



## **Report to JCSC**

**Subject**      Sickness Management

**Date**         28<sup>th</sup> February 2007

**Author**       Head of Personnel and Organisational Development

### **1. Purpose of the Report**

To advise Members of the JCSC of the actions taken to improve attendance levels since the last meeting.

### **2. Background**

At the last meeting of the JCSC Members considered proposals from the Chief Executive to change the absence management procedures in order to bring about an improvement in attendance levels. The recommendations from the JCSC were approved by Personnel and Resources Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2006.

The Members of the JCSC also requested that there be a further meeting of the JCSC to receive a report relating to the ongoing management of absence, and that Managers discuss the issue with the Trade Union representatives.

#### **1. Meeting with Trade Unions**

Following the JCSC meeting, there was a meeting between the Head of Personnel and Organisational Development, representatives of the Personnel Section, the Chair of UNISON and departmental Union representatives, including a representative from Direct Services. There was an open discussion about the concerns that absence levels appear to be increasing and what ideas could be proposed to address these.

The main issues discussed were:

- Genuineness of absence – sometimes it is suggested that an employee is not really ill. It was emphasised that when an employee reports sickness

then it must be taken that they are too ill to work. If there were any evidence that they are not ill, then this would potentially be a disciplinary matter to be investigated.

- Use of 3 days leave as 'duvet days' – this proposal from the Trade Unions was discussed, it would enable employees to use up to 3 days of their leave for short-notice absence. There were concerns about this, as it would affect minimum staffing levels for crews and customer service at holiday times and also during inclement weather.
- Self-managed teams – under this proposal teams of employees would be responsible for achieving pre-determined targets each day or week, and if a member of the team was absent, they would take action to replace them, or complete the work with reduced resources. This might have implications for job grades, and could have consequences for working relationships.

No specific actions were agreed as a consequence of this meeting, but the discussion was helpful in terms of sharing ideas and concerns.

## 2. Management Training

Since the agreement to the change in the sickness management procedure there has been a briefing to all managers. All Section Heads were invited to one of three briefings. The briefings covered a range of employment issues, and one part was to particularly remind managers of their responsibilities in managing absence and to explain the changes to the procedure. All managers were given brief guidance notes about their responsibilities and also a flow chart describing the absence management procedure – a copy of this is attached.

In addition to this briefing, an external trainer has been commissioned to deliver a course, originally provided by APSE on positive attendance. This course aims to give managers confidence in carrying out return to work interviews, investigating absence and encouraging attendance. Over the two courses, 30 managers have attended from several departments, and particularly those who manage large teams.

## 3. Sickness Information

The latest outturn for days lost over the past 12 months is 10.36 per employee (up to January 2007). This represents an improvement when compared to earlier in 2006, and is also a reduction on the days lost from the end of 2005/06 which was 10.87. This may be indicative of the increased interest and attention which is being paid to sickness absence rather than the impact of the change in policy. The actual days lost for January 2007 does show an increase on previous months, but is very close to the days lost in January 2006. It is pleasing to note this improvement although it is unlikely the final out turn for 2006/07 will reach the target of 9.5 days.

Attached as appendix 2 is the latest management information which shows the days lost by department for the last 12 months and the overall figure. Appendix 3 shows the breakdown of absence by department into long term (20 or more days) and short term for the month of December, and Appendix 4 is the latest trend graph. This report gives an indication of the nature of the absence and will inform how managers take action. Other information that is sent out, lists all employees who have had absence in the month, and all employees who have triggered the absence management procedures in the previous 12 months.

These reports are sent to Heads of Service during the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of each month after the sickness information has been input onto payroll.

