



Haringey Council

[No.]

Agenda item:

General Purposes Committee

On 29 September 2008

Report Title: **Sickness Trigger Levels**

Forward Plan reference number (if applicable): **[add reference]**

Report of: **Assistant Chief Executive (People & OD)**

Wards(s) affected: **ALL**

Report for: **Key decision**

1. Purpose

1.1 To approve a revision of the council's trigger levels when managers need to formally review an employee's sickness absence.

2. Introduction by Cabinet Member – Cllr Charles Adje

2.1 The Council has been striving to bring down the level of sickness absences and has introduced methods of improving employee's health as well as quick Intervention processes with a view to assisting employee attendance. I therefore concur with the proposals outlined in the report.

3. Recommendations

3.1 To approve amendment of the Council's trigger level for formally monitoring an employee's sickness levels to at least 5 days absence in a rolling 12 month period, or earlier if there is cause for concern. This will be pro rated for part time staff.

Report Authorised by: **Stuart Young, Assistant Chief Executive (People & OD)**

Contact Officer: **Steve Davies, Head of Human Resources, 020 8489 3172**

4. Chief Financial Officer Comments

4.1 The Chief Financial Officer has been consulted over the contents of this report and notes that there are no additional direct financial implications arising from this recommendation however, if it leads to reduced sickness absence this will improve productivity and overall value for money.

5. Head of Legal Services Comments

The Head of Legal Services has been consulted on the content of this report. Changes to the Council's arrangements concerning sickness monitoring in order to achieve a greater consistency of approach will assist in the fair application of those procedures.

6. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

6.1 No documents that require to be listed were used in the preparation of this report.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 There are no additional financial implications arising out of the changes proposed in this report.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 The comments of Head of Legal are outlined in paragraph 5.

9. Equalities Implications

9.1 The proposals outlined in the report will have no detrimental impact in equalities terms on the way in which sickness is managed.

10. Background

10.1 The Council's sickness trigger levels were last considered in April 2001 as part of a Scrutiny Review.

10.2 The current trigger levels for managers to conduct an attendance review meeting are - an employee has 8 days absence in a rolling year, has 3 periods of absence in 3 months, is absent continuously for 20 days, or earlier if there is cause for concern.

10.3 The aim of the attendance review meeting is to understand the reasons for the employee's absence and seek to improve this through a combination of support and/or warnings about the impact of the absence on their performance.

10.4 The current level of sickness stands at 9 days per employee as at July 2008. This has reduced from a high of 10.4 days at July last year.

- 10.5 The level of long term sickness stands at 4.36 days and short term sickness at 4.64 days.
- 10.6 The council's sickness target level is 8.8 days with a stretch target of 8.5 days.
- 10.7 Research by the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development shows that the most effective tools for managing sickness absence overall, and in particular for short term absence, are return to work interviews and the trigger mechanisms to review attendance.

11. Proposals

- 11.1 Consistent targeting of management action on sickness has helped to reduce sickness levels over the last 12 months but it is recommended that to simplify the monitoring process and further improve sickness levels and achieve the council's targets that a single trigger level be introduced.
- 11.2 It is proposed that the new trigger level be any sickness absence period of at least 5 days in a rolling 12 month period, or earlier if there is cause for concern. This will be pro rated for part time staff.
- 11.3 A single sickness trigger will help to avoid any confusion about when management action should be taken. At present with 3 variable levels of trigger there is a potential for confusion as to when managers should undertake formal monitoring of an employee's sickness absence.