

Agenda Item No: 7

Report Title: Attendance Management Policy Review

Report To: Employment Committee **Date:** 5 March 2018

Ward(s) Affected: All

Report By: Helen Knight, Head of HR

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Purpose of Report:

- 1 To update the Employment Committee regarding the review of the Attendance Management Policy.

Officers Recommendation(s):

- 2 To note that a full review of the attendance management policy has been undertaken in collaboration with a wide variety of stakeholders and amendments made as a direct result.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 3 Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough Councils have jointly committed to bringing policies and procedures together as part of the Joint Transformation Programme (JTP) which is an important step towards aligning our people and business practices.
 - 3.1 The Attendance Management Policy was the first of the HR policies to be aligned in September 2016 and at that time Unison requested that a review be conducted once the policy was in operation.
 - 3.2 The policy has now been in use for 17 months and HR has collated feedback amongst the team, from managers using the policy and from Unison.

Information

- 4 Until September 2016 there were slightly differing arrangements in place across LDC, EBC and those staff formerly employed by Eastbourne Homes Limited (EHL) that were TUPE transferred to EBC on 1 August 2017. For example, each organisation was using slightly different triggers for each stage of the policy and slightly different definitions for short term absence and long term absence.

4.1 A wide range of users were consulted including HR Business Partners, Service Managers, Team Leaders, Heads of Service and Unison. The feedback included those who thought the policy was very clear and easy to follow and some that thought specific areas were not as clear as they could be. Unison submitted a written submission and have had a full written response.

4.2 The main points from the review are:

- The wording has been clarified or simplified where users have found it confusing. For example, one of the triggers was previously expressed as “2 continuous weeks” and this has been changed to “10 working days (based on full time hours)”.
- Unison felt the triggers were ‘too strict’. The triggers are part of the overall management process; they also offer opportunity for support to be put in place and reasonable adjustments considered. The 3 absences in 12 months trigger is widely regarded as best practice. Much advice and best practice also recommends the 2nd trigger should be after 8 days or more of absence, we agreed to make our policy 10 days or more for this trigger following lengthy discussion with Unison prior to the policy being finalised.
- Five further training sessions have been facilitated by HR (in addition to the ten run during 2016) for those who did not attend the original sessions or have only recently been promoted to a managerial role.
- HR Business Partners have monthly meetings with their managers within the organisation and attendance management is a standing item on the agenda for these meetings
- Managers have been reminded that this policy should be implemented consistently through the councils and that the policy already references adjustments for those staff that have a protected characteristic under equalities legislation.
- The introduction of the joint intranet across the council has assisted with simplifying the paperwork required as part of this policy.

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 level of sickness experienced within the councils.

Legal Implications

6 The Legal Services Department were consulted regarding the policy at that time that it was implemented.

Sustainability implications

7 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

Equality Screening

- 8 An Equality and Fairness Analysis was completed for this policy when it was implemented.

Appendix

- 9 Eastbourne Borough and Lewes District Attendance Management Policy.