#### 4. Absence Management Reporting Service

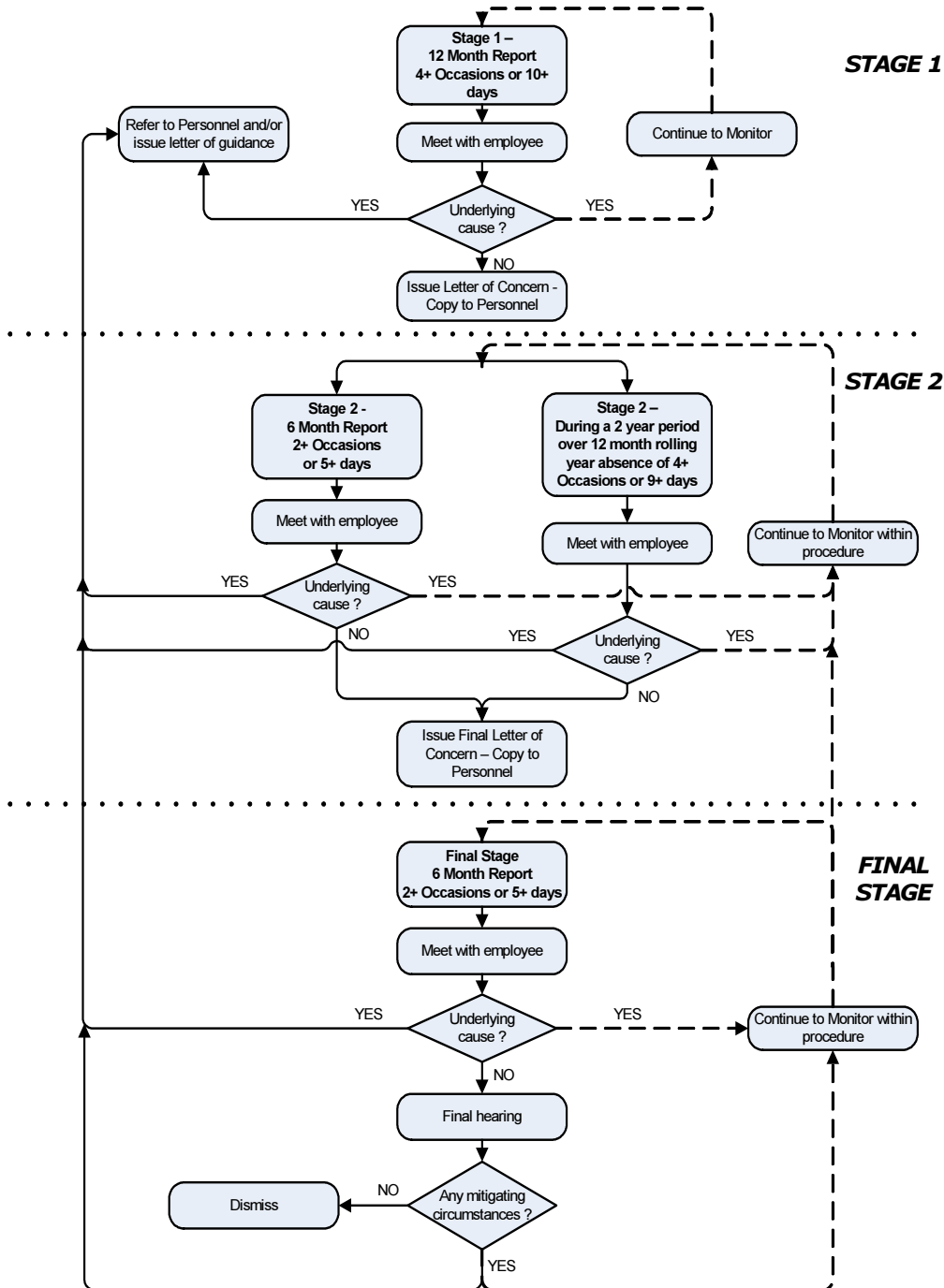
One of the proposals in the Chief Executive's report was to investigate the use of an absence management reporting service. These companies generally offer a 24/7 phone contact arrangement for employees to report absence and then a direct contact to the line manager by phone or SMS text message.

There have been initial discussions with one company, and a further company has been identified which may be able to offer the same service. Consideration of this approach is continuing with SMT, although it may be appropriate to delay this to assess the impact of the recent changes on attendance levels.

#### 3. **Recommendation**

It is recommended that Members consider the progress made on improving attendance levels since the last meeting of this Committee.

