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Fy Nghyf / My Ref : CM39058

Eich Cyf / Your Ref :

Dyddiad / Date: 13th March 2018

Councillor David Walker  
Chair Of Policy Review & Performance Scrutiny Committee  
County Hall  
Atlantic Wharf  
Cardiff Bay  
CF10 4UW

Annwyl / Dear Councillor Walker

**PRAP Scrutiny Committee - 17th January 2018**

Thank you for your letter of 25<sup>th</sup> January 2018. This is an important issue and I welcome the Committee's comments and work on this matter.

Concerning GLL, the 18 months leading up to December 2017 included 6 months in which the Council managed Leisure prior to the transfer on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016. During these six months, the leisure management put in considerable effort to bringing cases to a conclusion so that the minimal number of long term cases were passed over to GLL on transfer. This resulted in eight of the long-term cases being reduced to three as at the date of transfer. The transfer involved 201 staff (147.61 FTE). However, as you have suggested we have contacted GLL to discuss and understand their data on sickness absence and any good practice that we could use within the Council. Officers from both Scrutiny and HR have met with GLL and a report is being prepared on any learning which will be shared with your Committee.

With regards to Cormac, this is more difficult as we do not have an on-going partnership arrangement with them. We understand that once we had met with them during the Alternative Delivery model to have discussions and shared our policy and processes, they felt that any improvements in sickness levels would be marginal, as we had already done much of the work that they would do. Andy Mudd from APSE has also been trying to verify the Cormac claims through APSE's network with contacts in Cornwall but at the time of writing this response, no evidence has been found to support the suggestion that their sickness had been reduced to 3% where a service such as Waste is contracted out.

ATEBWCH I / PLEASE REPLY TO :

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The Council welcomes correspondence in English and Welsh and we will ensure that we communicate with you in the language of your choice, whether that's English, Welsh or bilingual as long as you let us know which you prefer. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to any delay.

Cyflawni ein gweledigaeth o ddod y brifddinas orau i fyw ynddi yn Ewrop

Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg a byddwn yn sicrhau ein bod yn cyfathrebu â chi yn eich dewis iaith boed yn Gymraeg, yn Saesneg neu'n ddwyieithog dim ond i chi roi gwybod i ni pa un sydd well gennych. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn creu unrhyw oedi.

difference | gwnewch wahaniaeth

We also appreciate your comments regarding other Councils such as Merthyr and we are liaising with the Head of HR there to understand their policies and processes and officers will be visiting Merthyr for further discussions. To assist with this work Appendix 1 provides a direct comparison of their policy against ours.

We do agree that in order to improve sickness we need strong leadership and this is evidenced in the significant interest and resource that is being put into both the delivery and overseeing of the action plan, including by the Chief Executive himself. This will also be reflected within Education and the leadership provided by the Director of Education and the Chairs of Governors.

A number of areas within the Council have undertaken team stress risk assessments and this is also part of all directorate H&S policies where consideration is given to the six Stress Management Standards identified by the HSE. These have not always been successful and have sometimes created more stress for the individuals taking part. Individual stress risk assessments are undertaken on request by an individual and for every occasion where work place stress is identified whether an individual is absent from work or not. In addition, in order to assist managers with spotting the early signs of stress, the Council runs a course for managers and employees regarding mental health in the workplace and this is available through the Academy. I am happy to discuss this issue further or receive further correspondence if Committee members have detailed questions or comments around stress risk assessments.

There is a dedicated team in HR, which provide managers with support in dealing with absence cases. This team provide support and guidance to managers in dealing with cases including long-term sick, frequent short-term sickness and those who have patterns of sickness. The CEX has requested that we look to add additional support to this team over the medium term to add additional capacity.

The non-recording of sickness has been a concern for officers and particularly where the spotlight is being placed on services with high sickness. However, there is no evidence that sickness is going unreported and if it were there would be an expectation that sickness levels would fall which has not been the case.

It is part of the action plan to look at particular groups, which would include both teaching assistants and frontline employees in order to ascertain whether there are any reasons as to why certain occupational groups would have higher sickness than others and what processes can be put in place to assist this. We have engaged APSE to carry out this additional work with focus groups covering the areas identified in the APSE report.

I hope the above is of assistance.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely



**Cynghorydd / Councillor Chris Weaver**  
**Aelod Cabinet dros Gyllid, Moderneiddio a Pherfformiad**  
**Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation & Performance**