

Report to: **Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **27 March 2008**

By: **Director of Adult Social Care**

Title of report: **Adult Social Care Departmental Sickness Absence Levels**

Purpose of report: **To update the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee on current sickness levels within the department and on the success of the stress management steering group and physical therapy pilot scheme.**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee are recommended to note the content of this report and the progress made to date in relation to the Department's sickness absence levels.

1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 There are no financial implications as a direct result of this report. Committee may wish to note, however, that the absence cost for the Adult Social Care (ASC) Department during 2006/07 (excluding replacement costs) amounted to £1,137,814, a reduction of 15.5% on the cost in 2005/06.

2. Background and Supporting Information

2.1 With effect from June 2005, in line with East Sussex County Council's priority to deliver against BVPI 12 and reduce sickness absence across the County Council, the Personnel and Training Department introduced a new Attendance Management Procedure. The revised procedure tightens the trigger points for short term absence and strengthens the process in relation to the management of long term absence.

2.2 An excel spreadsheet containing charts which show the Council's annual outturns of sickness absence since 2003/04 (department by department) is attached at **Appendix 1**.

2.3 The ASC Departmental Attendance Management Co-ordinator continues to actively support the Personnel and Training Department in reducing the levels of sickness absence and regularly contacts line managers and sends them the relevant monthly absence trigger reports for their members of staff. The Co-ordinator also attends the departmental Stress Management Steering Group meetings on a regular basis in order to contribute to new ways of improving attendance and monitoring systems. The corporate Attendance Management Steering Group has been replaced with the new Health and Safety Steering Group chaired by the Director of Transport and Environment. ASC is represented on the group by the Assistant Director of Operations.

3. Current Position

3.1 The Corporate BVPI 12 absence rate for quarters one, two and three (i.e. April to December 2007) has been calculated as 5.73 days per FTE, which for the authority as a whole is an increase of 1.4% on the same period last year. If this increase is maintained for the whole of 2007/08, the final Corporate BVPI 12 outturn figure for the whole authority will be 8.12 days per FTE, above the target of 7.85 days. However, in Adult Social Care the absence rate for quarters one, two and three, has been calculated as 9.78 days per FTE, which is a 4.6% reduction on the same period last year. If this reduction is maintained for the duration of 2007/08, the final outturn figure for the department will be 13.01 days per FTE, well below the 2007/08 target set of 13.36 days.

4. Stress Management Steering Group

4.1 The ASC stress management steering group has continued to meet quarterly to look at ways of addressing the causes of stress absences. The group has developed an action plan which is attached at **Appendix 2**.

4.2 Two 'What Stress! In Local Government' workshops were organised for ASC staff on 12 December 2007 and 20 February 2008. Both workshops were fully attended and the facilitators received very positive feedback, attached at **Appendix 3**. The stress management steering group will discuss continuing the workshops on an annual basis at the next meeting in April.

4.3 **Appendix 4** shows the average days lost due to stress absences across all departments for April to September 2006/07 and 2007/08. Stress absences in ASC for these periods has decreased by 26.4% and for the whole council has decreased by 15.5%.

5. Physical Therapy Pilot Scheme

5.1 This pilot scheme was launched on 15th January 2007. During the seven months of the pilot 111 employees were referred through Health Response UK for physical therapy.

5.2 Employees completed their course of treatment in an average of 4.6 sessions per person. This figure is slightly lower than the national average reported by Health Response UK of five treatment sessions.

5.3 Employees receiving physical therapy through Health Response UK had a total absence of 62 days during the trial period, an average of 0.5 days per person. This compares favourably with the estimated 495 absence days (4.4 days per person, based on national statistics provided by Health Response UK) that may have occurred should no access to treatment have been offered. The drop in absence from the predicted 4.4 days to 0.5 days is in line with Health Response UK's averages for organisations using their physical therapy service.

5.4 Detailed financial calculations indicate an overall return on the investment of 51%, with cases of short term injury rather than on-going chronic problems producing the greatest return on investment.

6. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendation

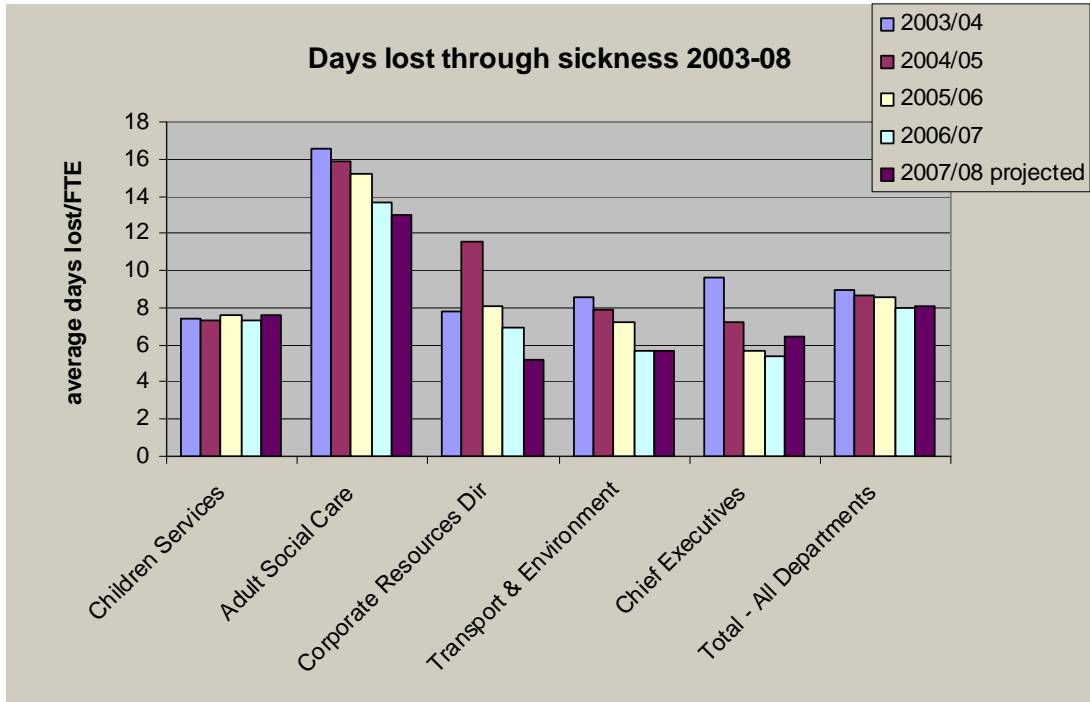
6.1 The ASC Scrutiny Committee are recommended to note progress made to date in reducing the Department's sickness absence levels during the current financial year and to support the continuation of this positive corporate and departmental work.

KEITH HINKLEY
Director of Adult Social Care

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Local Member(s): All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None



Stress Steering Group Action Plan

| Areas | Jul-07 | Aug-07 | Sep-07 | Oct-07 | Nov-07 | Dec-07 | Jan-08 | Feb-08 |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------|---|--|---|--|--|--|
| Stress Steering Group | Stress Steering Group (SSG) meeting: - data analysis - formation of action plan | | | Stress Steering Group (SSG) meeting: - data analysis - which hot spots to target - initial feedback from using stress assessment tool | SSG members to ensure stress is discussed at Service / Team level following BE article in each of their represented areas for: - for top down and bottom up approach - trigger for stress risk assessments - review stress assessment tool | SSG Meeting: - stress assessment tool - full trial feedback - update on targeted hot spots | | SSG meeting 26 Feb: - discuss stress answers in staff survey results and form action plan regarding future consultation - review corporate stress working arrangements and how departmental work fits into this, including discussions regarding focus groups - update on targeted priority areas - discussion regarding tackling team stress and function stress for particular areas, probably highlighted by the update on targeted |
| Publicity | | | Brief Encounter Article - Judy Benoy BE - advertise "Stress in Local Government" seminar in November | | | BE - advertise "Stress in Local Government" seminar in February | Launch annual stress feedback return | |
| Consultation | Revised stress assessment tool trialled through DPS Home Care for 3 months | | Staff survey undertaken | Staff survey undertaken | Staff survey undertaken | | Annual stress feedback return | - Collation of annual risk return data for analysis - staff survey results |
| Corporate Health & Safety | | | | | | "Stress in Local Government" seminar | Review Corporate Policy Documents and update | "Stress in Local Government" seminar |

