
Report to: Partnership and Performance Committee

Date of Meeting: 29 August 2019

**Subject: Maximising Attendance and Employee Wellbeing –
Action Plan 2019/20**

Report by: Strategic Director (People)

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1. This report outlines actions currently being taken to continue to promote measures and approaches to maximise attendance and employee wellbeing across Clackmannanshire Council.

2.0 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the report, commenting and challenging as appropriate.

3.0 Background

- 3.1. In February 2019, the Chief Executive and Strategic Director (Partnership and Performance) attended the Local Government and Communities Committee at Scottish Parliament. The Committee's main focus was on absenteeism in local authorities, the extent to which it inhibits councils in delivering services and realising goals and how councils are tackling this. The outputs of this meeting form part of the Committee's overall year-round scrutiny of the challenges facing councils, especially in terms of resources and budgeting which will then in turn lead to a report to the Scottish Parliament.
- 3.2. Compared to other Councils, the average FTE days lost in Clackmannanshire Council remains high. In 2017/2018, the indicative absence cost to the Council was over £2 million with the average number of days lost for Council employees (excluding teachers) being 16.8 and for teachers 9.1 days. Whilst these statistics are undoubtedly concerning, it is useful to consider them more broadly given the small size of the Council, as analysis of "time lost" shows that Clackmannanshire is not top, and across those who have returned this specific data, the levels are broadly similar. It is also important to note that the council is committed to adhering to national terms and conditions related to sick pay in order to support our employees whilst absent.

- 3.3. An Internal Audit Review of Sickness Absence 2018/19 was recently completed as part of our 2018/19 Internal Audit coverage, agreed by the Audit and Finance Committee on 15 March 2018. This report contains recommendations and a focused programme of management actions for delivery during 2019/20. Further detail of these actions is outlined in section 4 of this report.

4.0 Measures and actions to improve attendance at work

- 4.1. Support measures already in place to maximise attendance and promote staff health and wellbeing include:

- Maximising Attendance Policy and Procedure (refreshed in 2017)
- Support and Guidance meetings (including return to work meetings and absence review meetings based on meeting triggers outlined in the Council's Maximising Attendance policy).
- Occupational Health referrals
- Physiotherapy
- PAM Assist (24-hour confidential Employee Assistance Programme that offers immediate access to clinical and professional expertise, giving employees a chance to talk about all kinds of work and personal issues)
- Stress Risk Assessment
- Stress Awareness Classes
- Capability process – (both informal and formal where necessary)
- Real Time absence information available to all managers
- Manager absence dash boards displaying real-time information
- MI reports via the Manager portal on the Council's HR System
- Regular reporting to the Councils Strategic Leadership Group, Bipartites and Tripartite forum
- Mandatory training and briefing sessions on maximising attendance and capability management.
- HR advice provided throughout and direct support on complex cases (recently endorsed and reviewed by Brodies Employment Lawyers)
- Mental Health First Aiders - Across the Council a number of employees have been training in Mental Health First Aid as part of their role in supporting some of our more vulnerable clients and staff.

4.2. A focused programme of management actions (see Appendix 1) has also been developed. A summary of key actions ongoing are highlighted below:

- Through a number of planned activities, the council will continue to emphasise the level of corporate priority and accountability (both managerial and personal) to improve employee wellbeing and maximise attendance. There is a key focus on employee wellbeing and maximising attendance at Staff Roadshows throughout the summer;
- A communications strategy is being developed to promote employee health and wellbeing activities and campaigns, ensuring careful planning to coincide with Healthy Working Lives events/initiatives, national campaigns, strategic workforce planning, Health and Safety and other current and emerging corporate initiatives with a link to employee wellbeing. Strategies to more effectively and visibly communicate key messages digitally are also being progressed, including development of video/podcasts and digital information screens;
- Efforts to maximise compliance via the consistent, robust and transparent application of policy, procedure and controls are ongoing. This includes a series of Strategic Director meetings to review current long-term sickness absence;
- Systems improvements have been identified that will streamline and simplify processes. This includes the roll out of a series of systematic line manager prompts for sickness absence reporting on iTrent in accordance with our policy requirements;
- We are continuing to review and develop a suite of family friendly policies that promote a range of flexible options to support employees and improve attendance at work. This includes the development of a menopause policy, Special Leave policy, and revised Flexible working and Carers policies;

