

Agenda Item No: 7 **Report No:** 111/16
Report Title: Attendance Management Policy & Procedure Report
Report To: Employment Committee **Date:** 12 September 2016
Cabinet Member:
Ward(s) Affected: All
Report By: Helen Knight, HR Manager – Shared Service
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Purpose of Report:

- 1 To seek Employment Committee (LDC) and Cabinet (EBC) approval to implement a revised policy regarding attendance management.

Officers Recommendation(s):

- 2 To agree the implementation of this policy within the organisation.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 3 Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough Councils are committed to regularly reviewing HR policies to ensure they comply with current legislation, are based on ACAS best practice and are clear and concise for consistent application throughout the organisation.
- 3.1 Human Resources (HR) has been a Shared Service across both councils since 1 April 2015 and as part of the 'Stronger Together' Joint Transformation Programme we will be looking to align all HR policies across Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough in the coming years.

Information

- 4 Absence levels have been consistently high at Lewes District Council averaging at least 12 days per FTE per year over the last 5/6 years. This figure when benchmarked against other Local Authorities including those with their own in house Waste Services is considerably high. The Council has a target, which has not yet been achieved, of 9.5 days per FTE per year.
- 4.1 The management of sickness absence has and continues to be a priority within the organisation with close scrutiny and management by line managers and HR

to ensure absences are being dealt with fairly and consistently and that staff receive all appropriate support.

- 4.2** The revised policy will provide clarity for both staff and managers alike across both organisations regarding the expectations for all when a member of staff is absent from the workplace, the procedure that will be followed, and the support that is available.
- 4.3** In conjunction with the launch of this policy we will also be introducing a new Wellbeing offering across both Lewes and Eastbourne. This will enable us to coordinate and publicise the variety of different wellbeing options available for staff and to take a more holistic approach which should include being:
- proactive rather than reactive to the health and wellbeing of staff
 - focused on prevention of injuries and illness
 - effective in the management of staff returning to work following a period of absence
 - committed to creating a health and well-being culture that staff are fully engaged with
- 4.4** HR have organised training sessions across Eastbourne and Lewes which will be mandatory for all managers to attend regarding this new policy. We are conscious that Attendance Management can also touch on mental health conditions in some circumstances and in consideration of that we have also arranged for the mental health charity MIND to provide training for our managers on this subject. Although these sessions will be optional we have recommended that all managers attend and the aim of this course will be to refresh their knowledge of the major diagnoses within mental health and highlight signs and symptoms of work-related stress. They will be guided through the appropriate way in which staff suffering with poor mental health should be supported and managed.
- 4.5** HR continue to support managers with their close management of absence and will also continue to feedback to Employment Committee quarterly on sickness absence levels.
- 4.6** Members of both Lewes and Eastbourne Unison branches have provided helpful and constructive input to this revised policy which will also be supported by other policies (as named within) as well as written guidance for managers and training.

Financial Appraisal

- 5** There are no financial implications related to the implementation of this revised policy, although clearly there are financial implications associated with the high level of sickness absence currently experienced in Lewes District Council.

6 Legal Implications

- 6.1** The Legal Services Department have not been asked for comments.

7 Sustainability implications

I have not completed the Sustainability Implications Questionnaire as this Report is exempt from the requirement because it is a progress report/budget monitoring report/development control report

8 Equality Screening

- 8.1** An Equality and Fairness Analysis has been completed and is attached as a Background Paper to this report.

9 Background Papers

Eastbourne Borough and Lewes District Attendance Management Policy

Equality and Fairness Analysis of Attendance Management Policy