

TASK & FINISH GROUP
OF THE
MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
27TH FEBRUARY 2013
“REVIEW OF SICKNESS ABSENCE”
MINUTES

PRESENT: Councillors: Steve Niblock (Chair of Group), Tony Newman and Roy Gladden

ALSO PRESENT: Janet Henshaw – Clerk To The Authority and Director of Legal, Procurement & Democratic Services
Nick Mernock – Director Of People & Organisational Development
Kelly Johnson – Minute Taker

1. Minutes Of Previous Meeting

The Group considered the Minutes of the previous meeting, held on 15th January 2013 and approved them as an accurate record.

2. Members Feedback In Relation To Information Packs

The Group considered and discussed the information provided to them, as requested at the last meeting, which included the following:

- Current Absence & Attendance Policy
- Current Discipline Procedure
- Current “Other Duties” Service Instruction
- Current Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy
- DRAFT Revised Discipline Procedure
- DRAFT Revised “Other Duties” Service Instruction
- DRAFT “Return to Operational Duties” Service Instruction
- DRAFT “Positive Mental Health & Wellbeing” Service Instruction
- DRAFT “Medical Discharge” Service Instruction

The Group discussed the possibility of adopting a Capability Procedure, with Members of the Group agreeing that this would be a sensible way forward. The Group acknowledged however, that any such procedure would need to be fair and equitable, and separate from any Disciplinary Procedure, with each case being dealt with on its own merit.

The Group also discussed the possibility of reinstating an Incentive Scheme for staff with no periods of sickness absence (albeit on a smaller scale than the previous scheme).

The Group recognised that given the current situation, this would send out a positive message that the Authority values and appreciates the work being undertaken by a reduced number of staff and acknowledges the additional pressure placed upon those staff.

Following consideration of these matters;

It was resolved that:

(a) The Group be provided with a presentation at the next meeting, highlighting:

- A breakdown of information regarding individuals on long-term sickness absence (excluding names of individuals).
- Approximate costs to the Authority in relation to long-term sickness absence, both in terms of sick pay and costs of covering such absences.
- Sickness absence figures for individuals self-rostering.
- Sickness absence figures for individuals actually operating on fire appliances (to include Search & Rescue Team).
- The number of individuals who would be eligible for an award/ incentive (for not being off sick within the past 12 months) and approximate costs associated with providing a suitable award.

(b) The Group be provided with Copy of the DRAFT Capability Procedure at the next meeting, for their consideration.

3. Determination Of Work Plan/ Actions

The Group considered how they wished to proceed with this review and also considered the need to consult with the relevant Representative Bodies prior to any decisions being finalised in relation to the work of this Group.

In light of this, the Group agreed to the following work plan/ actions:

- At the next meeting, the Group will consider a further presentation from Nick Mernock – Director of People & Organisational Development,

which will cover the information outlined above. Further meeting dates will be agreed at this meeting, depending on what the Group determine is required at that stage.

- A report will be prepared and submitted to the meeting of the Performance & Scrutiny Committee on 30th May 2013 outlining the recommendations of the Group.
- Following consideration by the Performance & Scrutiny Committee, the recommendations of this Group and any proposed new procedures or policies, will be subject to 12 weeks Consultation with the relevant Representative Bodies.
- Once the Consultation period has concluded, this Group will convene again to consider responses and finalise the recommendations to the full Authority.

Close

Date of the Next Meeting: Wednesday 20th March 2013