**SICKNESS MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE**



**Managers Notes**

- If at any stage there is evidence of disability or underlying cause of absence, seek further advice from Personnel and/or Occupational Health.
- The next stage in the procedure is activated once the relevant trigger is reached and the employee appears on the relevant report.
- Example 4+ means 4 or more; 10+ means 10 or more.

Appendix 2

Service	Section	Fte At Start	Fte At End	Average Fte	No Emps Sick FTE	FTE Days Lost	FTE Days Lost per FTE
Chief Executive		5.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	21.50	4.30
Service Total:		5.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	21.50	4.30
Head of Cabinet Office	Cabinet Unit - Policy	3.00	2.81	2.91	3.81	63.19	21.75
	Cabinet Unit Support	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	12.35	7.37
	Communications	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	8.00	2.67
	Community Partnerships	6.00	5.00	5.50	3.00	66.00	12.00
	Head of Cabinet Office	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	8.00	8.00
Service Total:		14.68	13.49	14.08	12.49	157.54	11.19
Head of Direct Services	Business Support	14.51	16.70	15.61	8.27	73.46	4.71
	Fleet, Refuse and Recycling	56.41	56.86	56.64	45.00	1112.89	19.65
	Head of Direct Services	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00		
	Parks and Street Care	36.62	44.62	40.62	26.30	715.11	17.60
	Technical Services	6.18	6.57	6.37	4.18	17.98	2.82
Service Total:		114.72	125.76	120.24	83.74	1919.44	15.96
Head of Finance	DIP Team	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00		
	Financial Services	13.11	15.72	14.41	10.97	133.51	9.26
	Head of Finance	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	7.50	7.50
	Housing Benefits	29.40	33.46	31.43	22.42	341.42	10.86
	Resource Services	2.50	3.50	3.00	2.00	4.50	1.50

	Revenues	29.18	31.88	30.53	25.45	245.48	8.04
Service Total:		76.18	86.55	81.37	61.84	732.41	9.00
Head of Housing	Departmental Support	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00		
	Head of Housing	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00		
	Housing Management	10.03	15.53	12.78	9.82	102.31	8.01
	Housing North Team	23.49	22.49	22.99	18.39	249.21	10.84
	Housing South Team	31.09	34.58	32.83	22.65	703.48	21.43
	Public Property	8.00	8.00	8.00	4.00	42.00	5.25
Service Total:		74.60	82.59	78.60	54.87	1097.00	13.96
Head of Legal and Democratic Services	Democratic Services	7.71	7.71	7.71	0.61	6.08	0.79
	Departmental Support	1.04	1.04	1.04	0.54	7.57	7.27
	Estates and Valuation	1.00	0.00	0.50	2.00	2.00	4.00
	Head of Legal and Democratic Services	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00		
	Legal Services	5.35	4.61	4.98	3.00	25.41	5.10
Service Total:		16.10	14.36	15.23	6.15	41.06	2.70
Head of Leisure services	Facilities Team	79.30	83.87	81.58	56.96	481.93	5.91
	Finance and Administration	4.65	7.65	6.15	5.00	62.00	10.08
	Head of Leisure services	1.00	2.00	1.50	1.00	1.00	0.67
	Resources	8.14	11.14	9.64	9.04	121.50	12.61
Service Total:		93.08	104.65	98.87	72.00	666.43	6.74
Head of Personnel and Organisational Dev	Departmental Support	1.61	1.54	1.57	1.00	1.00	0.64

	Head of Personnel and Organisational Dev	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00		
	Information Technology	13.74	12.74	13.24	8.00	26.50	2.00
	Personnel	5.34	3.34	4.34	3.34	43.05	9.93
	Safety	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00		
	Scrutiny	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	3.00
Service Total:		23.69	20.62	22.16	13.34	73.55	3.32
Head of Planning and Environment	Administration	3.84	3.84	3.84	2.37	18.21	4.74
	Building Control	9.51	8.51	9.01	7.51	119.35	13.24
	Departmental Support	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	9.00	9.00
	Development Control	10.32	14.38	12.35	6.65	47.74	3.87
	Environmental Protection	11.68	12.81	12.24	7.50	32.18	2.63
	Food, Health and Safety	11.12	10.96	11.04	6.50	84.15	7.62
	Head of Planning and Environment	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
	Local Plans	6.46	8.27	7.36	6.68	26.78	3.64
Service Total:		54.94	60.78	57.86	39.21	338.42	5.85
		11.23	11.05	11.14	1.58	180.51	16.20
Service Total:		11.23	11.05	11.14	1.58	180.51	16.20
Grand Total:		484.22	524.85	504.54	348.21	5227.86	10.36

