

EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 21st JANUARY 2016

Sickness absence management within schools

To consider and comment on the following issues:

- That the Committee considers and comments on the attached report, outlining support provided to schools in relation to sickness absence management.

Reasons:

- The Committee requested a report as to how the Authority supports effective sickness absence management in schools in order to minimise the use of supply cover, as part of its forward work programme.
- That the Committee is enabled to exercise its scrutiny role in relation to performance monitoring.

To be referred to the Executive Board for decision: NO

Executive Board Member Portfolio Holders:

- Cllr. Gareth Jones (Education & Children)
- Cllr Mair Stevens (Human Resources, Efficiencies & Collaboration)

Directorate: Chief Executive's	Designations:	Tel Nos. / E-Mail Addresses:
Name of Head of Service: Paul R. Thomas	Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance)	01267 246123 prthomas@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 21st JANUARY 2016

Sickness absence management within schools

A new Sickness Absence Policy was introduced in the Authority in 2014 and based on the corporate policy during 2015 a model policy was sent to all schools for adoption.

The People Management & Performance Division (within the Chief Executive's Department) is working on a number of initiatives to support schools in better absence management through Occupational Health Centre and Human Resources advice.

The initiatives included in the report include:

- Bespoke training for Head teachers on absence management
- Guidance on referrals to Occupational Health
- Introduction of a mutual funding scheme for school absence
- Introduction on an All Wales Supply Teacher Agency provider

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

YES

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

Signed: **Paul R. Thomas** Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance)

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
YES	NONE	YES	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

Valuing our employees by supporting good health and wellbeing is one of the Authority's core values. Carmarthenshire County Council aims to support its employees by providing a safe and healthy workplace and promoting a culture where regular attendance can be expected of all employees of the Authority. Absence from work is unlikely to be a positive experience for the absent employee(s) or his / her colleagues, so the Authority will actively manage and support those employees who experience ill health during their employment.

Carmarthenshire County Council's Sickness Absence Policy applies to all employees with exception to staff on the complement of locally managed schools, for whom the policy adopted by their respective schools will apply. Although the Authority encourages all schools to adopt the new School's Model Sickness Policy, some schools may have different policies they follow, with different triggers and stages.

3. Finance

Schools currently pay insurance to cover absence and will include cover of supply costs. However, insurance cover varies greatly across all schools, as does the cost. By introducing a mutual fund, this could have financial benefit for those schools who opt into the service. Financial Services is currently comparing each school's policy and current costs and use of insurance for supply cover.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below:

Signed: **Paul R. Thomas** Assistant Chief Executive (People Management & Performance)

1. Local Member(s) – N/A
2. Community / Town Council – N/A
3. Relevant Partners – N/A
4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations – N/A

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW:

Title of Document	File Ref No. / Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
E&C Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme 2015/16 – Education & Children Scrutiny Committee (18th May 2015)	<p>Minutes http://online.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/agendas/eng/EDUC20150518/REP08.HTM</p>
Carmarthenshire County Council's Sickness Absence Policy (2014)	<p><i>Internal document only – Available on Council's intranet system</i></p> <p>Cymraeg http://hafnium/worklife/Document%20Library/HR%20Policies%20and%20Guidance/Sickness%20Absence/01.%20Polisi%20Absenoldeb%20Salwch.docx</p> <p>English http://hafnium/worklife/Document%20Library/HR%20Policies%20and%20Guidance/Sickness%20Absence/01.%20Sickness%20Absence%20Policy%20014.docx</p>
Sickness Absence Policy – Executive Board (11th November 2013)	<p>Agenda http://online.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/agendas/eng/EXEB20131111/index.asp</p> <p>Minutes http://online.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/agendas/eng/EXEB20131111/MINUTES.HTM#P94_6165</p>
Sickness Absence Policy – Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee (7th October 2013)	<p>Agenda http://online.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/agendas/eng/POLI20131007/index.asp</p> <p>Minutes http://online.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/agendas/eng/POLI20131007/MINUTES.HTM</p>