POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR ESSEX

Managing Attendance Strategy

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1.0	November 2012		First publication
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Introduction

This strategy is intended to support managers as they try and reduce levels of sickness absence and promote healthy attendance. This strategy takes account of best practice supported by the Cabinet Office Ministerial Task Force on Health, Safety and Productivity - the Well-Managed Organisation. It also supports the Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex (PCC) achieving objectives to reduce the number of working days lost through sickness absence.

It is a strategic document with a statement of intent. Many of the actions arising from this strategy are underpinned by procedural guidance in the Staff Capability Procedure.

Managing Attendance will be through the CEO of the OPCC.

Business rationale

The Essex PCC recognises the need to care and manage sickness absence. Simply put:

- Absence is a cost and a good measure of overall organisation.
- Absence affects our public reputation as an employer.
- Sickness absence is a good indicator of the health of the organisation.
- It reflects overall levels of wellbeing.

This strategy supports the PCC in managing levels of sickness absence and promoting a healthy attendance. This strategy is part of a holistic approach, which links commitment to business delivery, tackling problems that are organisational rather than individual and to the involvement of employees and their representatives.

Developing an absence strategy

This strategy has four strands:-

- Monitoring, measuring and understanding information about absence
- Managing sickness when it happens
- Promoting a healthy environment, tackling causes of absenteeism
- Promoting a culture that encourages attendance

(1) <u>Monitoring, measuring and understanding</u>

The PCC recognises good information systems are essential for absence management. To manage absence, the OPCC will establish an effective flow of information on sickness absence that will include:

- The overall number of working days lost to absence
- The cost of absence to the organisation
- Absence broken down by:
  - Gender
  - Age
  - Long-term sickness
  - Short-term sickness
- Analysis by type of absence
  - Absence related to a disability to be listed separately

The CEO will monitor and measure sickness levels through the Managers, as a performance indicator through management meetings.

<u>Process for collecting data</u>

The individual line manager will ensure all employees adhere to the sickness reporting guidelines. Managers have responsibility for ensuring the guidelines and recording of data is achieved in a timely manner.

<u>Monitoring Absence</u>

The individual line manager, as part of the absence management strategy, will strive to reduce the working days lost for staff and will monitor this on a monthly basis.

(2) <u>Managing absence when it happens</u>

The individual line manager will take actions in managing absence specifically to:

- Ensure staff contact their manager to update them on their progress and/or condition
- Ensure that staff receive an informal return to work interview after every period of short-term absence
- Insist on certification if the number of short-term absences as per sickness ‘triggers’ exceed five in 12 months, (this cost is recoverable)
- Managers to ensure appropriate Occupational Health referrals are carried out where “trigger” levels in a four-month period; to pick up early signs of longer-term issues and problems
- Check on persistent Monday or Friday absence as a pattern
- Consider pay effects for staff who fail to certificate after absences of more than five working days
- Offer more sensitive arrangements (looking at on an individual basis) for special and compassionate leave and dependent leave so that parents and carers are not compelled to take sick days to meet their domestic responsibilities - leave arrangements are contained in separate guidelines
- Giving managers a framework for reviewing levels of sickness attendance with staff. See Staff Capability (Managing Sickness) Procedure

Corporate HR will support the strategy by ensuring:

- Corporate HR will work with the PCC in monitoring, understanding and shaping the strategy
- Corporate HR through employee relations will provide specialist advice to clients on employment law, Equality Act related issues and procedural issues associated with capability issues

Line Managers will support the strategy by ensuring;

- They monitor and understand levels of sickness for their area of service delivery
- Regularly conduct return to work interviews
- Consider appropriate action where sickness absence triggers are reached
- Ensure appropriate support, guidance and relevant reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 are offered to staff before taking formal action under the Staff Capability Policy
- Seek appropriate HR or occupational Health interventions

Occupational Health will support the strategy by ensuring:

- They offer staff appropriate and timely advice to assist in facilitating a return to work
- Liaise with the medical profession to support diagnosis and prognosis of underlying medical issues
- Advise managers on boundaries of medical restrictions.

- Offer advice to staff on promoting a healthy lifestyle

(3) Promoting a healthy environment: tackling the causes of absence

Occupational Health intervention

Diagnosis

The strategy provides for Occupational Health interventions through either self-referral or line management referrals. This includes use of funding for diagnosis and fast track interventions.

Health promotion

The OPCC CEO has a duty of care to staff to minimise risks to health in the workplace. Occupational Health can provide a range of advice to officers and employees to reduce the instances of:

- Smoking
- Obesity
- Unhealthy eating
- Alcohol consumption, including rehabilitation programmes
- Stress, including external counselling services
- Back injury
- Sedentary lifestyle

(4) Management interventions

The OPCC CEO continues to offer the following to staff to reduce absence:

- Assessments of workplace comfort
- Action to make reasonable adjustments to comply with the Equality Act 2010
- Advice and guidance to managers on recognising stress in the workplace

(5) Promoting a culture that encourages attendance

The OPCC CEO recognises factors that can drive high levels of sickness absence which include:

- Employment insecurity
- Monotonous or repetitive work
- A lack of autonomy and job control
- Imbalance between reward and recognition
- Poor management

The OPCC CEO will ensure:

- Staff will have a voice through consultation in change processes

- Strive to provide staff with varied work and potentially extend their responsibilities to make work more interesting
- Allow staff more controls over the pace of their work
- Ensure staff receive regular feedback from managers through informal and PDR processes
- Ensure staff are praised for good performance and supported if they need to improve performance

(6) <u>Sustaining management commitment</u>

- The PCC will ensure the Chief Executive and Managers continue to treat absence as a priority
- Ensure the information system is updated and maintained
- Ensure managers retain the skills they need to manage absence effectively

(7) <u>Procedural guidance</u>

Procedural guidance is available for implementing the strategy

(1) Staff Capability (Managing Sickness) Procedure
(2) Reporting of Sickness Guidelines
(3) Leave Policy 2007 (Compassionate and Special Leave provisions included)
(4) Guidance on Recuperative & Restrictive duties
(5) Recognising & Managing Stress in the workplace guidelines.
(6) The application of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (As amended)