

Audit and Risk Panel

Tuesday, 12th January, 2016

SPECIAL MEETING OF AUDIT AND RISK PANEL

Members present: Alderman Rodgers (Chairperson);
Councillors Haire, Jones, Mullan, Ó Donnghaile,
and Mr. R. Cox.

In attendance: Mr. R. Cregan, Director of Finance and Resources;
Mrs. R. Crozier, Assistant Director of Parks and Leisure;
Mr. A. Harrison, Head of Audit, Governance
and Risk Services;
Mrs. J. Minne, Director of Organisational Development;
Mrs. S. Toland, Lead Operations Officer/Head of
Environmental Health;
Mrs. S. Steele, Democratic Services Officer.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were reported.

Update Presentation on Absenteeism 2015/2016

The Director of Organisational Development commenced her presentation by referring to the ongoing management of attendance. She advised that in 2006/07 there had been approximately 15.08 days of absence per employee and she proceeded to outline for the Members the steps which had been taken to improve the management of sickness absence. This had included the introduction of a new attendance policy which was implemented using the attendance management framework.

The Director reported that a recent review of those policies had been undertaken and that the vast majority of the proposed changes had been agreed with the Council's Trade Unions. She advised that, at its meeting on 18th December, the Members of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee had agreed to implement the revised Attendance Management Policy and Guidance and Disciplinary Procedure, in full, incorporating management proposals on those areas where agreement had not been reached with the Council's Trade Unions.

The Panel was advised of the following facts and figures:

- sickness absence had reduced considerably over the last ten years with a now overall reduction of 4.92 days;
- at the end of Quarter three the absence rate was 7.57 days;
- there had been a slight increase from last year in the number of absences which had been classified as long term (i.e., twenty days or more) increasing from 64.11% to 65.53% this year;
- there had been a slight decrease in the percentage of staff with no absence from 32.6% last year to 35.94% this year;

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- stress and musculo-skeletal were the two highest causes for sickness absence;
- four of the Departments were currently on target, with the City and Neighbourhood Services Department being the only Department not on target.

The Director concluded her presentation by outlining to the Members the monitoring procedures taken to manage sickness absence on a corporate basis throughout the Council, which included the following measures:

- fortnightly compliance meetings between Departments and Human Resources;
- Department and Human Resources case reviews;
- Occupational Health and Human Resources meetings for sensitive cases;
- individual Department action plans;
- annual targets set at Departmental and Sectional Level;
- reports to the Corporate Management Team, Audit Panel and Strategic Policy and Resources Committee;
- flu vaccinations offered;
- immediate referrals to employee counselling for stress and to the nurse for musculo-skeletal;
- health and wellbeing initiatives including stress audits, stress awareness and stress management training;

The Chairman thanked the Director of Organisational Development for her presentation.

Members noted the information which had been provided.

Chairperson