

21st July 2016

Agenda Item: 6

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR – CUSTOMERS AND HUMAN
RESOURCES****SUPPORT FOR THE “DYING TO WORK” CAMPAIGN****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Personnel Committee of the “Dying to Work” campaign and to seek support for signing the voluntary charter in support of this initiative.

Information and Advice**Background:**

2. The Dying to Work campaign was launched in light of the unfortunate and upsetting experience of a GMB member employed by a private company who had been diagnosed with terminal breast cancer. The cause was subsequently picked up nationally by the Trades Union Congress. It has received broad support from across the political spectrum with a number of private organisations having signed up to a voluntary charter.
3. The campaign seeks to afford additional employment protection to terminally ill employees who may not have the time to reskill or adapt to any “reasonable adjustments” which they may be offered under the current provision of the Equality Act 2010.
4. As retirement ages are increasing and Cancer Research UK are projecting that 1 in 3 people will be diagnosed with cancer, more people will receive a terminal diagnosis during their working life. Currently 1 in 10 new cancer cases are found in people under 50 which equates to over 33 thousand cases a year and whilst recognising all the significant advances in prevention and treatment, not all diagnoses being considered terminal, this is nonetheless an increasing concern.
5. The Council as part of its ongoing joint work with the recognised trades unions to review and consider its employment policies and management guidance, has set up a joint working party to consider the impact of terminal illness on both continuing employment and pay and pension benefits.

6. The voluntary charter seeks to agree ways in which employees will be supported, protected and guided through their employment following a terminal diagnosis. Nottinghamshire would be the first large county council nationally to sign up to the voluntary charter. A draft charter is attached to this report at Appendix 1.

Reasons for Recommendations

7. The Council treats its employees reasonably and with dignity and respect and is seeking to raise awareness and continue to promote a caring and sensitive approach to those employees unfortunate enough to receive a diagnosis of terminal illness and where the condition is significantly life limiting.
8. Through the ongoing work of the joint Task and Finish Group, the aspirations set out in the attached charter are being translated into clear advice and management guidance and training to support and enable those with line management responsibilities in handling any cases involving terminal illness in the most sensitive way possible. This will also ensure that personal control and choice is maintained wherever possible in accordance with the various existing employment policies and pension requirements.

Statutory and Policy Implications

9. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Human Resources Implications

10. The value of treating employees fairly and sensitively in the most challenging of circumstances strengthens the overarching psychological contract and builds further engagement with the workforce.
11. In seeking to promote Nottinghamshire as a great place to live and work, our commitment to employees facing a diagnosis of terminal illness may be another positive reason for candidates to elect to apply here making us an employer of choice particularly in the hard to recruit to disciplines such as frontline children's social care.

Equalities Implications

12. The Council's Attendance Management and Redeployment policies apply equally to all directly employed staff. These procedures contain guidance which ensures appropriate and consistent management of these policies and the further work of the joint Task and Finish Group will build on the existing management guidance.

Financial Implications

13. Consideration will be given to any implications for the Local Government Pension Fund and requests for extensions to sick pay will be monitored to identify any additional financial impact arising from the adoption of the voluntary charter.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

1. Support the signing of the voluntary charter to promote the positive treatment of employees with a diagnosis of terminal illness.
2. Note the ongoing work of the task and finish group to develop additional management guidance and training to enable them to continue to support their team members who are terminally ill.

Marjorie Toward

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Resources Department**

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Constitutional Comments (KK 23/06/16)

14. The proposals in this report are within the remit of Personnel Committee.

Financial Comments (RWK 23/06/16)

15. There are no financial implications arising directly from the proposals in the report.

Human Resources Comments (GME 22/06/16)

16. The human resources implications are implicit in the body of the report.

Background Papers

TUC Dying to Work Campaign Fact Sheet

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All