Agenda Item 7

Leicestershire County Council

EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE – 23 OCTOBER 2013

MANAGING ATTENDANCE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES

Purpose of Report

1.   The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update in relation to absence management across the Council.

Background

2   Normal practice at this time of year would be to present a report showing performance as at the end of Quarter 1, and compare this to previous quarters. The Committee will recall that at the last meeting on 11 July, it was noted that absence in Quarter 4 of 2012/13 had risen to an average of 9.22 days per FTE (full-time employee), but that, due to the previous way of recording reported sickness absence, there was some concern about the accuracy of the figures.

3.   The Council made changes to the Oracle self-service system effective from 1 April 2013, and managers have been recording sickness absence directly onto the system. In parallel with this, a new reporting methodology is being introduced. In relation to sickness absence, this will give managers access to 'real time' reports, together with more accurate data regarding absence levels and patterns.

4.   The reports are currently going through a final process of testing to ensure that they are fit for purpose, and it is anticipated that they will be rolled out to HR and managers within the next two months. This means that we are not in a position to provide Quarter 1 reporting information to the Committee.

5.   The Committee had also requested that wider analysis be carried out and benchmarking data provided ie. to assess whether other similar organisations were experiencing similar trends to those reported for Quarter 4 of 2012/13.

6.   The benchmarking work is underway, and it is proposed that this is presented as soon as the Council's own data is available. It is anticipated that Quarter 2 20013/14 data and analysis will be available for the next meeting of the Committee in December.

Current action

7. Officers have set up a steering group which is pulling together all relevant strands of activity including recording of data, reporting, benchmarking, active management of cases and training for managers

8. Dedicated HR resources are working closely with managers to ensure that 'active' cases are proactively managed and progressed.

9. As soon as data is available, a 'star chamber' process will be set up to focus with managers on specific cases, preventative work, and to ensure that they are accountable for actively contributing to the reduction of sickness absence levels.

10. The Committee is asked to note the associated report on the quantitative and qualitative review of the Mental Health First Aid programme.

Conclusion

11. It is essential that sickness absence is accurately recorded and reported on across the Council, and officers are confident that as the new process becomes more embedded, it will underpin the robust approach set out above.

Recommendation

12. That the current position in relation to reporting, together with the ongoing actions to reduce sickness absence be noted.

Background Papers

None.

Circulation under Local Issues Alert Procedures

None.

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Equal Opportunities Implications

None.