
Report to Audit and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 11 December 2025

Subject: Absence Compliance Update

Report by: Senior Manager (HR and Workforce Development)

1.0 Purpose

1.1. This paper provides Committee with:

- (i) an update on the Maximising Attendance and Well-being action plan,
- (ii) an update on the work being undertaken by the Absence Compliance Officer role.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1. That Committee notes the report and accompanying appendices, commenting and challenging as appropriate.

3.0 Considerations

Maximising Attendance and Employee Wellbeing Action Plan

- 3.1. The Maximising Attendance and Employee Wellbeing Action plan was originally developed in 2019 and updated in 2023. (Appendix 1).
- 3.2. The action plan outlined a number of recommendations and proposals, which aimed to promote measures on attendance and wellbeing across the Council. The update in 2023 renewed our focus on the wellbeing of our staff. The action plan is now complete. Whilst one action was not progressed this is as a result of the Health Working Lives scheme no longer being offered by Public Health Scotland. However, the standards, as a framework, continue to inform the work of the Healthy Working Lives group in order to promote staff health and wellbeing.
- 3.3. The Councils recently approved Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy will continue to monitor and report on staff wellbeing progress, with updates provided to the Committee on a regular basis.

Absence Compliance Officer Post

- 3.4. In order to provide a targeted and focused approach on absence management, and in particular management compliance with policies and processes, the Strategic Oversight Group agreed the introduction of a 2-year fixed-term Absence Compliance Officer post, commencing from October 2024.
- 3.5. The first year of this new post has been focused on two key areas of absence management.
- 3.6. Firstly, the compliance aspect addresses consistency and accountability of managers across the Council, by ensuring they follow the agreed Maximising Attendance processes. This has been an on-going piece of work including:
 - more regular and detailed management reports submitted to Senior Managers;
 - detailed reports on return to works and other support measures; and
 - ensuring absence is a regular agenda item at management meetings, and that it forms part of constructive conversation meetings.
- 3.7. The second aspect of the post has been upskilling managers and developing new training courses, materials, templates and best practice examples. Coaching is also being provided in key areas where more bespoke support is required.
- 3.8. In addition to this, to focus on the root causes of absence, there has been a spotlight on wellbeing, with measures such as fully utilising and promoting the employee assistance programme, and undertaking a number of initiatives in conjunction with the healthy working lives programme.
- 3.9. Appendix 2 provides an overview of work being undertaken on an ongoing basis in support of reducing the Council's absence levels, and increasing staff wellbeing.
- 3.10. The Absence Compliance Officer has also sought to develop a range of supports for staff and managers, with a focus on support, and absence management. This has included signposting and assisting managers implement existing policies aimed at supporting staff, such policies include
 - A Menopause policy;
 - Carers Policy;
 - Pregnancy Loss Policy;
 - Review of the Maximising Attendance Policy;
 - Flexible Working and Work / Life Balance Policy (in review); and
 - Special Leave provisions (in review).

- 3.11. Moving forward, the Absence Compliance Officer role will continue to develop the Council's approach to absence management, with the aim not only to reduce absence levels as a whole but create an organisational culture where the wellbeing of staff is prioritised, both through our policies, processes, and daily interactions.

4.0 Sustainability Implications

- 4.1. None.

5.0 Resource Implications

5.1. Financial Details

- 5.2. The full financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. This includes a reference to full life cycle costs where appropriate. Yes ☒

- 5.3. Finance have been consulted and have agreed the financial implications as set out in the report. Yes ☒

5.4. Staffing

6.0 Exempt Reports

- 6.1. Is this report exempt? Yes ☐ (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No ☒

7.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

(1) Our Priorities

Clackmannanshire will be attractive to businesses & people and ensure fair opportunities for all ☐

Our families; children and young people will have the best possible start in life ☐

Women and girls will be confident and aspirational, and achieve their full potential ☐

Our communities will be resilient and empowered so that they can thrive and flourish ☐

(2) Council Policies

Complies with relevant Council Policies ☒

8.0 Impact Assessments

- 8.1 Have you attached the combined equalities impact assessment to ensure compliance with the public sector equality duty and fairer Scotland duty? (All EFSIAs also require to be published on the Council's website)

No ☒

- 8.2 If an impact assessment has not been undertaken you should explain why:

There are no direct impacts resulting from the contents of this report.

