

# minutes



Meeting SICKNESS ABSENCE SELECT COMMITTEE

Date Monday, 23 June 2008 (commencing at 2.00 pm)

## Membership

Persons absent are marked with 'A'

## COUNCILLORS

John Knight (Chair)  
Andy Stewart (Vice-Chair)

	Reg Adair	A	Dave Shaw
	John Allin	A	Parry Tsimbiridis
A	Vincent Dobson	A	Brian Wombwell
	Andy Freeman		

## APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

The appointment by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10 March 2008 of Councillor John Knight as Chair and Councillor Andy Stewart as Vice-Chair of the Committee was noted.

## MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the Committee, as set out above, was noted.

## APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dobson, Tsimbiridis (on other County Council business) and Wombwell.

## DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Councillor Freeman declared a personal interest as an employee of UNISON.

## SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

The scope of the review, in looking at what could be done to reduce levels of sickness and whether current policies and procedures were in place to achieve the performance indicator of 8.75 days, was noted.

## ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME - UPDATE

Steve Morley, Programme Director (Infrastructure and Attendance Management), gave a presentation on work to reduce levels of sickness absence. Although there

had been improvement, sickness absence in 2007/08 had been 9.75 days, and Nottinghamshire remained one of the poorest performing authorities in this regard. Improvements had been made through case management, changes to policies and procedures, training and communication. He described the stages of the absence management system and the structures for overseeing the programme.

Councillor Knight asked whether Nottinghamshire would continue to be at the bottom of the league table. Mr Morley said that comparative figures for 2007/08 would be available, and that possibly the county would move up a few places. Councillor Knight wondered why Derbyshire's performance might be so much better, and referred to the representative from Derbyshire due at the next meeting. Mr Morley pointed out that Derbyshire's triggers were tighter than Nottinghamshire's and that they had a dedicated team of 8 permanent Attendance Management Officers .

Councillor Adair asked how the culture of the organisation would change, and who would drive this forward. Mr Morley replied that he believed that the Attendance Management Team should be integrated with Human Resources, and that managers need to become more responsible. Councillor Knight wondered whether managers should face disciplinary sanctions if they did not carry out trigger level interviews. Councillor Adair asked for more detailed information to identify hotspots and seasonal variations, on leave for urgent domestic business, and the role and effectiveness of Occupational Health. He agreed that managers should adhere to trigger level policies.

In reply to Councillor Knight, Mr Morley said that recommendations which the Select Committee might wish to consider included making the Attendance Management Team permanent, making attendance management part of supervision and performance review processes, and comparing with other authorities to check that the trigger levels were still relevant. He explained that Attendance Management Officers had been appointed until 31 March 2009. In reply to Councillor Adair, Mr Morley stated that he hoped managers' attitudes to attendance management could be changed within 12 months.

## **WORK PROGRAMME**

It was noted that there were two more meetings planned, on 21 July and 15 September. After discussion, it was agreed to invite Derbyshire County Council and Jack Markiewicz, Service Director, Human Resources on 21 July, and Councillor John Stocks, Cabinet Member for People, Performance and Property on 15 September, when the draft final report would also be considered. It was agreed not to seek evidence from trade unions or the private sector as part of the review.

The meeting closed at 2.55 pm.

## **CHAIR**