Appendix 3

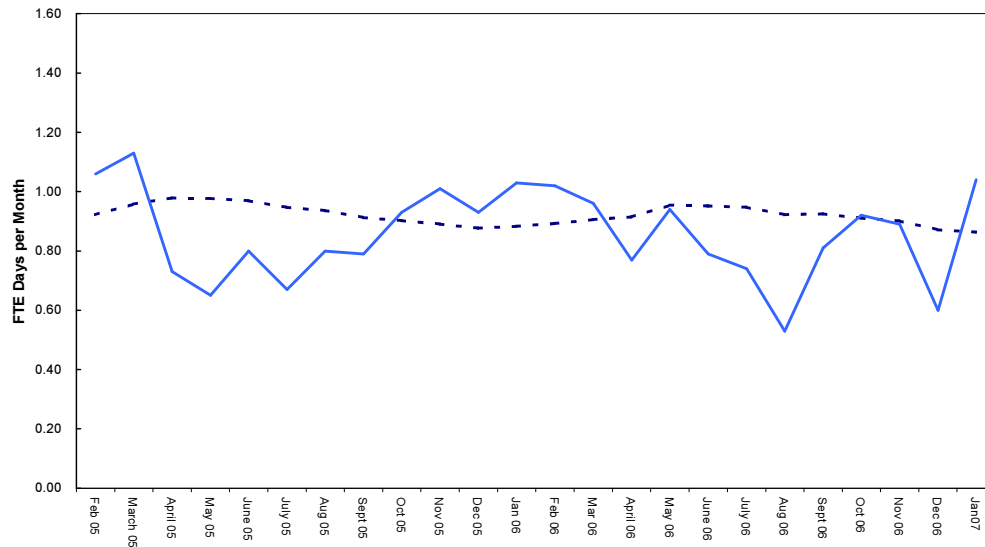
Head of Service	Section	No Occurrences Long Term	Total No Occurrences Absent	Long Term FTE Days Lost	Total FTE Days Lost	Long Term as a % of Days Lost	Long Term as a % of Occurrences
Chief Executive		0	2	0.00	6.85	0.00%	0.00%
Head of Service Total:		0	2	0.00	6.85	0.00%	0.00%
Head of Cabinet Office	Cabinet Unit Support	0	2	0.00	9.48	0.00%	0.00%
	Communications	0	1	0.00	0.98	0.00%	0.00%
	Community Partnerships	0	1	0.00	1.96	0.00%	0.00%
Head of Service Total:		0	4	0.00	12.42	0.00%	0.00%
Head of Direct Services	Business Support	0	2	0.00	5.87	0.00%	0.00%
	Fleet, Refuse and Recycling	2	13	44.03	91.89	47.91%	15.38%
	Parks and Street Care	2	4	36.15	43.19	83.70%	50.00%
Head of Service Total:		4	19	80.18	140.95	56.88%	21.05%
Head of Finance	Financial Services	0	6	0.00	13.61	0.00%	0.00%
	Housing Benefits	1	13	22.50	76.28	29.50%	7.69%
	Resource Services	0	3	0.00	4.89	0.00%	0.00%
	Revenues	0	11	0.00	62.68	0.00%	0.00%
Head of Service Total:		1	33	22.50	157.46	14.29%	3.03%
Head of Housing	Housing Management	0	3	0.00	15.65	0.00%	0.00%
	Housing North Team	0	5	0.00	19.02	0.00%	0.00%
	Housing South Team	3	32	41.90	76.94	54.46%	9.38%
Head of Service Total:		3	40	41.90	111.61	37.54%	7.50%
Head of Legal and Democratic Services	Democratic Services	0	2	0.00	5.92	0.00%	0.00%