9.0 Legality

- 9.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes ☒

10.0 Appendices

- 10.1 Please list any appendices attached to this report. If there are no appendices, please state "none".

Appendix 1 – Maximising Attendance and Employee Wellbeing Action Plan

Appendix 2 – Absence Compliance Officer Sample Highlight Report

11.0 Background Papers

- 11.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)

Yes ☐ (please list the documents below) No ☒

Author(s)

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Approved by

NAME	DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE
Chris Alliston	Strategic Director – Partnership and Performance	

APPENDIX 1: MAXIMISING ATTENDANCE AND EMPLOYEE WELLBEING CAMPAIGN - ACTION PLAN

No.	Action	Reason for Action	Tasks required	Lead/ Owner	Action Due	Q1 19/20 Update	Action update – as at May 2023	Action Update – as at November 2025
1.	Points arising out of Internal Audit report to be considered in relation to the content of the Maximising Attendance Policy and Procedures.	To ensure the consistent and transparent application of robust controls.	HR will ensure, that these points are included, as part of the next scheduled review of the Maximising Attendance Policy / Procedures / Managers' Guide.	HR Service Manager	31 December 2019	Work is on track to address the recommendations contained within the IA report.	COMPLETE The Maximising Attendance Policy and Procedure has been recently reviewed through the policy group process and was agreed by Council in June 2023.	COMPLETE
2.	A review/refresh of the corporate record outlining who has attended Maximising Attendance training is required.	The corporate record must be updated to ensure that all officers with supervisory responsibilities have undertaken the mandatory Maximising Attendance training.	HR to send email reminder to all managers with supervisory responsibilities to establish who has attended a Maximising Attendance training course within the last 3 years. This will determine who requires training or a refresher course.	HR Service Manager	19 April 2019	HR email has been sent and returns are being collated to determine training/ refresher course requirements.	COMPLETE This is now captured on an ongoing basis via the itrent/clacks academy system, with maximising attendance training offered on an ongoing basis	COMPLETE

3.	A programme of communications aimed at Maximising Attendance will take place throughout 19/20.	<p>To emphasise the level of corporate priority in relation to absence/wellbeing and the impacts to the Council/Services and Teams of non-compliance.</p> <p>To remind all staff and line managers of their responsibilities for complying with the Maximising Attendance Policy and Procedures.</p>	a)	Initial comms piece will be sent from Chief Executive following recent attendance at parliamentary committee to raise the profile of employee wellbeing and emphasise the corporate priority of reducing absence levels (increasing resilience, wellbeing, engagement and capacity, and reducing the financial impact of absence).	Chief Exec/ Strategic Director	By end April 19	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE
			b)	A focused communications strategy will run throughout the year to raise the profile of the impact of sickness absence, and continue the focus on promoting wellbeing (This will include a series of e-communications on Connect, posters, the video clips/podcasts, digital information screens at staff entrances)	Comms team	December 2019	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE
			c)	Staff roadshows will take place during early June 2019 and absence management will be a key topic.	SLG	June 2019	COMPLETE	COMPLETE	COMPLETE
			d)	Working with partners and other local authorities to consider and apply good practice.	SLG	Sept 2019	Teleconference being set up with East Ayrshire Council to discuss supportive approaches.	COMPLETE	COMPLETE

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4.	A systematic approach will be taken to review current long-term sickness absence within each directorate, ensuring that the instances of non compliance with the Policy and recording are addressed.	To ensure compliance with the Maximising Attendance Policy and Procedures. To ensure a strong ongoing focus to improve attendance at work.	All Directors will work with Service Managers, HR BPs and OH where appropriate to review current long term sickness absences and ensure that individual plans are in place to support employees back to work.	Directors	Summer 2019	People portfolio meetings completed in June for Social Services and Education. Place/P&P meetings to follow in Q2 19/20.	COMPLETE here are meetings in place in each directorate to ensure absence management is being followed consistently and a new 3 month review process period between senior managers/ HR and strategic directors is also in place	COMPLETE Senior HR BP has followed up and ensured BPs are continuing to have these meetings. Absence compliance officer also links in where required, with monthly MI generated to inform senior management meetings.
5.	Refresh commitment to provide meaningful, regular updates to absence information held on Pentana.	To ensure the data contains up to date action on how short and long term absence is being addressed across the council.	Directors to ensure that Pentana updates are provided for their directorates.	Directors/ Service Manager	August 2019	Meetings ongoing to assess whether current Pentana requirements remain fit for purpose. Thereafter data requirements will be refreshed and rolled out at ESLG in August.	Pentana reports are tabled on a regular basis to ESLG/SLG	COMPLETE Reports continue to be provided and scrutinised as appropriate, with absence levels recorded on the Pentana performance management system.
6.	Review whether automation/ prompts on iTrent can be set for sickness absence over 7 days	Efficiencies have been achieved regarding annual leave requests via the use of automated prompts. Rolling this out to sickness absence is expected to increase efficiency for procedural compliance and reporting of sickness absence.	HR Service Manager to identify whether automated prompts/ escalation can be set up on iTrent for sickness absence over 7 days.	HR Service Manager	June 2019	New prompts have been set up and communications to roll out are in progress.	COMPLETE	COMPLETE Additional prompts have been put in place by the Absence Compliance Officer.

