



AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT

Report Title	ABSENCE MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Audit Committee Meeting Date:	05 November 2012
Policy Document:	No
Directorate:	Resources
Accountable Cabinet Member:	Cllr Alan Bottwood

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This paper provides a summary of absence performance benchmarking data and a summary explanation of medical suspension.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the paper.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 Audit Committee on 26th September requested comparison figures of sickness absence at other local authorities and details of medical suspension.
- 3.1.2 Benchmarking data – Northampton Borough Council participates in the CIPFA Human Resources Benchmarking Club on an annual basis. The outturn data for 2011/12 was submitted to CIPFA in May and the final report is released in July. The participating authorities are of varying size and range from an employee headcount of 521 to 947. For the year 2011-12, Northampton Borough Council's employee headcount was 911. Graphs extracted from the report are shown below. Each bar in the graph represents an organisation's value, Northampton Borough Council's bar is highlighted in black.

The authorities in the CIPFA Benchmarking Club are broken down as per the table below:

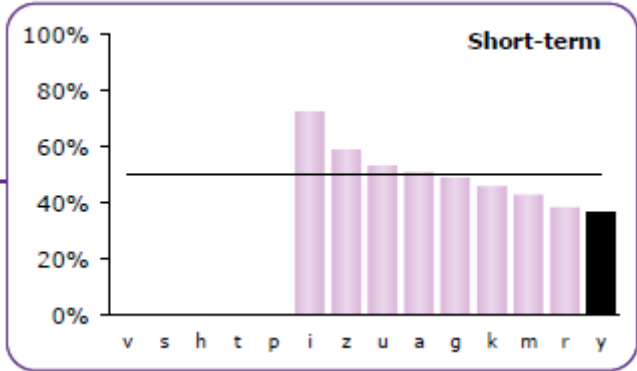
Member Type	Number
Borough Council	7
District Council	3
City Council	2
Housing Association	1

Of the seven other Borough Council's five are comparable in relation to the way sickness absence is managed.

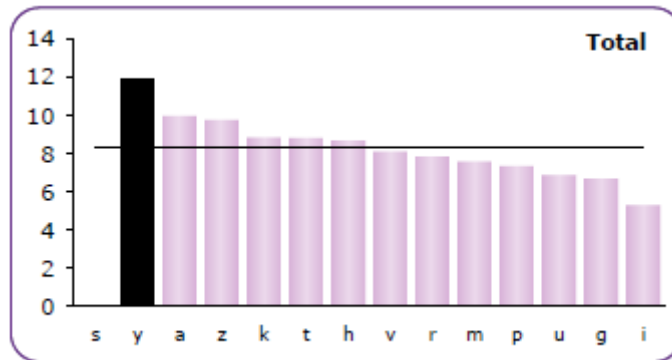
The employee headcount for each of the five Borough Council's is lower than Northampton Borough Council, nevertheless the results for sickness absence are calculated based on an average Full Time Equivalent.

The comparable Borough Councils are coded as a, z, l, r, and v in the graphs below.

3.1.3 Short-term sickness absence - The benchmarking data for short-term sickness absence identifies that Northampton Borough Council is ranked the best in controlling short-term absence levels. The graph below shows the Short-Term sickness absence comparison to the participating authorities.



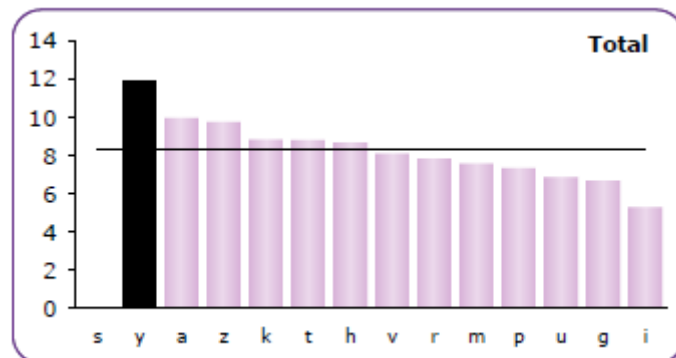
3.1.4 Long-term sickness absence - The benchmarking data for long-term sickness absence identifies that Northampton Borough Council is ranked the worst in controlling long-term absence levels. Actions are in place to reduce the long-term sickness absence levels at Northampton Borough Council. Wellness Recovery Action Plan (RAP) are used as a focussed casework approach to support employees and encourage early return to work. The graph below shows the Long-Term sickness absence comparison to the participating authorities.



3.1.5 The distribution of Short-term and long-term sickness absence of Northampton Borough Council and the average of the participating authorities is shown in the graph below.

	%	Avg
Short-term	36%	50%
Long-term	64%	50%

3.1.6 Total sickness absence - The benchmarking data for total sickness absence identifies that Northampton Borough Council has higher sickness absence than the participating authorities. The graph below shows the total sickness absence comparison to the participating authorities.



3.1.7 Medical Suspensions – there are currently no medical suspensions in the Council. Medical suspensions are used very infrequently when a Manager has serious concerns that the employee is not fit to return to work for medical reasons, or that their GP has declared them fit to return with restrictions that cannot be practically accommodated. In these circumstances advice is sought from HR and the Council’s Occupational Health advisers. Whilst on medical suspension, employees remain on full pay. The reason for medical suspension is to ensure that staff are not put at unnecessary risk and that their condition is not exacerbated.

4. Background Papers

4.1 None

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