4.3. Whilst good progress has been made across the majority of actions outlined in the Maximising Attendance and Employee Wellbeing Action Plan, and further improvement against targets outlined in the LGBF is anticipated, Clackmannanshire Council will continue to apply a robust approach to ensuring scrutiny and momentum to reduce current absence levels. An update for Q1 19/20 is contained within the attachment, and further updates will be provided at future Partnership and Performance committee meetings.

5.0 Resource Implications

5.1. Financial Details

5.2. The full financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. This includes a reference to full life cycle costs where appropriate. Yes

5.3. Finance have been consulted and have agreed the financial implications as set out in the report. Yes

5.4. *Staffing*

6.0 Exempt Reports

6.1. Is this report exempt? Yes (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No

7.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

(1) **Our Priorities** (Please double click on the check box)

Clackmannanshire will be attractive to businesses & people and ensure fair opportunities for all

Our families; children and young people will have the best possible start in life

Women and girls will be confident and aspirational, and achieve their full potential

Our communities will be resilient and empowered so that they can thrive and flourish

(2) **Council Policies** (Please detail)

8.0 Equalities Impact

8.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?

Yes No

9.0 Legality

9.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes

10.0 Appendices

10.1 Please list any appendices attached to this report. If there are no appendices, please state "none".

Appendix 1 – Maximising Attendance and Employee Wellbeing Action Plan

11.0 Background Papers


11.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)

Yes (please list the documents below) No

Author(s)

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Approved by

NAME	DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE
Fiona McOmish	Strategic Director (People)	

MAXIMISING ATTENDANCE AND EMPLOYEE WELLBEING CAMPAIGN - ACTION PLAN

No.	Action	Reason for Action	Tasks required	Lead/ Owner	Action Due	Q1 19/20 Update
1.	Points arising out of Internal Audit report to be considered in relation to the content of the Maximising Attendance Policy and Procedures.	To ensure the consistent and transparent application of robust controls.	HR will ensure, that these points are included, as part of the next scheduled review of the Maximising Attendance Policy / Procedures / Managers' Guide.	HR Service Manager	31 December 2019	Work is on track to address the recommendations contained within the IA report.
2.	A review/refresh of the corporate record outlining who has attended Maximising Attendance training is required.	The corporate record must be updated to ensure that that all officers with supervisory responsibilities have undertaken the mandatory Maximising Attendance training.	HR to send email reminder to all managers with supervisory responsibilities to establish who has attended a Maximising Attendance training course within the last 3 years. This will determine who requires training or a refresher course.	HR Service Manager	19 April 2019	HR email has been sent and returns are being collated to determine training/ refresher course requirements.
3.	A programme of communications aimed at Maximising Attendance will take place throughout 19/20.	To emphasise the level of corporate priority in relation to absence/wellbeing and the impacts to the Council/Services and Teams of non-compliance. To remind all staff and line managers of their responsibilities for complying with the Maximising Attendance Policy and Procedures.	a) Initial comms piece will be sent from Chief Executive following recent attendance at parliamentary committee to raise the profile of employee wellbeing and emphasise the corporate priority of reducing absence levels (increasing resilience, wellbeing, engagement and capacity, and reducing the financial impact of absence). b) A focused communications strategy will run throughout the year to raise the profile of the impact of sickness absence, and continue the focus on promoting wellbeing (This will include a series of e-communications on Connect, posters, the video clips/podcasts, digital information screens at staff entrances) c) Staff roadshows will take place during early June 2019 and absence management will be a key topic. d) Working with partners and other local authorities to consider and apply good practice.	Chief Exec/ Strategic Director Comms team SLG SLG	By end April 19 December 2019 June 2019 Sept 2019	Action Complete Posters designed for imminent issue; costing for tv screen in staff foyer at Kilncraigs being obtained; Comms plan timings being developed. First roadshow took place on 13 June 2019. Teleconference being set up with East Ayrshire Council to discuss supportive approaches.