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7.	Ensure employee wellbeing and improving attendance is placed on team/departments meetings as a standing agenda item and that updates tie in with corporate priorities.	Ensure messages during campaign are reiterated during team/directorate meetings.	All line managers with supervisory responsibilities required to report progress on actions/updates through line management routes.	All line managers	August 2019	Cascade required through Strategic Directors and Senior Managers – Action ongoing	COMPLETE This is an ongoing agenda item on SMTs/ bipartites etc as well as absence specific review meetings with HRBPs. Senior Managers should be discussing absence and steps being taken with supervisors as part of their 1-2-1 engagement.	COMPLETE As noted above HR team meet three monthly with appropriate Senior Managers/Team Leaders on absence. HR Team have absence discussions on an ongoing basis Absence Compliance Officer will also work with managers to create action plans for specific cases.
8.	Embed employee attendance and wellbeing into the PRD process.	Integrate objective as a positive indicator of performance.	All line managers to ensure that all PRDs make reference to all absence management to the extent that: a) Managers have already undertaken or will undertake the required training or ensure they attend a refresher session b) Managers will ensure they comply with Council policies and reporting requirements c) Embed these requirements within guidance and on iTrent.	All line managers	By end March 2020	Strategic Directors to seek assurance from Senior Managers that actions are embedded in PRD process. – Action ongoing	The PRD process has been replaced with Constructive Conversations where individual wellbeing is a main focus. Objective setting should include consideration of absence levels. Business Plans should include targets related to absence levels.	COMPLETE Constructive Conversations process now embedded as the Council's staff performance management framework. .

No.	Action	Reason for Action	Tasks required	Lead/ Owner	Action Due	Q1 19/20 Update	Action update – as at May 2023	Action Update – as at November 2025
9.	<p>Review/create family friendly policies that offer/promote flexible options aimed at reducing sickness absence:</p> <p>a) Develop and implement a Menopause policy</p> <p>b) Review and refresh family friendly policies to promote a variety of options that provide an ongoing focus to improve attendance at work.</p>	Ensure that policies provide a range of options to support employees and improve attendance at work.	HR Service Manager will lead the development of a menopause policy and review family-friendly policies to provide options to improve attendance at work.	HR Service Manager	Ongoing	<p>Reviews for Flexible working, Carers policy currently going through internal governance routes. Special Leave policy due for imminent approval.</p> <p>Development of menopause policy has commenced.</p>	<p>COMPLETE</p> <p>The menopause policy is in place. In addition we developed and implemented a carers policy and pregnancy loss policy. In addition flexible working. Special leave have been updated.</p>	<p>COMPLETE</p> <p>Menopause policy is currently being reviewed alongside a new policy looking to support Menstrual Health, we have also created a neo natal policy recently in line with recent updates. All special leave arrangements including bereavement leave support are being reviewed. Carers policy has been reviewed and a number of sessions held by HRBP team over all council locations for Carers week to highlight the supports available and to bring carers together.</p>

