

EMPLOYMENT MATTERS COMMITTEE

1 APRIL 2010

REVIEW OF SHORT NOTICE LEAVE POLICY

Report from: Tricia Palmer, Assistant Director, Organisational Services

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Summary

The report asks the Employment Matters Committee to note a review of the implementation of short notice leave.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 The Policy lies within the Council's policy and budget framework and the Committee's terms of reference. Therefore, this is a matter for the Employment Matters Committee.

2. Background

2.1 On 22 January 2009 the Employment Matters Committee agreed to revise the leave provisions to include short-notice annual and flexi-leave. This supported the council's commitment to improve the Work-Life balance of employees by enhancing the flexible working provisions that were already in place.

2.2 It was agreed at the Committee to review the new provisions one year later.

3. Advice and analysis

3.1 To find out whether the new provision had been used within medway managers were contacted asking them whether or not they had agreed to implement the new provisions and whether they had any observations on its usefulness and/or whether there were any pitfalls etc. The responses, whilst limited in number indicated that the introduction of short-notice leave has been a positive step

The main observations were:

- (i) In some cases departments had already had a similar informal arrangement in place;

- (ii) to manage the new arrangements on an informal basis worked well;
- (iii) staff appeared to be relaxed knowing that if they suddenly have a problem (e.g. sick children) they can ask for a day off at short notice;
- (iv) short-notice leave has removed any “stigma” that staff may have felt in suddenly having to put their personal lives first;
- (v) it was felt positive to know that there is a corporate policy in place enabling staff to take leave without having to explain why or feel guilty about doing so;
- (vi) short-notice leave works well providing there are sufficient resources to run the service;
- (vii) most requests have been for childcare, elderly care or unexpected problems at home;
- (viii) most requests have been agreed;
- (ix) staff tended to take annual leave for short-notice leave as opposed to flexi-leave;

3.2 Human Resources advisers were asked whether there had been any adverse feedback from managers relating to the implementation of the new provisions and they confirmed that there had not.

3.3 In light of the comments received there are no proposals to change the current provisions and the council will continually promote the benefits of flexible working to managers and employees.

4. Risk Management

4.1 There is a potential risk to service delivery if a manager fails to manage short-notice leave appropriately i.e. they do not ensure there is sufficient cover needed to provide the service.

5. Financial and legal implications

5.1 There are no legal or financial implications arising from this report.

6. Recommendations

6.1 That the Employment Matters Committee notes the content of the report.

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Background Papers:

Employment Matters Committee Report 22 January 2009
Annual leave and flexible working policies