

**Report Title:**            **Sickness Report**

**Report To:**            **Employment Committee**      **Date:**            **18 June 2018**

**Ward(s) Affected:**    **All**

**Report By:**            **Helen Knight**

**Contact Officer(s)-**   **Helen Knight**

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### **Purpose of Report:**

To update the Employment Committee regarding the council's sickness figures for the period Q4 2018/18 (January – March 2018).

### **Officers Recommendation(s):**

- 1      To note the Q4 figures and also the new sickness absence target for 2018/19 along with the new way in which the figures will be presented in the future.
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### **1      Reasons for Recommendations**

The Committee has asked for a regular item to be presented regarding the absence statistics within the council.

### **2      Information**

- 2.1    The average number of days' absence per employee for Quarter 4 was 2.87. An excel spreadsheet showing the council's sickness figures for Q4 (1 January to 31 March) is attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.2    This means that the overall sickness for Lewes for the full year 2017/18 was 10.12 days, a decrease on 2016/17 which was 10.6 days per full time equivalent employee. Whilst this figure means that we did not meet our target of 9 days, we are pleased that we have continued the year-on-year reduction for the last 7 years.
- 2.3    Members may recall that in the previous report regarding Q3 we predicted there may be an increase in Q4 due to managers reporting that many staff were affected in January 2018 by significant viruses such as flu and vomiting. This increased our short term absence and is reflected in the overall Q4 figures.

- 2.4 Q4 had the highest level of absence of any quarter during 2017/18 although it is very slightly lower than the Q4 figure from 2016/17 which was 2.89. As demonstrated by Appendix 2 the reasons for absence continue to be varied with the most frequent reason for short term absence being colds and virus. Of the long term absences detailed during this quarter, the one person with stress and another with depression have both subsequently returned to work.
- 2.5 Management of sickness absence continues to be a priority within the organisation with close scrutiny and management by line managers and HR.
- 2.6 From 1 February 2017 the majority of employees have been employed by Eastbourne Borough Council so from Q1 of 2018/19, absence information will reflect our combined workforce and will no longer be split out separately to show those who used to be employed by Lewes District Council. HR will continue to maintain detailed absence rates across service areas and reasons for absence.
- 2.7 With the combined reporting in mind we have considered a new target for 2018/19. The sickness figures for both councils over previous years have been as follows:

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Lewes (in days per FTE)</b>	<b>Eastbourne (in days per FTE)</b>
2017/18	Target 9 Actual 10.25	Target 5.8 Actual 8.25
2016/17	Target 9 Actual 10.6	Target 5.8 Actual 5.75
2015/16	Target 9 Actual 11.26	Target 5.8 Actual 5.26
2014/15	Target 9 Actual 11.31	Target 5.8 Actual 5.1
2013/14	Target 10.5 Actual 11.5	Target 5.8 Actual 6.15
2012/13	Target 10.5 Actual 12.52	Target 5.8 Actual 5.27
2011/12	Target 11.5 Actual 12.24	Target 5.8 Actual 5.59

Some of our neighboring authorities record the following

<b>Authority</b>	<b>Days lost per FTE</b>		<b>Waste in house?</b>
Mid Sussex District Council	2015/16	8.85	No
	2016/17	8.36	
Brighton and Hove Council	2016/17	10.6	Yes
East Sussex County Council	2016/17	8.73	No
Horsham	2016/17	9	Yes
Arun District Council	2016/17	8.35	No
	2017/18	8.78	
Wealden District Council	2015/16	7.43	No
	2016/17	8.05	

- 2.8 These indicate that our previous observations that Lewes' sickness rates were higher than average and Eastbourne's were lower, have been correct.
- 2.9 It is also worth noting that none of the neighbouring authorities referenced above (aside from East Sussex County Council who have joined Orbis) have gone through the level of change that we have in recent years. Although we have not noticed any evidence of increased absence due to stress as a result of these restructures we have received feedback from Unison and staff to this affect.
- 2.10 Bearing in mind the absence totals of Lewes and Eastbourne over recent years and those of our neighbouring authorities with Waste Services we are suggesting a combined target for Lewes and Eastbourne of 9 days per FTE for the financial year 2018/19. 9 has been the annual target for Lewes since 2014 and although we have not met it we can see from the table above that there has been a gradual reduction year-on-year.
- 2.11 We would anticipate being able to reduce the target to 8 days for 2019/20 and this will be kept under review over the next 12 months.

### **3 Financial Appraisal**

- 3.1 The financial implications of this report are the number of working days lost to sickness.

### **4 Legal Implications**

- 4.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report

## **5 Risk Management Implications**

- 5.1 I have completed the Risk Management Implications questionnaire and this report is exempt from the requirement because it is a progress report/budget monitoring report/development control report

## **6 Equality Screening**

- 6.1 Equality analysis is not required as this is an information only report with no key decisions attached.

## **7 Background Papers**

None

## **8 Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix 1 Excel spreadsheet showing the Council's sickness figures for Quarter 4 (1 January to 31 March)
- 8.2 Appendix 2 Excel Spreadsheet showing reasons for absence (by service area) during Quarter 4.