

## **WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

### **Report by the Head of Human Resources & Organisational Development**

**Joint Consultative Forum – 16 December 2011**

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**Subject: Attendance Management Policy – Review**

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** To provide the Joint Consultative Forum (JCF) with information relating to the implementation of the Attendance Management Policy and planned review of the Attendance Management Policy

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1** The Attendance Management Policy was implemented on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2011 following approval by the Corporate and Efficient Governance Committee, with a review of the Policy to be carried out in March 2012.
- 2.2** The policy was implemented following a review of the previous Maximising Attendance Policy and developed to provide a consistent and clear framework which will result in a positive improvement in the management of sickness absence. Whilst the trades unions recognised the need for a review of the policy and were fully consulted during policy development, there were several elements of the policy on which the trade unions voiced concerns, and these were raised at the JCF in September 2011.
- 2.3** A report was requested to be submitted to the next JCF in December 2011 to update the Forum on the implementation of the Policy and plans for the review.

#### **3. Main Issues**

- 3.1** The Attendance Management Policy was implemented on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2011. To support implementation of the policy, a comprehensive programme of line manager training and staff briefing sessions was rolled out.

##### Line Manager Training

- 3.2** A 2 hour session was devised for line managers detailing the key differences between the Maximising Attendance Policy and the new Attendance Management Policy. The session also includes case studies

to demonstrate management of absence in accordance with the new policy.

Since 1<sup>st</sup> September 2011, 36 Training sessions were carried out covering a total of 400 line managers. Sessions were predominantly delivered in the HR & OD Training Suite in Garshake, but manager sessions were also carried out at:

- Clydebank High School
- St Peter the Apostle
- Vale of Leven Academy

Training on Attendance Management will be delivered as part of a suite of line manager training on a quarterly basis.

### Staff Briefing Sessions

- 3.3** A one hour session was designed as a presentation to advise staff of the key elements of the new policy and to explain the new standards required. The presentation was supplemented by a Quick Guide and an FAQ. During the period a total of 28 sessions were delivered.

1300 employees signed in as attendees at the sessions. Sessions were predominantly held in the Council Chambers in Council Headquarters and were also arranged at the following locations:

- The Hub CE Centre, Clydebank
- Clydebank High School
- St Peter the Apostle High School
- Dumbarton Day Centre
- Vale of Leven Academy
- Alexandria CE Centre
- Richmond Street Depot
- Dumbarton Library
- St Martin's Primary School

A briefing session was also delivered to trade union representatives.

### Policy Review

- 3.4** The Policy is to be reviewed in March 2012, this will give a full 6 months of the policy in operation to gather sufficient data for review. The review will be undertaken by a Project Team and will involve the following:

- Survey of line managers (including follow up interviews) to establish how the new policy is being applied and to monitor consistency

- Focus Groups with trades unions- enables better targeting of key areas of concerns
- Survey to establish if the policy is fully understood by staff and monitor consistency
- Review of metrics - absence statistics and associated discipline and grievance statistics
- Occupational Health Referrals – review of referral rates and early intervention
- Findings of review and Recommendations for revision

#### **4. People Issues**

- 4.1** The review will fully consider the impact of the new policy upon employees including a study on the fair and consistent application of the policy.

#### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1** There are no financial implications of carrying out a review of the policy as this will be conducted in-house.

#### **6. Risk Analysis**

- 6.1** The absence of an effective absence management framework adversely impacts upon our service delivery and employee morale. Significant financial costs associated with high absence levels are a particular risk to the Council in the current financial climate. Conducting a policy review will ensure that the policy is fit for purpose.

#### **7. Equalities, Health & Human Rights Impact Assessment (EIA)**

- 7.1** An initial impact screening identified a potential negative impact on specific equalities groups: disability; pregnancy / maternity & health, gender. The Policy has been developed to ensure a range of reasonable adjustments have been incorporated to alleviate any negative impact. The review will consider if there has been any negative impact.

#### **8. Strategic Assessment**

##### Fit for Purpose Services

- 8.1** Review of the Attendance Management Policy is required to ensure that critical employment policy is fit for purpose.

## **9. Conclusions and Recommendations**

- 9.1** The Attendance Management Policy was implemented on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2011 supported by a comprehensive programme of Training and Briefing sessions. Follow up manager sessions will continue to be delivered as part of a structured training programme supported by Organisational Development.
- 9.2** The Attendance Management Policy will be reviewed March 2012, 6 months after the policy has been in operation.
- 9.3** The JCF is asked to note the contents of this report and the actions which will be undertaken to review the Attendance Management Policy.

**Tricia O'Neill,  
Head of Human Resources & Organisational Development**

**Person to Contact:** Tracy Keenan, Lead HR Adviser, Corporate Services  
– Human Resources & Organisational Development,  
Garshake Road, Dumbarton.  
Contact: (01389) 737687  
Email: [tracy.keenan@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:tracy.keenan@west-dunbarton.gov.uk)

**Appendices:** None

**Background Papers:** None

**Wards Affected:** Not applicable