

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Staff Governance
DATE	1 November 2018
REPORT TITLE	Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing policy
REPORT NUMBER	RES/18/191
DIRECTOR	Steven Whyte
CHIEF OFFICER	Morven Spalding
REPORT AUTHOR	Keith Tennant
TERMS OF REFERENCE	Purpose of Committee 5 Remit of Committee 3.1

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.0 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the attached Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing policy to replace the existing Maximising Attendance policy.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee: -

- 2.1 approves the attached Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing policy to replace the existing Maximising Attendance policy; to take effect from 1 January 2019, to allow for necessary training and other administrative arrangements to be completed.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The current Maximising Attendance policy was put in place in 2010 and was revised in 2014 and was therefore due a further review under the rolling programme of HR policy reviews.
- 3.2 A key aim of the new policy will be to contribute towards reducing sickness absence levels in the Council. One of the Council's statutory performance indicators (SPIs) relates to sickness absence, measured as average days lost per employee.
- 3.3 The Council's overall figure for 2016/17 was 10.3 average days lost per employee and for 2017/18 was 9.9 average days lost per employee; a reduction of 0.4 average days lost per employee over the two years.

- 3.4 It should be noted that 46% of employees had no sickness absence in 2016/17 and 47% of employees had no sickness absence in 2017/18. The new policy should help to maintain the attendance of those employees and support other employees who may have to take time off work due to sickness absence.
- 3.5 From the review it was identified that a new policy was required going forward to meet current organisational needs, with it to be as supportive as possible towards employees. The review involved the trades unions with early discussions having taken place on the proposed features of the new policy.
- 3.6 It was highlighted that the policy put in place by the Bon Accord Companies in May 2017 was an example of good practice, with it having an emphasis on the supportive aspects of attendance management and with absence managed through one process rather than divided into short and long term.
- 3.7 It was identified that it had been operating effectively to date since its introduction and has contributed (along with other measures) to an improvement in the Bon Accord Companies' levels of sickness absence, with average days lost per employee in 2016/17 having been 13.2 days, and average days lost per employee in 2017/18 having been 10.9 days; a 2.3 day per employee reduction.
- 3.8 It was decided therefore to base the design of the Council's new policy on the Bon Accord Companies' policy with the compilation of a document to meet the Council's current needs and in accordance with the requirements of the Target Operating Model.
- 3.9 A reduction in sickness absence would likely lead to less overtime being worked, less agency usage, an increase in productivity and reduction in employment costs. This should in turn lead to the provision of better service to Council customers.
- 3.10 Appropriate training will be put in place on the new policy to help ensure that managers are familiar with its operation, so that they understand their responsibilities. This should enable them to better support employees through the process where absence occurs.
- 3.11 Administrative arrangements are currently being designed, including relevant letters and forms, and consideration given to how the new Core HR system can be utilised in the process (with the Your HR system to no longer be used). In addition, there will be a designated page on the new People and Organisation portal covering employee wellbeing and how to deal with absence.
- 3.12 To allow time for the work mentioned under 3.10 and 3.11 above to be undertaken, the implementation date of the new policy will be 1 January 2019.
- 3.13 The key differences between the existing policy and the proposed new policy are detailed below.

- 3.131 The policy and procedure will be contained in one document rather than there being separate guidance notes. This should make it easier for managers and employees to understand the policy and their responsibilities under it.
- 3.132 There will now be one process for managing both short and long-term absence, rather than separate processes for each. This should help ensure that absence is managed more efficiently, particularly in cases where there is a combination of short and longer-term absence.
- 3.133 There will be a single absence trigger level in the new policy which will be 10 days or more and/or 3 occasions of absence over any 12-month period. In the current policy there is a second trigger point of 15 days or more and/or 5 occasions of absence over a 24-month period. This change will make the policy more straightforward to administer and easier to understand.
- 3.134 There is more of an emphasis in the new policy on managers and employees working together to identify solutions in relation to an employee's absence.
- 3.135 There is also more of an emphasis on preventative measures to employee absence and looking at employee wellbeing with reference in the policy to employee good health initiatives, the Counselling Service and flexible working options.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation in this report. The cost of officer time in implementing the policy, including the training and administrative arrangements will be met through existing budgets. Savings to overtime and agency staff costs may accrue if the new policy achieves its aim of contributing towards reductions in levels of sickness absence in the Council. Absence figures will be monitored going forward to identify the effectiveness of the new policy.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendation in this report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

	Risk	Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)	Mitigation
Financial	If the new policy were not approved, then it may be the case that	N/A	The approval of the new policy will mitigate this risk.

	anticipated future reductions in sickness absence and associated savings may not accrue.		
Legal	There is no legal risk.	N/A	N/A
Employee	If the new policy were not approved, then employees would not benefit from there being in place a policy with a more supportive tone and content than the existing policy and hence improvements in employee health and wellbeing may not accrue.	N/A	The approval of the new policy will mitigate this risk.
Customer	If the new policy were not approved; which is anticipated to assist in reducing levels of sickness absence in the Council; then customers may be adversely affected with fewer employees available to provide services at any time.	N/A	The approval of the new policy will mitigate this risk.
Environment	There is no environmental risk.	N/A	N/A
Technology	There is no technological risk.	N/A	N/A
Reputational	There is no reputational risk to the Council.	N/A	N/A

7. OUTCOMES

Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes	
	Impact of Report
Prosperous Economy	Links with the 'Prosperous Economy' theme in the Local Outcome Improvement Plan; as having as supportive and effective absence management

	policy in place will assist with employee morale, demonstrating the Council as a caring employer. Levels of morale are linked to productivity, resource efficiency and the delivery of cost effective services. As the Council plays a key role in fostering an environment where the local economy can thrive having an engaged workforce delivering cost effective services is a key requirement.
Prosperous People	N/A
Prosperous Place	N/A
Enabling Technology	N/A

Design Principles of Target Operating Model	
	Impact of Report
Customer Service Design	N/A
Organisational Design	N/A
Governance	N/A
Workforce	Links to the 'Workforce' design principle in that having a policy in place that is supportive and enables the early addressing of sickness absence issues, will help ensure that the Council has an engaged workforce with high levels of attendance, contributing positively to its outcomes and service to customers. It will also assist in creating a positive culture and hence with the retention of employees.
Process Design	N/A
Technology	N/A
Partnerships and Alliances	N/A

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment	Full EHRIA required. No adverse equality or human rights issues were identified from the assessment.

Privacy Impact Assessment	Not required
Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty	Not applicable

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Bon Accord Care Supporting Attendance and Supporting Wellbeing policies.

10. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Supporting Attendance and Wellbeing policy

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Name Keith Tennant
Title Policy and Advice Officer
Email Address ktennant@aberdeencity.gov.uk
Tel 01224 - 523094