

Agenda Item No: 4

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny (Resources)

Date of Meeting: 10th March 2009

Report Title: Scrutiny Review of Sickness Absence Management

Report By: Verna Connolly
Head of Personnel & Organisational Development

Purpose of Report

To present the final report of the scrutiny review of sickness absence management

Recommendation(s)

- 1. The committee approve the report and its action plan and submit it to Cabinet.**

Reasons for Recommendations

To acknowledge the effectiveness of the councils sickness absence management.

It is not possible to publish the main report on the Internet due to the complex images it contains. If you require a copy, please contact Katrina Silverson on 01424 451747 or email ksilverson@hastings.gov.uk

Background

Executive Summary

- 1.0 A Scrutiny Review to examine the effectiveness of HBC's sickness absence management was included in the 2008/2009 Overview and Scrutiny annual work programme. The review fell within the focus of the Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Councillors Bird (chair), Webb, Martin, and Lock were appointed to carry out the review and were supported by an officer team.
- 1.2 The agreed terms of reference for the review were to consider the effectiveness of absence management by:
 - a. Comparing HBC to other local authorities
 - b. Considering current policies and procedures
 - c. Examining the Personnel IT system (Trent) and the sick absence management process ("Bradford Factor")
 - d. Seeking evidence from other bodies on impact of absence management.
 - e. Considering proposals for future absence management
- 1.3 The Scrutiny Review team met on 3 occasions.
- 1.4 A report on current absence management was provided by HBC Personnel and Organisational Development (POD) and considered at the first meeting.
- 1.5 The review team, at their request, also met with a senior occupational health advisor and trade union representatives for additional information and consultation (see appendices i and j).
- 1.6 Having considered the comments from the previous meeting the panel met again for further interviews with POD and trade union representatives and agreed a set of recommendations for the final report.
- 1.7 In drawing together its conclusions the Review Team found that;
 1. HBC POD works closely and effectively with the Trade Unions in developing its policies and procedures and has an effective consultation process.
 2. HR has a robust absence management process and that the Trent system and the "Bradford Factor" have been instrumental in reducing absence at the authority.
 3. The Benenden Healthcare scheme should be extended to members.
 4. The Employee Assistance Programme should be extended to members.
- 1.8 An action plan is included at page 6 of the main report.

Wards Affected

None

Area(s) Affected

None

Policy Implications

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	No
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	No
Risk Management	Yes
Environmental Issues	No
Economic/Financial Implications	No
Human Rights Act	No
Organisational Consequences	Yes

Supporting Documents

Appendix 1 - Final report and Action plan

Officer to Contact

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