Stress Steerin

| Areas | Mar-08 | Apr-08 | May-08 | Jun-08 |
|---|--------|---|--------|--|
| <p>Stress Steering Group</p> | | <p>SSG Meeting 29 April: - discuss presentation of analysis of annual risk return - update on targeted priority areas</p> | | <p>SSG Meeting 24 June: - review activity over the past year and discuss turning this work over to the Health & Safety Steering Group</p> |
| <p>Publicity</p> | | | | |
| <p>Consultation</p> | | | | |
| <p>Corporate Health & Safety</p> | | | | |

**WHAT STRESS! IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT
FOR ASC STAFF ON 12.12.07
SEMINAR EVALUATION SHEET SUMMARY (40 completed)**

(Scoring available was poor, average, good and excellent)

- How would you rate the lecturer? *All 40 people rated it excellent*
- Was the information presented clearly? *All 40 people rated it excellent*
- Was the information interesting? *All 40 people rated it excellent*
- How would you rate the content of the seminar? *39 people rated it excellent, 1 person rated it good*
- To what extent were the aims of the seminar fulfilled?
 - *Are you now better equipped to cope with stress at work? 27 people rated it excellent, 12 people rated it good*
 - *Have you learnt a range of techniques for coping with stress? 22 people rated it excellent, 16 people rated it good*
 - *Will you be able to use what you have learnt in your working environment to benefit others? 26 people rated it excellent, 13 people rated it good*
- Did the seminar meet your personal learning objectives? *All 40 people said yes*
- Were the facilities conducive to a useful learning experience? *All 40 people said yes*
- Would you recommend this seminar to others? *All 40 people said yes*
- How do you feel this seminar will benefit you? *There were many comments here including:*
 - *Lively, interesting, informative*
 - *Help me manage case loads, learn to relax, cope*
 - *Will help in every way – private and work life*
 - *Help to cope with every day stressors*
 - *Recognise signs of early burn out*
 - *Increase awareness of self and affects/responses of/to situations*
 - *Confirmed how stressed I am and the need to act urgently*
 - *Helps me to know myself*
 - *Will work towards creating a stress free environment*
 - *Help to recognise stressors and implement strategies*
 - *Having suffered from depression this year I found course supportive, informative and fun*
 - *Will use skills gained on self and championing others*

- Understand self and colleagues better
 - Help to recognise own personal characteristics/triggers
 - Raises awareness
-
- Are there any additional comments you would like to make? *Again there were many comments made including:*
 - Will stay with me for a long time
 - Useful for work and play
 - Very informative and amusing
 - More informative than any other stress courses attended
 - Useful for work and play
 - Best, most relevant, realistic & enjoyable seminar ever
 - Puts stress into perspective
 - Gave me hope that I can carry on with job
 - Excellent presenter, positive and fascinating
 - Very enjoyable, loved tutors style, kept interest all day
 - Everyone in ESCC should attend
 - I have more coping mechanisms now
 - A tonic – compassionate lesson in life
 - Great way to learn
 - Great to have a presenter who understands stress from employees point