No.	Action	Reason for Action	Tasks required	Lead/ Owner	Action Due	Q1 19/20 Update	Action update – as at May 2023	Action Update – as at November 2025
10.	Continue to promote wellbeing in order to progress the 'Gold' Healthy Working Lives award.	Embed actions to promote wellbeing with the campaign to improve attendance at work.	Link HWL campaign actions with efforts to improve attendance at work.	HWL Group	Ongoing	Comms team due to meet with HWL group to align campaign dates	NOT COMPLETE Council approved the Wellbeing Strategy 2022 – 2025 and the HWL Group will take forward the identified actions	NOT COMPLETE HWL standard no longer offered by Public Health Scotland, however the standards as a framework continue to inform work of the HWL group in order to promote staff health and wellbeing. As such, this action cannot be completed.
11.	Embed outputs of wellbeing focus group arising out of the Staff Survey results/actions into the Workforce plan.	Ensure links are made to embed and integrate actions where possible.	OD Adviser to ensure links with staff survey, workforce plan and sickness absence actions.	OD Adviser	June 2019	Strategic Director (People)/ OD Adviser meeting took place in July 2019 following council approval of Strategic workforce plan to align actions. Ongoing.	COMPLETE Completed and included within Council's workforce Programme (which has since closed down following completion).	COMPLETE Actions included and addressed via the Workforce Programme (now closed). Further actions re: wellbeing taken forward via the Interim Workforce Strategy (now closed).

No.	Action	Reason for Action	Tasks required	Lead/ Owner	Action Due	Q1 19/20 Update	Action update – as at May 2023	Action Update – as at November 2025
12.	Review progress by conducting random iTrent checks/quality assurance and committing to an annual review to ensure procedural compliance.	<p>To ensure good practice is followed consistently.</p> <p>To track progress in sickness absence reporting.</p>	Internal Audit to devise review plan that addresses actions outlined.	Internal Audit	Random checks ongoing culminating in 12-month annual review	Action not yet commenced.	<p>COMPLETE</p> <p>Reports are sent to Bipartites which show the number of Support and Guidance and Return to work completed and outstanding.</p> <p>HRBPs review absence reports regularly and highlight issues to services.</p> <p>Work is currently ongoing in relation to amending the process related to submission of and recording of medical/self certificates.</p>	<p>COMPLETE</p> <p>Absence levels reported via working together structure of Bipartites and Tripartite meetings (half yearly and annual reporting).</p> <p>Absence Compliance Officer issues bespoke information for managers involved with managing staff absence.</p>



APPENDIX 2: Sample Highlight Report

Update – September 2025

For your information and grateful if you can cascade the undernoted update at your next Senior Management/TU Bipartite and LNCT meeting.

Here are some bullet points of some of the exciting things that are happening as part of HWL and Absence Compliance and our continual drive to maximise good health, wellbeing and attendance at Clackmannanshire Council:-

1. **Champion Health App** - new Champion Health portal and app officially launched and replaces the current PAM Assist Wellbeing App.

Managers to encourage staff to watch the **15 minute YouTube video re what Champion Health is and to register** during working/wellbeing time. You can view the [Champion Health/PAM Wellness App demonstration video](#) below, which will walk you through the platforms features.

2. **PAM Wellness Overview** - a 2nd Lunch and Learn webinar session took place on Tuesday 26th August. Although promoted, this was very poorly attended. A recording has been uploaded to Clacks Academy and Managers should encourage staff to watch this during working/wellbeing time. **Staff Health and Wellbeing>Staff Wellbeing>PAM Wellness – An introduction to your Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) Service.**
3. Ongoing work on the **rebranding of HWL** and the creation of new content (i.e. webinars, podcasts, good news stories, up and coming local events i.e. Rangers Services – nature walks, Sports Physical Activity Programme, wild water swimming, voluntary work etc) for Sharepoint. Focus on key core areas including mental health and wellbeing, physical health and wellbeing, financial health and wellbeing etc.
4. Continual promotion of **HWL calendar and campaigns** – Autumn Programme.
5. **National Wellbeing Week (1st - 7th September).** A week long programme of free online sessions designed for professionals across health, social care, social work, local government and the third sector was promoted across the Council. **(Unable to get feedback from the National Wellbeing Champions as to numbers registered from Clacks but the event overall was a success).**

6. **Know Your Numbers Week (8th – 14th September).** This was poorly attended. The total checks carried out were 18, 10 male and 8 female.

Kilncraigs	9 people checked
Kelliebank	5 people checked
Forthbank	4 people checked

3 people had high blood pressure and recommended that they get it checked.
2 people had mild/high blood pressure and recommend they get checked.
The rest were generally ok.

Managers should continue to signpost staff to the Keep Well Health Assessment Service.

