

**Body:** CABINET

**Date:** September 2016

**Subject:** ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT – REVISED/UPDATED POLICY

**Report of:** Becky Cooke, Assistant Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development

**Ward(s):** ALL

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

**Contact:** Helen Knight, Human Resources Manager  
Telephone 01323 415063 or internally on Extension 5063

**Recommendations:** That Cabinet : Approve the implementation of this policy for recommendation to full Council.

## **1.0 Overview: Attendance Management**

Eastbourne Borough and Lewes District 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. Human Resources (HR) has been a Shared Service since 1 April 2015 and as part of the 'Stronger Together' Joint Transformation Programme we will be looking to align all HR policies across Eastbourne Borough and Lewes District Councils in the coming years.

## **2.0 Use of the Attendance Management Policy**

- 2.1 Absence levels at Eastbourne Borough Council have been consistently low in recent years averaging 5.5 days over the last 5 years. Conversely, 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.
- 2.2 The management of sickness absence has and continues to be a priority within the organisations 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.

- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 In conjunction with the launch of this policy we will also be introducing a new Wellbeing offering across both Eastbourne and Lewes. 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
- 2.5 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.
- 2.6 Members of both Eastbourne and Lewes 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.
- 2.7 Joint Staff approved this policy and supported its implementation at a meeting in July 2016.

### **3.0 Cabinet is asked to:**

Endorse the revised Attendance Management Policy and recommend its approval and implementation to the full Council

**Becky Cooke**  
**Assistant Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development**