

Update on Sickness Absence Management
Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 4th January 2011

At the meeting of the 5th October 2010, Corporate Overview & Scrutiny requested a further update on activity in relation to improving sickness absence rates.

The Council has been focussing closely on the levels of sickness absence. The average number of days sickness per employee in 2009-10 was 11.37 days. This put Thurrock in the bottom quartile in terms of performance. As at the end of September 2010 – half way through the year – the Council average is 5.07 days – which suggests an improvement on last year, however is unlikely to meet our target of 9 days over the whole year, which if achieved would put us in Quartile 2 based on the latest available national comparative information. The tables on the next page show a breakdown of sickness absence by service area.

Manager and HR Advisor Actions

In order to effectively improve both short and long term sickness we need our managers to manage situations more effectively supported by more reliable management information and more proactive human resources advice. Management Information systems have been updated and accurate data is now being produced on a monthly basis and discussed with Heads of Service, Directors and the HR Advisors. This allows trends and issues to be identified early and appropriate action taken. A managers training pilot has been run to assist managers in understanding their roles and responsibilities.

The sickness policy is being reviewed as an early phase of the overarching HR policy review. In doing this we are looking at best practice in other Councils and elsewhere.

Occupational Health Review

The Occupational Health (OH) and absence management review and pilot is now underway with the appointment of an Occupational Health Nurse Advisor. The initial focus has been in moving the existing OH cases forward, in particular those relating to long term absences. Long term absences have been dealt with by a dedicated case worker. Many of these staff have returned to work or have since been removed from the payroll. Some cases are still being referred to the Occupational Health Physician. Following the end of the pilot (December) we will review the outcomes and make recommendations for any new processes and/or models to be implemented early in the New Year.

New referral process

As part of the OH review, the referral process and form have been changed. The main changes are: more detailed referral information is required; all forms must be sent to the Human Resource Advisor; the rules around non-attendance of Occupational Health appointments will be enforced; and there will be no self-referrals.

Jackie Hinchliffe
Head of Human Resources, Organisational Development and Customer Strategy



Average number of sickness absence days per employee

Based on cumulative position YTD

Weighted targets based on 2009-10 Directorate/Service Outturn data

Sustainable Communities Directorate							
Area (approx headcount)	09-10 Outturn	Aug	Sept	RAG	DOT same month 09-10	Weighted Target 31/08/10	Weighted Year End Target
*Sus Com Dir. (259)	11.04	5.59	7.13	X	X	3.61	9.45
*Strat Plan&Del (56)	12.23	6.10	7.72	X	✓	3.98	10.42
*Public Prot. (51)	7.23	3.78	4.18	X	X	2.20	5.76
*Environment (147)	11.57	5.89	7.56	X	X	3.87	10.13

Financial and Corporate Governance							
Area (approx headcount)	09-10 Outturn	Aug	Sept	RAG	DOT same month 09-10	Weighted Target 31/08/10	Weighted Year End Target
*Fin&CGov Dir. (85)	6.11	3.32	3.87	X	X	1.97	5.16
*Finance (33)	8.65	4.71	4.96	X	X	3.30	8.63
*Legal (48)	2.48	2.54	3.37	X	X	0.83	2.18
*PA Office (4)	4.75	1.50	1.50	✓	X	1.72	4.49

Community Well Being Directorate							
Area (approx headcount)	09-10 Outturn	Aug	Sept	RAG	DOT same month 09-10	Weighted Target 31/08/10	Weighted Year End Target
*CWB Dir. (659)	13.65	4.68	5.64	X	✓	4.38	11.47
*Com,Lib&Cult (120)	5.81	2.65	3.15	✓	X	2.84	7.44
*Housing (199)	11.81	4.34	5.55	X	✓	3.07	8.04
*SC(Adult)(306)	18.67	5.68	6.77	✓	✓	6.20	16.24
*Strat Comm (33)	3.50	5.27	5.36	X	X	0.80	2.10

Change & Improvement Directorate							
Area (approx headcount)	09-10 Outturn	Aug	Sept	RAG	DOT same month 09-10	Weighted Target 31/08/10	Weighted Year End Target
*C&I Dir (41)	2.56	2.10	2.49	X	?	1.88	4.92
*Business Serv (7)	7.26	3.00	4.71	X	X	1.88	4.92
*Pol, Perf, P'ships (8)	2.56	2.44	2.57	X	?	1.88	4.92
*Comms (11)	2.56	1.74	1.74	✓	?	1.88	4.92
*OD (14)	2.56	1.82	2.06	✓	X	1.88	4.92

Children, Education & Families Directorate							
Area (approx headcount)	09-10 Outturn	Aug	Sept	RAG	DOT same month 09-10	Weighted Target 31/08/10	Weighted Year End Target
**restructure from 4 to 3 Services							
*CEF Dir. (847)	8.79	3.31	4.06	X	X	2.78	7.28
*ChildrenSC&H (141)	8.22	4.67	5.62	X	X	1.61	4.22
*Bus Infra** (247)	?	3.79	4.56	X	?	2.97	7.78
*CY&F** (446)	?	2.60	3.26	✓	?	3.19	8.36

BV12 Whole Council							
	09-10 Outturn	Aug	Sept	RAG	DOT same month 09-10	Weighted Target 31/08/10	Weighted Year End Target
☑ BV012 Average Days / shifts lost to sickness per employee	11.37	4.07	5.07	X	✓	3.44	9.00