



## AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

<b>Report Title</b>	<b>ABSENCE MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE</b>
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**AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC**

<b>Audit Committee Meeting Date:</b>	24 September 2012
<b>Policy Document:</b>	
<b>Directorate:</b>	Resources
<b>Accountable Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr Alan Bottwood

### 1. Purpose

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- 1.1 This provides a summary of the absence performance indicator BV12 and current actions being taken to move towards the target.

### 2. Recommendations

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- 2.1 To note the paper.

### 3. Issues and Choices

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#### 3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 The high level of sickness absence in the Council means that the target outturn figure of 10 days average is unlikely to be achieved without some significant changes in approach.
- 3.1.2 Overview and Scrutiny reported on absence in March 2011 and Cabinet accepted their recommendations. Overview and Scrutiny undertook a monitoring of the accepted recommendations within its report on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2012 where it was reported that their recommendations had been implemented.

3.1.3 The following Table shows the Short Term and Long Term Sickness absence and the Year to Date BVPI 12 results, the profiled Year to Date BV12 Targets, and the Outturn Targets for each Service Area.

Area Name	FTE Per area	Short Term Sickness %	Long Term Sickness %	Year to Date BVPI - 12	Year to Date Target	Outturn Target
Borough Secretary	33.58	26.62%	73.38%	5.33	3.58	10.75
Landlord Services	195.21	29.33%	70.67%	5.49	4.08	12.24
Customers & Cultural Services	140.71	58.22%	41.78%	4.29	3.5	10.5
Regeneration, Enterprise and Planning Management	5.81	100.00 %	0.00%	1.2	0.5	1.5
Partnership Support	9.54	64.03%	35.97%	1.23	0.92	2.75
Chief Executive	5	100.00 %	0.00%	0.6	0.33	1
Strategic Housing	120.005	38.00%	62.00%	3.56	3.33	10
Customers & Communities Management	5.5	100.00 %	0.00%	0.2	0.34	1
Finance & Resources	154.62	61.35%	38.65%	2.95	3.17	9.5
Public Protection	49.86	26.95%	73.05%	3.43	3.75	11.25
Business Change	27.85	67.92%	32.08%	1.99	3.17	9.5
Planning	37.25	43.70%	56.30%	1.51	2.75	8.25
Resources Management	8.49	100.00 %	0.00%	1.47	3.17	9.5
Housing Management	3	100.00 %	0.00%	0	2.33	7
Regeneration and Development	23.43	33.83%	66.17%	0.9	3.42	10.25
<b>NBC Corporate Position</b>	<b>828.235</b>	<b>41.82%</b>	<b>58.18%</b>	<b>3.72</b>	<b>3.33</b>	<b>10</b>

#### **Note**

1. Chief Executive covers the direct reports to the Chief Executive
2. Customers and Communities includes the secretarial support as well as the direct reports to the Director
3. Resources Management includes the secretarial support as well as the direct reports to the Director
4. Housing Management includes the secretarial support as well as the direct reports to the Director
5. Planning and Regeneration includes the secretarial support as well as the direct reports to the Director
6. Short-Term Absence - Absences that are intermittent and sporadic and are usually unconnected and normally last for a period of less than four weeks.
7. Long-term absence is normally defined as continuous absence of 4 weeks or more.

## **3.2 Issues**

3.2.1 Already in place is an absence policy, a strict adherence to return to work interviews after each absence and targets set for staff who hit specific absence triggers. However even though this good practice is being followed the absence statistic is still not achieving its performance target. Therefore a number of additional aspects are currently being undertaken.

3.2.2 Policy – policies are currently being reviewed to be considered whether any improvements can be undertaken. These are currently out to consultation with the Trade Unions.

3.2.3 Training – The e learning programme includes information for managers on managing absence which is sufficient for knowledge. However, anecdotal experience is pointing to reluctance by managers to have difficult

conversations with employees with regard to continued absence. The training programme has been reviewed and amended to include a focus on skills training for attendance at work, appraisal, recruitment and induction. Courses are being written and will be in place by November 2012. In the meantime HR are offering absence clinics for management groups to focus on method.

3.2.4 Health and Wellbeing – HR are identifying the major causes of short term / recurring absence – so far these include stress / mental health issues; muscular-skeletal issues; gastro-intestinal issues and migraines. The Firstcare nurses (this is our absence service) are being advised not to accept absences without referrals to Managers and to Health and Safety, they are also advising that employees with these conditions visit their GPs. Risk assessments are being undertaken for all employees reporting with stress and all longer term absences and managers are being advised of ways forward including adjustments to work; staggered returns to work and counselling support. This is beginning to show some success in returning people to work which will eventually creep into the rolling average figures.

3.2.5 Actions that have been taken so far from a health and wellbeing perspective are:

#### **Absence related to Mental Health issues**

Managers now complete a specific stress return to work form. Firstcare (absence system) indicates if there is a need to refer employees for Occupational Health or other support.

- Managers will complete the managers' checklist and contact HR Helpdesk for further support where necessary
- If the stress is work related, immediate intervention is undertaken from manager with support from Health, Safety & Wellbeing
- Managers are provided with a toolkit on pressure management, available on the intranet to all on managing mental health issues and also informs employees of voluntary organisation and further inf.
- An Action Plan is completed and used to support employees with mental health issues and used as a live document.

## **4. Background Papers**

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4.1 Absence Policy

4.2 Overview and Scrutiny Report – Absence Management

**Catherine Wilson, Head of Business Change – ext 7377**