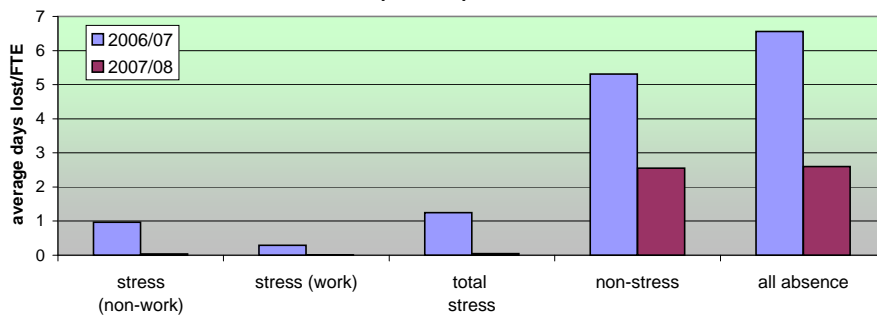
Finally, a majority of participants felt that this course should be attended by all staff, some saying it should be mandatory, and twenty stated that they felt that all managers should attend, from senior managers to first line supervisors, for the benefit of themselves and the people they manage.

Average days lost by stress/non-stress April to September 2006/07 - 2007/08

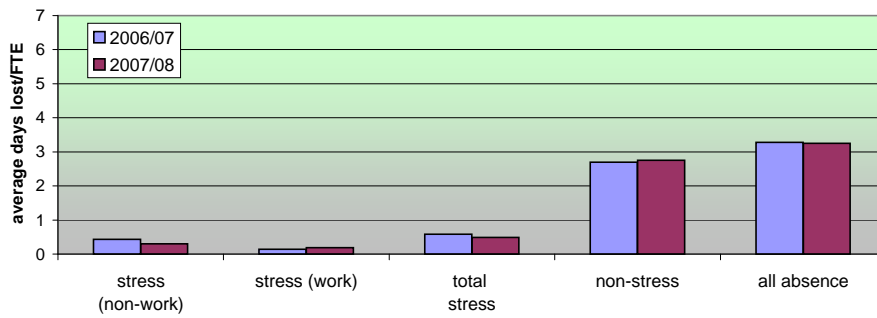
| | | stress (non-work) | stress (work) | total stress | non-stress | all absence |
|----------------------------|---------|----------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------|-------------|
| Adults | 2006/07 | 0.97 | 0.29 | 1.25 | 5.31 | 6.56 |
| Chief Executives | 2006/07 | 0.20 | 0.10 | 0.30 | 1.97 | 2.27 |
| Children | 2006/07 | 0.91 | 0.39 | 1.30 | 3.97 | 5.27 |
| Corp Resources Directorate | 2006/08 | 0.19 | 0.10 | 0.29 | 2.36 | 2.65 |
| schools | 2006/09 | 0.28 | 0.08 | 0.36 | 2.03 | 2.39 |
| Transport and Environment | 2006/10 | 0.17 | 0.03 | 0.20 | 2.29 | 2.50 |
| ESCC | 2006/07 | 0.43 | 0.14 | 0.58 | 2.70 | 3.28 |
| Adults | 2007/08 | 0.54 | 0.38 | 0.92 | 4.93 | 5.85 |
| Chief Executives | 2007/08 | 0.24 | 0.09 | 0.32 | 2.53 | 2.86 |
| Children | 2007/08 | 0.45 | 0.34 | 0.79 | 3.22 | 4.01 |
| Corp Resources Directorate | 2007/08 | 0.06 | 0.02 | 0.08 | 2.24 | 2.32 |
| schools | 2007/08 | 0.25 | 0.15 | 0.40 | 2.26 | 2.66 |
| Transport and Environment | 2007/08 | 0.04 | 0.01 | 0.04 | 2.56 | 2.60 |
| ESCC | 2007/08 | 0.30 | 0.19 | 0.49 | 2.76 | 3.25 |

note:
 excludes medical appointments
 includes ALL staff, including those on temporary contracts <1 year's service

Average days lost by stress/non-stress
 Adult Social Care
 April to September



Average days lost by stress/non-stress
 ESCC all departments
 April to September



Average days lost due to stress
 ESCC all departments
 April to September

