



FULL COUNCIL REPORT

Date Written	17 th August 2021
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Service Area	Human Resources
Non Exempt	Non Exempt
Committee Date	8 th September 2021

To: Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen

Sickness Absence Policy and Sickness Absence Procedure

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Council has operated a Sickness Absence Policy for some time. This defines the expectations of employees when they are unwell. The Council's policy has been effective to date with the Council having the lowest sickness absence record in Wales.
- 1.2 However, it is good practice to update policies to ensure that the content is still relevant, achieves the outcomes that are required, and responds appropriately to new legislation and case law.
- 1.3 In addition, it is recognised that policies and accompanying procedures, if set out using a simple format that is easy to understand and follow, will enable managers to use them more effectively.
- 1.4 The Trade Unions have been consulted on the updated Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that

- 2.1 The updated Policy and Procedure be implemented; with immediate effect, be approved.
- 2.2 Delegated authority be given to the Head of Human Resources for any minor future amendments to the Policy and Procedure, in consultation with the Portfolio Member, be approved.

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Occupational Health team has reviewed the Council’s Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure in accordance with the Healthy Organisation Plan. The team took into account responses to the employee Stress Survey in 2018 and the Culture Survey in 2019 and engaged with managers and Trades Unions. The outcome of the review indicated that a clearer, more flexible and supportive approach to managing attendance would be more effective and would ensure both managers and employees better understood their responsibilities in relation to absence. The return of the Occupational Health Service in 2020 allowed the service area to adopt an approach to improve attendance at work and take into account the impact of the procedures on employee wellbeing. Focus on employee wellbeing has also been placed in the Healthy Organisation plan to ensure we raise awareness of this to prevent sickness absence before it is an issue and impacts on individuals, teams and the organisation.
- 3.2 The key purpose of the Sickness Absence Policy and the Sickness Absence Procedure is to provide practical and legal guidance on the management of employee sickness absence. These documents deal with the issues arising from both short-term and long-term absences, steps managers can take to assist employees return to work and steps they can take when employees are unable to return, up to and including dismissal or support in accordance with the Dying to Work Charter.
- 3.3 The Council recognises that its employees are its most valuable resource but also that if employees spend less time at work than they are contracted to, there is a direct effect on the service that can be provided to the public and that sickness absence can become a significant drain on our limited resources.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications.

5.0 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts	Neutral/Not Applicable
1. Merthyr Tydfil Well-being Objectives	0 of 4	0 of 4	4 of 4
2. Sustainable Development Principles - How have you considered the five ways of working? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term • Prevention • Integration • Collaboration • Involvement 	3 of 5	0 of 5	2 of 5
3. Protected Characteristics (including Welsh Language)	0 of 10	0 of 10	10 of 10

4. Socio-economic Disadvantage	0 of 6	0 of 6	6 of 6
5. Consultation and Engagement	Undertaken	Due to be Undertaken	Not Required
	1 of 1	0 of 1	0 of 1
6. Data and Evidence to inform the proposal	Yes		No
	1 of 1		0 of 1
7. Biodiversity and the resilience of Ecosystems	Maintained	Enhanced	Reduced
	0 of 1	0 of 1	0 of 1
Summary			
The main positive impacts are:	To provide clear guidance to both managers and staff on how to deal with sickness effectively.		
The main negative impacts are:	No negative impacts.		

FRAN DONNELLY
HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, PENSIONS AND PAYROLL

COUNCILLOR ANDREW BARRY
CABINET MEMBER FOR GOVERNANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
Sickness Absence Policy	2021	
Sickness Absence Procedure	2021	
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		No

Consultation has been undertaken with the Corporate Management Team in respect of each proposal(s) and recommendation(s) set out in this report.