	Departmental Support	0	1	0.00	7.57	0.00%	0.00%
	Legal Services	0	2	0.00	2.90	0.00%	0.00%
Head of Service Total:		0	5	0.00	16.39	0.00%	0.00%
Head of Leisure services	Facilities Team	0	24	0.00	58.19	0.00%	0.00%
	Finance and Administration	0	3	0.00	3.91	0.00%	0.00%
	Resources	0	4	0.00	9.18	0.00%	0.00%
Head of Service Total:		0	31	0.00	71.28	0.00%	0.00%
Head of Personnel and Organisational Dev	Information Technology	0	3	0.00	5.87	0.00%	0.00%
Head of Service Total:		0	3	0.00	5.87	0.00%	0.00%
Head of Planning and Environment	Administration	0	1	0.00	3.24	0.00%	0.00%
	Building Control	0	4	0.00	11.74	0.00%	0.00%
	Departmental Support	0	1	0.00	3.91	0.00%	0.00%
	Development Control	0	1	0.00	0.98	0.00%	0.00%
	Environmental Protection	0	2	0.00	15.65	0.00%	0.00%
	Food, Health and Safety	0	4	0.00	14.21	0.00%	0.00%
	Local Plans	0	2	0.00	5.87	0.00%	0.00%
Head of Service Total:		0	15	0.00	55.61	0.00%	0.00%
Grand Total:		8	152	144.58	578.45	24.99%	0.604



## Appendix 4



— FTE Days per FTE in Current Month  
 - - - 12 Month Rolling Average

Month	Total Absence (%)	Days In Month	No of FTE Staff	Available Days (Total)	Days Lost (Total)	12 Month Average (%)	FTE Days per FTE in Current Month	FTE Days per FTE 12 Month Average	FTE Days per FTE Per Month Average
Feb 05	5.29	20.00	566.85	11337	600.32	4.44	1.06	11.07	0.92
March 05	5.36	21.00	561.50	11792	633.12	4.60	1.13	11.49	0.96
April 05	3.49	21.00	523.88	11001	384.90	4.55	0.73	11.75	0.98
May 05	3.24	20.00	527.58	10552	342.35	4.52	0.65	11.72	0.98
June 05	3.63	22.00	525.11	11552	419.81	4.50	0.80	11.63	0.97
July 05	3.21	21.00	528.70	11103	356.81	4.42	0.67	11.36	0.95
Aug 05	4.51	22.00	526.40	11581	522.17	4.46	0.80	11.24	0.94
Sept 05	4.82	22.00	530.43	11669	562.30	4.49	0.79	10.95	0.91
Oct 05	4.42	21.00	526.94	11066	489.40	4.44	0.93	10.83	0.90
Nov 05	4.59	22.00	530.41	11669	535.43	4.45	1.01	10.69	0.89
Dec 05	4.91	19.00	524.86	9972	490.01	4.44	0.93	10.52	0.88
Jan 06	4.92	21.00	522.50	10973	539.46	4.37	1.03	10.60	0.88
Feb 06	5.12	20.00	524.50	10490	536.82	4.35	1.02	10.71	0.89
Mar 06	4.18	23.00	524.04	12053	503.53	4.25	0.96	10.87	0.91
April 06	4.27	18.00	522.14	9399	401.71	4.32	0.77	10.97	0.91
May 06	4.47	21.00	512.76	10768	481.57	4.42	0.94	11.46	0.96
June 06	3.58	22.00	511.26	11248	402.14	4.42	0.79	11.42	0.95
July 06	3.54	21.00	517.79	10874	384.99	4.44	0.74	11.37	0.95
Aug 06	2.40	22.00	527.69	11609	278.48	4.27	0.53	11.07	0.92
Sept 06	3.88	21.00	520.33	10927	423.68	4.19	0.81	11.10	0.93
Oct 06	4.20	22.00	519.97	11439	480.76	4.17	0.92	10.93	0.91
Nov 06	4.04	22.00	524.96	11549	467.12	4.13	0.89	10.82	0.90
Dec 06	3.14	19.00	522.23	9922	311.21	3.98	0.60	10.45	0.87
Jan 07	4.73	22.00	521.26	11468	542.54	3.96	1.04	10.36	0.86