

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

SICKNESS ABSENCE – ACTION PLAN

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the action plan drawn up in response to the Economic Development & Corporate Issues Scrutiny Committee report on Sickness Absence.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Economic Development & Corporate Issues Scrutiny Panel completed a review of Sickness Absence in North Lincolnshire Council in February 2010. This was a revisit of the review of sickness absence completed in December 2003.
- 2.2 The panel requested the formulation of an action plan in response to the 16 recommendations contained in the Scrutiny Panel's report.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 Attached to this paper is a proposed action plan to take forward the recommendations of the Scrutiny Panel. Cabinet has the option of approving the plan, which will give direction to officers in reducing sickness absence.
- 3.2 Alternatively, cabinet may wish to suggest amendments to the plan, giving further ideas for reducing sickness absence.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 The action plan deals with the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee in full. Cabinet is therefore recommended to approve the plan.
- 4.2 Making amendments to the plan may result in delays to implementation.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 A proposal is for the council to establish a specific absence panel/board to provide specific management co-ordination of sickness absence. This will be drawn from existing resources.

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

6.1 No other implications have been identified.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

7.1 The action plan is supported by EMT.

7.2 The Scrutiny Panel report has been seen by trade unions, who recognise the need for reduced levels of sickness absence and wish to work with the council to support this.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That Cabinet approves the action plan attached to this report.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, HUMAN RESOURCES

Pittwood House
Ashby Road
Scunthorpe
North Lincolnshire
DN16 1AB

Author: Christine Wilkinson

Date: 21 May 2010

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

- Economic Development & Corporate issues Scrutiny Committee Panel report, revisiting the review of sickness absence in North Lincolnshire Council completed in December 2003, dated February 2010

Sickness Absence Improvement Plan (Draft version)

Developed in response to scrutiny recommendations

Last updated: 24th May 2010

Rec. No		Action	By whom	Deadline
1	That all managers be reminded of their obligation to manage the absence of all their employees through the diligent and fair application of the council's sickness absence procedure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal letter from Chief Executive to all senior management teams (SMTs) to remind them of their obligation to manage sickness absence • SMTs to ensure that all line managers are aware of their responsibility • SMT members to follow up non-compliance with individual managers for all periods of sickness absence • Article in manager newsletter 'Nuggets' • Article in employee newsletter 'People' • Setting individual targets for service areas • Poster campaign 	<p>Chief Executive</p> <p>Senior Management Teams</p> <p>Senior Management Teams</p> <p>HR Strategy & Performance Officer/Strategy Development Officer</p> <p>HR Strategy & Performance Officer</p> <p>Assistant Director HR/ HR Strategy & Performance Officer</p> <p>Head of Health, Safety & Welfare</p>	<p>June 2010</p> <p>June 2010</p> <p>June 2010</p> <p>June 2010</p> <p>May 2010</p> <p>June 2010</p> <p>June 2010</p>

Sickness Absence Improvement Plan (Draft version)

Developed in response to scrutiny recommendations

Last updated: 24th May 2010

Rec. No.		Action	By whom	Deadline
2	<p>That Human Resources produce a manager's checklist to be used by all managers when:</p> <p>(a) an employee notifies them of their absence (b) steps to be followed during absence providing advice of different scenarios (c) actions to be implemented upon the employee's return, and (d) to be used for every employee absence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review content of current return to work documentation to meet new requirements 	HR Policy Officer / Senior HR Officer	July 2010
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update e-form in line with above action 	Principal HR Officer (Policy)	July 2010
3	<p>That once the employee has successfully returned to work, the above checklist be signed by the line manager and returned to HR for audit purposes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review e-form workflows and functionality • Return of checklist to HR for all periods of sickness absence • Non compliance to be incorporated into QPR reporting 	<p>Principal HR Officer (Policy)</p> <p>All managers</p> <p>HR Strategy & Performance Officer</p>	<p>July 2010</p> <p>July 2010 onwards</p> <p>August 2010</p>

Sickness Absence Improvement Plan (Draft version)

