

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 5
23 March 2017	PUBLIC REPORT

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REVISED ATTENDANCE POLICY

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM : Director of Governance	Deadline date : N/A
It is recommended that Employment Committee approve the revised Attendance and Absence Monitoring policy (Appendix 1).	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report is submitted to the Employment Committee following agreement from members of the Joint Consultative Forum.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 The purpose of this report is to propose a revised employee attendance policy for approval.

2.2 This report is for the Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 2.3.1.2 'to determine employee procedures, including dismissal procedures' and 2.3.1.4 'to determine local terms and conditions of employment for employees'.

3. TIMESCALE

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If Yes, date for relevant Cabinet Meeting	N/A
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4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The existing Attendance policy has been in place since 2008.

4.2 The policy has been significantly reviewed. It includes the process to follow in both short term and long term sickness cases. The policy is designed to ensure that managers and employees alike are clear in respect of their responsibilities.

4.3 Alongside the policy is a manager's guidance document, standard letters and flow charts to ensure the policy is simple to understand and managers will be able to easily follow it. The main reason for this is to ensure that each case is managed consistently.

5. PROPOSAL

5.1 The policy has been assessed against the ACAS guidelines on disciplinary cases and other best practice documents and any required changes reflected in the policy. The main changes are as follows:-

- The requirement to submit a Fit Note on return from sickness absence has been removed.
- Fit notes that are submitted during an absence now have to be copied and the originals returned to the employee.

- Formal warnings will be issued at meetings where appropriate to ensure that the employee is fully aware of the potential outcome of continued poor attendance.
- A statement regarding the rules around annual leave that continues to accrue during periods of long term sickness.
- The policy is fit for purpose in respect of agile working as the council moves to this model.
- The trigger points have been made much clearer and are now over a 12 month period. These are pro-rata for part time staff.
 - Three or more occasions of sickness absence (existing trigger)
 - 10 working days absence over 2 occasions (amended trigger)
 - Unacceptable patterns of absence (existing trigger)
 - The unacceptable patterns may cover a period of more than 12 months if there is evidence to confirm that the absence occurs annually, bi-annually etc.

5.2 The policy stresses the importance of Return to Work Interviews. The self certification form is in two parts and includes details taken from the return to work interview.

5.3 All managers will be invited to an upskilling session where the changes made to the policy will be explained to them in full. The existing Attendance Management training will also be updated.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 The HR team shared the draft policy and guidance documents with senior managers at Departmental Management teams throughout the summer of 2016. Much of the feedback provided was taken on board within the proposed draft policy. Trades Unions have also been consulted on the proposals at the Joint Consultation Forum meetings on 21 October 2016 and 29 November 2016. Changes were made as a result of their comments. Positive feedback was given by the Trades Unions to the proposed policy.

7 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Managing sickness is a very important part of a manager's responsibilities; this policy and process should ensure that managers have all the information they need to deal with each case consistently, fairly but with the flexibility to take account of individual needs and circumstances. They do this with the full support of their Business Partners.

8. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985).

8.1 ACAS Code of practice on Disciplinary and Grievance procedures – March 2015

9. APPENDICES

9.1 Appendix 1 – Attendance and Absence Management Policy