

HARPENDEN TOWN COUNCIL

NON CONFIDENTIAL

COMMITTEE: HUMAN RESOURCES

DATE: 14 JULY 2017

REPORT BY: CARL CHEEVERS, TOWN CLERK

SUBJECT: SICKNESS ABSENCE MONITORING 2016/17

1. Summary

1.1 This report sets out the amount of sick leave taken by staff employed by the Town Council.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the:

2.1.1 Report be noted

2.1.2 Town Clerk refreshes the Absence Management policy to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

3. Background

3.1 During 2016/17 there were a total of 89 days taken as sick leave. This equates to 667.5 hours.

3.2 Any leave under 7 total days were self-certificated. Any sick leave above this threshold required a fit to work certificate, issued by the employee's GP. During this period there was four fit to work certificates issued. The longest period of absence for any one employee was 10 working days (two instances). The reasons for extended absenteeism were: lower back pain (two incidents with two officers); stress and anxiety and high blood pressure.

3.3 The reasons stated for short term sickness were minor illnesses i.e. coughs and colds.

3.4 Comparative figures are:

- 2015/16 – 25 days, 187.5 hours
- 2014/15 – 36 days, 248.5 hours
- 2013/14 – 128.75 days, 586 hours
- 2012/13 – 124.50 days, 538.50 hours
- 2011/12 – 38.5 days, 265.75 hours

3.5 The average number of days lost through staff sickness is equivalent to 5.5 days per employee.

- 3.6 In 2016 the national average number of days lost to sickness in the private sector was 4.3 days per employee. The average number of sickness days in the public sector was 8.5 days (8.7 in 2015).
- 3.7 There were no identifiable patterns associated with lost days by officers. In light of the two incidents of lower back pain, additional training in manual handling will be considered for all officers who are involved in strenuous work activities.
- 3.8 In general sickness absence is not an issue at the Town Council and at a level that is not currently a cause for concern. However there is a need to review and refresh our Absence Monitoring policy.
- 3.9 The current Absence Monitoring Policy, adopted by Council on 19 May 2008, covers the following:
- to assess any pattern with the absence;
 - to check to see whether the absence is work related;
 - to ensure that if required support is provided for the employee;
 - if necessary to request the employee visit the Town Council's Occupational Health Physician to establish whether there are any underlying reason for the absence;
 - in the event of long-term absence, to ensure provision is made for a planned programme for returning to work. The Council should be seen to be encouraging and supporting the employee in these instances;
 - to record the level of lost working days for comparative reasons.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

5. Environment and Biodiversity implications

None

6. Crime and Disorder implications

None