Developed in response to scrutiny recommendations

Last updated: 24th May 2010

Rec. No.		Action	By whom	Deadline
4	That the mandatory completion and return to HR of the checklist form be part of individual service area QPR meetings. This will allow Service Directors to ensure that managers are complying with the council's sickness absence procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop reporting on PP to enable provision of performance information (sickness absence return to work form, review meetings, trigger reports) 	HR Strategy & Performance Officer	August 2010
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review trigger reports provided to services (Policy in Practice group) 	Principal HR Officer (Policy)	Report back to HRMT June 2010
5	That the scrutiny panel be consulted on the checklist prior to its implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised checklist provided to scrutiny panel 	Head of Organisational Development	June 2010
6	That as part of managers' Employee Development Reviews (EDRs) held annually, a specific part of their appraisal be their performance in implementing the council's sickness absence procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the EDR form to include a section on managing absence 	Head of Organisational Development	July 2010
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement revised form 	Head of Organisational Development	August 2010

Sickness Absence Improvement Plan (Draft version)

Developed in response to scrutiny recommendations

Last updated: 24th May 2010

Rec. No.		Action	By whom	Deadline
6 (cont'd)	Failure by the manager to have achieved 100% completion and return of the checklist to HR be dealt with according to the severity of failing to comply with mandatory requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss a manager's performance in managing sickness absence during Employee Development Review 	All managers	Ongoing from August 2010
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review PP/e-forms to produce performance data upon which managers carrying out the EDR can form a judgement 	HR Strategy & Performance Officer / Principal HR Officer (Policy)	Aug 2010 (manual) Dec 2010 (e-form)
7	That a sickness absence panel/board be formed and led by the Chief Executive. This would provide specific management co-ordination of sickness absence and should be made up of HR officers, senior managers and a representative from occupational health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel to be established reporting directly to the Chief Executive 	Assistant Director HR	June 2010
8	That in future managers receive details of sickness costs for their service and these should be incorporated into their performance targets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of absence incorporated in monthly returns 	HR Strategy & Performance Officer	Aug 2010
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs to be included in Quarterly Performance Reviews and Corporate Performance Review 	HR Strategy & Performance Officer / Performance Manager	Aug 2010

Sickness Absence Improvement Plan (Draft version)

Developed in response to scrutiny recommendations

Last updated: 24th May 2010

Rec. No.		Action	By whom	Deadline
9	That a new comprehensive mandatory training package be developed and brought into use for all managers with supervisory responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review current session, using new sickness absence policy• Include 'fit notes'	Head of Organisational Development	Sept 2010
10	That mandatory refresher training courses be introduced once all managers have attended the above training, particularly when any amendments are made to the council's sickness absence policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish recording system and refresher training system	Head of Organisational Development	September 2010
11	That in addressing amendments to the sickness absence policy the panel would like the Trade Unions to be consulted on any proposals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include as regular item on CCG	Assistant Director HR	ongoing
12	That the reduction of the current trigger points for short-term absences be investigated with immediate effect.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Revise policy to incorporate reduction of short-term trigger points	Assistant Director HR	June 2010

Sickness Absence Improvement Plan (Draft version)

Developed in response to scrutiny recommendations

Last updated: 24th May 2010

Rec. No.		Action	By whom	Deadline
13	That consideration be given to reducing the referral times to the OHS, and detailed in the council's sickness absence policy for managers' guidance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise policy to incorporate earlier referral to OH 	Assistant Director HR / Head of Health, Safety & Welfare	June 2010
14	That the Council Management Team investigates the possibilities of praising and rewarding good attendance and showing employees they are valued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue to be discussed with Internal Programme Board, with recommendations from Assistant Director, HR 	Assistant Director HR	June 2010
15	That the Assistant Director Human Resources carries out further investigations/consultations with other service providers before making any commitments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate a comparable internal solution • Pilot in low performing area 	Assistant Director HR	June 2010
16	That the council's leaders, service directors, managers and employees be aware that scrutiny will be re-visiting this review on an annual basis in order to scrutinise implementation of the recommendations and any progress that has been made.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual review to be scheduled • Communication to include reference to review 	Head of Democratic Services	