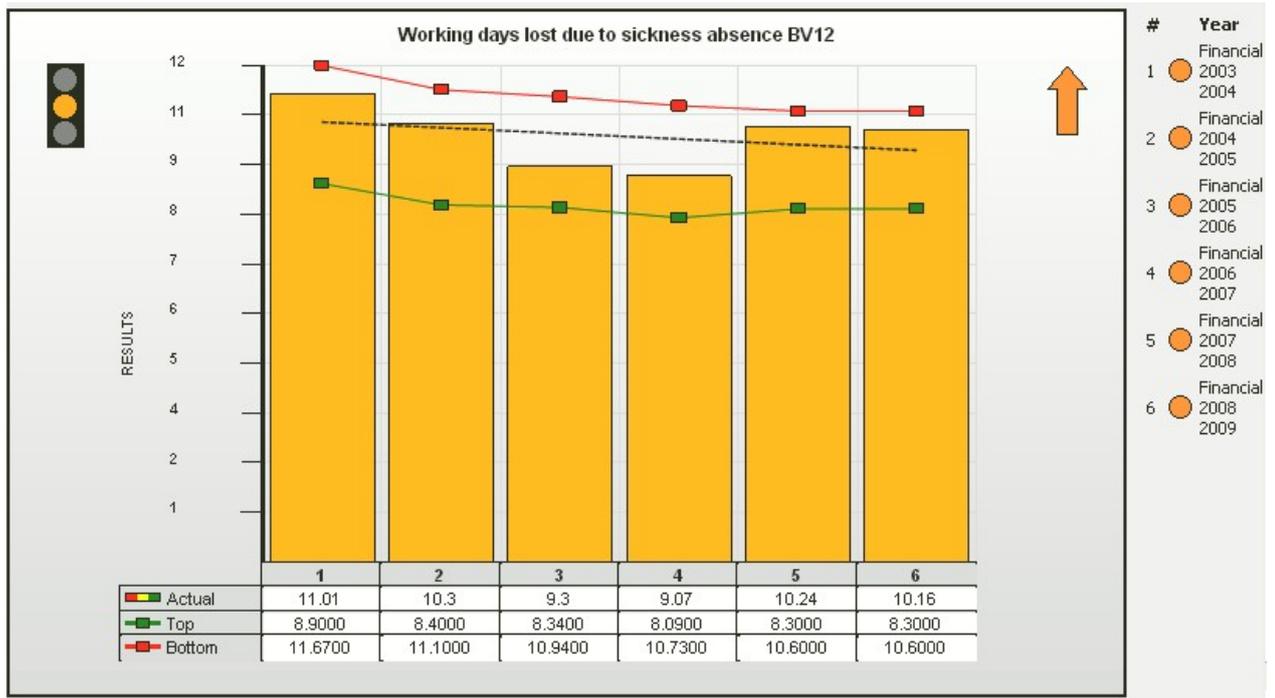
**1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT**

- 1.1 Inform the committee of the current position on sickness absence in the council.

**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 Sickness absence was highlighted by the Audit Commission in the council's Annual Audit and Inspection letter as a risk to capacity - "capacity is hampered at an operational level by increasing levels of staff sickness absence"
- 2.2 Sickness absence had already been highlighted by the council as a performance concern during the year at its QPR. As a result BV 12, the nationally defined sickness absence indicator, was subject to a performance improvement panel (PIP).
- 2.3 The panel found that the council had high levels of long term sickness absence. It requested that sickness absence processes be benchmarked against other councils. Services with high levels of sickness absence were also asked to attend the panel to account for this, together with a service area where sickness absence levels were good. A performance improvement target of 9.5 days was set and it was resolved that this would be monitored and reviewed again if performance did not improve.
- 2.4 The Audit Committee sought assurances that the action taken was having an impact in reducing the risk and requested a report from the Head of Strategy Development on the improvements made .
- 2.5 Performance on BV12 over the last 6 years is shown below. Results for 2008/9 show a very minor decline from 10.24 to 10.17. This is still significantly more than the target of 9.5. It should be noted that this is unaudited data and no data quality checklist or other data quality information has been attached to the indicator.

## 2.6



Comparative performance for the year, based on those councils still collecting BV12 and submitting to our benchmarking service indicates that the council would be in the 4<sup>th</sup> quartile and be ranked 49 out of 64. The sickness at 10.17 is still well above the council average of 8.87.

2.6 This has been highlighted in the council's Annual Performance Outturn report and a recommendation that be subject to a further PIP has been approved by the Council Management Team. In addition this indicator has now been included in a suite of corporate performance indicators that the council will monitor on a quarterly basis through the internal programme board.

2.7 Although the PIP has not been undertaken yet, the council's approach to performance improvement would normally seek outside assistance in the form of a peer review or peer improvement planning where local improvement has not had an effect. Initial analysis of the performance system also identifies concerns about the absence of a robust action plan for recovery and an absence of quarterly monitoring data.

### 3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 The Committee are asked to consider the latest position and action taken and determine whether the proposed actions give sufficient assurance that the risk will be reduced.

### 4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

4.1 The levels of sickness absence are costly to the council in terms of lost productivity and in some cases providing cover.

5. **OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)**

5.1 the council needs to ensure that it complies with the Disability Discrimination Act when dealing with sickness absence.

6. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION**

6.1 CMT have been consulted on the outturn position and agreed to the further PIP process.

7. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 That the Audit Committee determines whether the proposed action provides sufficient assurance that sickness absence will be reduced.

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**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report**

Audit Commission Annual Audit and Inspection Letter 2007/8 produced March 2009