

Appendix 1	Summary of key findings and recommendations	Recommendations			Status
		H	M	L	
<p>Subject: Absence Management</p> <p>Category: Assurance – Risk</p> <p>Date issued: 26 June 2024 Draft 04 September 2024 Final</p> <p>Level of Assurance:  Substantial for policy and procedures.  Limited for the reporting and monitoring of sickness absence, training of managers and absence management documentation.</p>	<p>The purpose of the audit was to evaluate the operation of the systems in place for monitoring of absence to ensure maintenance of staff wellbeing in new working environments and capacity for service delivery.</p> <p>Recording of sickness absences, working patterns and calculation of the Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) on the iTrent system (the HR and Payroll system) is administered by the Employment and Reward (E&amp;R) team. All areas (excluding Facilities and Catering services who still use paper forms) have access to the sickness e-form on CS16 to report sickness to the E&amp;R team. Line managers are responsible for reporting sickness to the E&amp;R team on a timely basis to enable sickness records on the iTrent system to be updated. There are intentions to introduce a self-service function for iTrent within the next 12 to 18 months which will allow employees to directly record sickness absences and managers to check/approve them, subject to business case approval and governance that is still to be achieved, aligned to the 21st Century theme of Blueprint Transformation.</p> <p>A Maximising Attendance at Work (MAW) policy is in place, and this details how managers should manage and monitor attendance and provide assistance to employees to enable a supported return to work. Absence triggers and stages of absence monitoring are detailed in the policy and these are different for local government employees and Teachers on Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) terms and conditions of employment. There are three stages of monitoring within the policy and reports, which highlight employees reaching an absence trigger, are generated from the iTrent system. MiTeam is a management tool which provides sickness absence information to enable line managers to view absence records for staff they manage.</p> <p>Internal Audit considers that the level of assurance is substantial for policy and procedures. Line managers are making use of the services available to support the wellbeing of employees such as Occupational Health and Physiotherapy and the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is being used by employees. Assurance is limited for the reporting and monitoring of sickness absence, training of managers and absence management documentation. Testing highlighted that there was a lack of understanding of how to apply the sickness absence policy by some managers and how / when to apply the various stages of absence</p>	0	4	3	Management have accepted the factual accuracy of the report and its findings and agreed to implement the recommendations.

	<p>monitoring and when an employee has met an absence trigger. It also highlighted some absences (7 areas) that had not been reported by Services which could result in absence cases not being managed in line with the policy, overpayments and an underestimate of the performance indicator for the number of days of sickness. Internal Audit made the following recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training on managing sickness absence should be provided to managers and the LearnPro Course on Maximising Attendance at Work should be reviewed and updated. Managers should be reminded that sickness absence information should be reported to E&amp;R on a timely basis. (Medium)</li> <li>• The instances where staff have not clocked in and do not have a recorded absence reason should be reviewed and action taken, when appropriate, implementing effective controls. (Medium).</li> <li>• The absence management monitoring report should be updated to include teams from the Chief Executive's service and consideration given to including absence monitoring stages that have been reached by employees. (Medium)</li> <li>• Documentation should be completed and appropriately retained for all sickness absences. Management should explore whether absence documentation (eg return to work documents / attendance review meetings) can be stored centrally. (Medium)</li> <li>• The Maximising Attendance at Work policy should be reviewed and updated to reflect the audit findings. (Low)</li> <li>• Maximising Attendance at Work information and guidance held on the intranet should be reviewed and updated and any new policies should be communicated to employees. (Low)</li> <li>• HR should consider implementing additional absence performance information such as: Number of employees on absence monitoring stages 1,2 and 3; Number of employees at the capability stage; and Number of employees utilising the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). The data reports used to generate performance data should be retained. (Low)</li> </ul>				
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