



## Report of the Service Centre Manager & Strategic Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager

Governance & Audit Committee – 8 March 2022

### Absence Management Audit Report 20/21

<b>Purpose:</b>	To provide an update on the Absence Management audit report for the above period
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<b>For Information</b>	

#### Internal Audit on Absence Management – Update March 2022

##### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 As a result of the first internal audit on Absence Management carried out in 2020, an assurance level of moderate was given.
- 1.2 An action plan was developed to address the issues identified and appropriate implementation steps put in place.
- 1.3 This action plan identified actions (High Risk) and MR actions (Medium Risk), as previously reported to the committee in September 2021 all recommendations have been implemented, with the exception of;

*“Consideration should be given to having a discussion with the provider of the Interflex system to provide reports highlighting instances of ‘unauthorised absences’ – this was considered non-cost-effective.*

- 1.4 There is a further “follow up” Audit scheduled for March 2022.

## 2 Further progress as at February 2022

2.1 As reported previously, in line with the Oracle Fusion project a Manager dashboard is in development and nearing readiness for User Acceptance testing, this will provide real time information for all Managers with absence management responsibility and provide them with information on the following:-

- Staff absent due to sickness (within their area only) and days lost
- Return to Work Interviews Outstanding
- Record of Action Meetings Outstanding

This information will also be available to the “Manager’s” Manager, providing additional data and information to improve Absence Management across the authority.

2.2 The monthly reminders to Managers has had a positive impact in terms of queries and requests for additional training.

2.3 Development of the Learning Module in Fusion is progressing and will provide an additional tool to further improve compliance in completing mandatory sickness management training.

2.4 There is continued improvement in terms of completing Return to Work and Record of Action meetings and these details can be provided to the Committee.

2.5 Management of Absence Advisors have been appointed in the Education, Place and Social Services Directorates to support Managers in ensuring compliance with our Sickness Absence Policy and to identify proactive ways in managing and reducing sickness.

This has included;

- Support to progress current Long Term Sickness cases of over 6 months and address cases which are progressing into 6 months and over.
- Early interventions in sickness cases to support managers and employees in progressing cases as appropriate.
- Strengthening links with Occupational Health by arranging review meetings with the OH Team to assist Managers by discussing next step plans at an earlier stage.
- Provision of additional dedicated clinics for Social Services staff, to minimise the waiting times between referrals and appointments.
- Manager training, guidance and upskilling.
- Support with Manager Compliance

- In partnership with Trade Unions, updated guidance has been developed in relation to the 'Dying to Work' Charter.
- Stress and Coronavirus related absences are being monitored and have started to decrease but this will be another key focus for the team going forward.

### **3. Integrated Assessment Implications**

3.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
- Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

3.2. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2005 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

3.3. Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

### **4. Financial Implications**

4.1 There are no financial implications other than those set out in the body of the report.

## **5. Legal Implications**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications other than those set out in the body of the report.

**Background Papers:** None.

**Appendices:** None.