



**Report of the Director of Human Resources,
Performance & Communications,
to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
on 9th June 2015**

**Corporate Plan Performance Report – Quarter 4: 2014/15 Sickness Absence
– Cover Report**

1.0 Introduction and Summary

- 1.1 The attached report ‘Copy C – Report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding Performance in relation to Sickness Absence’ provides a recent update regarding this corporate performance indicator.
- 1.2 This topic was identified for further consideration from the Quarter 4 (January to March 2014/15) Corporate Plan Performance Report and was also discussed previously at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 29th July 2014 due to corporate performance targets not being met as shown in the table below:

Indicator	Q4 2013/14	Q4 2014/15	Annual Target	Status
Short term sickness absence - FTE days per employee	5.0	5.0	4.0	✗
Long term sickness absence - FTE days per employee	6.07	5.36	5.0	✗
Total sickness absence - FTE days per employee	11.07	10.4	9.0	✗

- 1.3 As shown in the table above and detailed in the Council’s Corporate Plan Performance Report Quarter 4 2014/15, this year has seen a reduction in levels of long term and total sickness amongst our employees. Long term sickness fell from 6.07 full time equivalent (FTE) days per person in 2013/14 to 5.36 this year, still short however of our target of 5 days. Similarly, total sickness fell from 11.07 FTE days to 10.4, but again short of our target of 9 days. Short term sickness levels were unchanged at 5 FTE days, again short of our target of 4 days.
- 1.4 As ‘Copy C’ highlights, in order to address sickness absence, there is evidence of good practice across the Council Directorates as well as a number of initiatives being put in place to support this. There is evidence of a reduction in long term absence which could be due to the impact of the Wellbeing Advisors who are supporting managers to effectively use absence procedures to address areas of concern and offer appropriate interventions to employees.

1.5 The table below shows the key themes of the number of days lost to sickness during Quarter 4 of the 2014/15 Corporate Plan Performance Report:

<u>Directorate / Service Area</u>	Mental Health (Anxiety, Stress, Depression etc.)	Musculo-skeletal (including fracture, back pain, strain etc.)	Respiratory (Cough, Cold, Flu,)	Gastro (Upset stomach, vomiting, Diarrhoea etc.)	Pregnancy	Cancer	Infectious Disease	Industrial Injury
HR, Perf & Comms	29	21	37	15.5	27	0	0	0
Finance, Property & IT	251	38	148.5	59.5	0	6	0	0
Legal and Governance	0	52	9	3	0	57	0	0
Public Health	113	0	0	4.5	0	0	2	0
Adults	804.5	498	413	195.5	46	62	23	0
CYPF	1249.5	657	745	434.5	121	214	13	0
DEC	403	548	476.5	189.5	11	74	50	0
Totals	2850	1814	1829	902	205	413	88	0

1.6 The table above demonstrates that the most common reason for days lost to sickness at the Council is mental health; however it is not clear to what extent this is as a result of work related pressures or other external factors.

1.7 Due to the different ways that sickness data is reported and the time-lag on this information, there is a lack of relevant performance information available to make appropriate comparisons with other local authorities with regards to the Council's current sickness absence performance.

2.0 Invited Witnesses

2.1 The following witnesses have been invited to today's meeting to discuss sickness absence performance with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- Julia Bell, Director of Human Resources, Performance & Communications
- Councillor Robin Franklin, Cabinet Support Member for Corporate Services

3.0 Possible Areas for Investigation

3.1 Members may wish to ask questions around the following areas:

- What interventions are in place to prevent sickness absence, in particular relating to mental health?
- What is being done to better understand reasons for absence and how these can be prevented?
- What are the latest developments in workplace health and how are these initiatives being utilised at the Council?
- What is being done to achieve cultural change in relation to the management of sickness absence, in particular with regards to Managers?
- How effective is the collection and use of data with regards to the performance management of sickness absence?
- What training is in place for both managers and employees with regards to preventing sickness absence?
- What is the likelihood of achieving the sickness absence targets in the future?
- Are there any plans to incentivise employees to reduce sickness absence?
- To what extent are the Trade Unions supportive in managing employee sickness absence?
- Are there any actions which could be taken by Members to assist in the achievement of improved sickness absence performance at the Council?

4.0 Background Papers and Links

- Copy C (attached) – Report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding Performance in Relation to Sickness Absence provided by the Director of Human Resources, Performance & Communications.

- Link to the papers from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 29th July 2014 regarding sickness absence:
<http://edemocracy.barnsley.gov.uk/edemocracy/overview-and-scrutiny-committee/overview-and-scrutiny-committee/2014/2014/07/29>
- Link to the Corporate Plan Performance Report Quarter 4: 2015/15:
<http://edemocracy.barnsley.gov.uk/0xac16000b%20x00585d83>

5.0 Glossary

BMBC - Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

CYPF – Children, Young People & Families Directorate

DEC – Development, Environment & Culture Directorate

FTE – Full Time Equivalent

HR, Perf & Comms – Human Resources, Performance & Communications

6.0 Officer Contact

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1st June 2015