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4.	A systematic approach will be taken to review current long-term sickness absence within each directorate, ensuring that the instances of non compliance with the Policy and recording are addressed.	To ensure compliance with the Maximising Attendance Policy and Procedures. To ensure a strong ongoing focus to improve attendance at work.	All Directors will work with Service Managers, HR BPs and OH where appropriate to review current long term sickness absences and ensure that individual plans are in place to support employees back to work.	Directors	Summer 2019	People portfolio meetings completed in June for Social Services and Education. Place/P&P meetings to follow in Q2 19/20.
5.	Refresh commitment to provide meaningful, regular updates to absence information held on Pentana.	To ensure the data contains up to date action on how short and long term absence is being addressed across the council.	Directors to ensure that Pentana updates are provided for their directorates.	Directors/ Service Manager	August 2019	Meetings ongoing to assess whether current Pentana requirements remain fit for purpose. Thereafter data requirements will be refreshed and rolled out at ESLG in August.
6.	Review whether automation/prompts on iTrent can be set for sickness absence over 7 days	Efficiencies have been achieved regarding annual leave requests via the use of automated prompts. Rolling this out to sickness absence is expected to increase efficiency for procedural compliance and reporting of sickness absence.	HR Service Manager to identify whether automated prompts/ escalation can be set up on iTrent for sickness absence over 7 days.	HR Service Manager	June 2019	New prompts have been set up and communications to roll out are in progress.
7.	Ensure employee wellbeing and improving attendance is placed on team/department meetings as a standing agenda item and that updates tie in with corporate priorities.	Ensure messages during campaign are reiterated during team/directorate meetings.	All line managers with supervisory responsibilities required to report progress on actions/updates through line management routes.	All line managers	August 2019	Cascade required through Strategic Directors and Senior Managers – Action ongoing
8.	Embed employee attendance and wellbeing into the PRD process.	Integrate objective as a positive indicator of performance.	All line managers to ensure that all PRDs make reference to all absence management to the extent that: a) Managers have already undertaken or will undertake the required training or ensure they attend a refresher session b) Managers will ensure they comply with Council policies and reporting requirements c) Embed these requirements within guidance and on iTrent.	All line managers	By end March 2020	Strategic Directors to seek assurance from Senior Managers that actions are embedded in PRD process. – Action ongoing

No.	Action	Reason for Action	Tasks required	Lead/ Owner	Action Due	Q1 19/20 Update
9.	Review/create family friendly policies that offer/promote flexible options aimed at reducing sickness absence: a) Develop and implement a Menopause policy b) Review and refresh family friendly policies to promote a variety of options that provide an ongoing focus to improve attendance at work.	Ensure that policies provide a range of options to support employees and improve attendance at work.	HR Service Manager will lead the development of a menopause policy and review family friendly policies to provide options to improve attendance at work.	HR Service Manager	Ongoing	Reviews for Flexible working, Carers policy currently going through internal governance routes. Special Leave policy due for imminent approval. Development of menopause policy has commenced.
10.	Continue to promote wellbeing in order to progress the 'Gold' Healthy Working Lives award.	Embed actions to promote wellbeing with the campaign to improve attendance at work.	Link HWL campaign actions with efforts to improve attendance at work.	HWL Group	Ongoing	Comms team due to meet with HWL group to align campaign dates
11.	Embed outputs of wellbeing focus group arising out of the Staff Survey results/actions into the Workforce plan.	Ensure links are made to embed and integrate actions where possible.	OD Adviser to ensure links with staff survey, workforce plan and sickness absence actions.	OD Adviser	June 2019	Strategic Director (People)/ OD Adviser meeting took place in July 2019 following council approval of Strategic workforce plan to align actions. Ongoing.
12.	Review progress by conducting random iTrent checks/quality assurance and committing to an annual review to ensure procedural compliance.	To ensure good practice is followed consistently. To track progress in sickness absence reporting.	Internal Audit to devise review plan that addresses actions outlined.	Internal Audit	Random checks ongoing culminating in 12-month annual review	Action not yet commenced.

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