7. World Mental Health Day on 10th October

"Trees of Courage" leading up to World Mental Health Day on 10th of October 2025.



Throughout Clackmannanshire, we would like to create a mental health campaign that encourages children, teenagers, and adults to hang anonymous, supportive messages to themselves on a tree based in a central area of their school or workplace as part of our offering for **World Mental Health Day on the 10th of October 2025.**

Background: The tree is a symbol that throughout all of the seasons and against all weather conditions, remain steadfast, planted in the soil, changing, growing, blossoming despite all its challenges.

Writing a personal message to yourself and attaching it to the tree is an affirmation of personal feelings and advice to younger selves. To do this the person will need to take stock of where they are and how they feel – before leaving a message for themselves.

The messages could be collected at the end of the campaign and used as a barometer of issues, thoughts, and ideas that our people are expressing. This would lead to focused and targeted follow up materials aimed at addressing the volume of messages left on the trees.

- 8. Mental Health & Wellbeing Training** – this training is open to everyone to learn about mental health and wellbeing. It is a 2 day course and delivered on a first come basis. Staff can register on Clacks Academy.

Mental Health & Wellbeing

Mental Health & Wellbeing
2 day course

09:00 on 07 October 2025 (2 days)

5 spaces(s) remaining

[Show more](#) +

Register

09:00 on 18 November 2025 (2 days)

8 spaces(s) remaining

[Show more](#) +

Register

09:00 on 02 December 2025 (2 days)

12 spaces(s) remaining

[Show more](#) +

Register

09:00 on 14 January 2026 (2 days)

11 spaces(s) remaining

[Show more](#) +

Register

9. **World Menopause Day on the 18th October** – next campaign being delivered. Potentially looking to set up focus groups etc thereafter.

10. Continual promotion of **PAM Wellness Calendar and online webinars**. Recent events included **Movement for Mental Health (21st August)** and **How to Approach Suicide Prevention (18th September)**. Next one is **Neurodiversity – support in the workplace** on the 16th October.

11. Continual promotion of access to the **Step on Stress Programme** for all staff.

Next dates to be promoted are:-

Series 45 – 20th, 27th October & 3rd November, 6:30 pm - 7:45 pm

Series

46 – 10th, 17th & 24th November, 10:00 am – 11:15 am

Series 47 – 2nd,

9th & 16th December, 2pm – 3.15 pm

12. Continual promotion of **Keep Well Health Assessments** for all staff.

13. **Toolbox Talk and Employee Wellbeing Survey** will be launched **w/c Monday 29th September** council wide. All Managers will receive an email this week instructing them to deliver the **Supporting Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing in the workplace** toolbox talk which will include a run through of the different supports available to staff, watching the recent PAM Wellness recording and time to complete the online Employee Wellbeing Survey. Wellbeing Champions will be on hand to help support Managers deliver this and there will be a mop up session delivered in the Chambers in October (tbc). The results of the survey will help the HWL Group Co-ordinators shape and inform the new **Health & Safety and Wellbeing Strategy. (We are aiming for 100% response rate so encourage Managers to make sure that staff are completing the survey!)**.

14. **Ongoing work** with Managers **re absence compliance**, weekly MI absence compliance reports being sent to Senior Managers and Managers. (Abatements/Minor Illness/IHR/3 months/6 months/1 year/Attendance Improvement Targets etc).

15. Monthly **Stress Risk Assessment MI reports** are being set up to ensure that SRA actions are being taken by Managers and support and signposting is in place quickly.

16. Ongoing work re development of **HR and HWL processes** for Managers which will be made available soon.

17. Examples of good quality **Return To Works, Support and Guidance, Long Term Support and Guidance forms** for Managers, example **Attendance Improvement Targets** being created and will be **rolled out to all Managers**.

18. **Separate meetings** to be set up with Susan (Children's Services)/Natalie (Education)/Diana (Kelliebank) to meet with Services re absence management and compliance at their request.
19. Review of the current **Maximising Attendance at Work training, redesign and deliver** with Service HRBP's to all Managers. **Provisional dates have been set up for next January and February** and Managers will be able to book themselves on via Clacks Academy soon.
20. Ongoing work on the creation of a **Manager Support Booklet** and an **Employee Support Booklet** for all staff.

Let's work together to create a mentally healthy workplace for everyone.



