New Payroll System & Service – Business Assurance

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to outline the specific controls and processes that have been created and adapted in the new East Kent People payroll system, specifically focusing on the integrity of Dover District Council's sickness reporting.

2. Sickness Absence Reporting

Dover District Council Managers have a responsibility to record sickness absence accurately and EK Human Resources have incorporated some practices to ensure that the data is accurate and the most up to date it can be.

3.1 Real Time Data

All managers have their own individual login for East Kent People – Manager, this enables them to view each member of their team and see which team members are currently off sick, how many absences they have had and what the absence was for. We are currently undergoing a trial before the purchase of a dashboard for East Kent People. The dashboard would be a further option for managers to view sickness data in a chart based format, tolerance levels, sickness days lost in the business to date, top 5 absence reasons and employees are reaching trigger points for their sickness absence in comparison to their peers.

Managers are able to pull reports from the system in relation the all their employees and their sickness to enable better management and ownership of any issues.

3.2 Workflows

East Kent People have workflows built into the system, which have benefits for Dover District Council. Once an employee has been recorded as absent the system will automatically send the line manager an email with details about completing a return to work form. Reminders are also built into the system, one sent to line managers at 7 days and one at 14 days open ended sickness, this reminds managers to complete a return to work interview and to obtain a Fit Note where applicable from their absent team member. Workflows are in progress to be built that will inform line managers when a member of their team has reached specific trigger points of sickness as detailed in Dover's absence policy as a further measure to create manager awareness and prompt action. These practices will enable managers to better manage sickness within their teams.

3.2 Quarterly Meetings

EK Human Resources currently hold quarterly workforce meetings with Dover's CMT to talk through any long term sickness cases, their current sickness levels and anticipated outturn for the year. This gives CMT the opportunity to tackle any issues, reoccurrences or trends at Dover and heightens awareness.

3. Data Quality

Data input into the East Kent People system will be by the Line Manager (sickness) and employee (annual leave), this means that there is a single data input point and removes the opportunity for error on data entry from paper forms.

For annual leave recording, the employee can only request leave as held within the Dover leave scheme appended to their grade and service. Leave is requested and has to be approved by the Line Manager, if leave has not been taken, the employee can request it is amended and the Line Manager has to authorise this. If the leave date has passed, the employee would need to request a change to this by their Line Manager. These measures meant that leave can only be requested if within entitlement and has to be approved by the Line Manager.

Workflows notify the Line Manager of a leave request and when approved, notify the employee of approval (or otherwise).

Sickness absence is entered by the Line Manager into the East Kent People system, and when the employee returns the Line Manager enters the return date. Both the Line Manager and the employee can view the sickness absence record which aids accuracy

4. Policy and Service

EKHR have consulted clients on a suite of updates to East Kent policies, these are in the final states of development and informal consultation, it is proposed (and agreed) by partners to be formally consulted upon during 16/17 and EKHR propose to commence this consultation in April 2016, dependent upon any other over ruling business consultations across the partners which may impact exact timing.

The EKHR service review recommendations, agreed by EKSB in summer 2015, are on plan for implementation in April 2016. Part of the agreement is to move to a new SLA that is qualitative rather than quantitative and initial consultations with the Client Reps are commencing in March 2016.

The EKHR service review implements an HR Business Partner attached to each client, who will manage the workforce information meetings (recommended monthly) with leadership or clients to talk through concerns with people management issues which would include sickness absence to ensure there is a focus within the organisation, although obviously the ownership remains within the management role. This also provides flexible resource that the client can use to focus on the HR issues that they prioritise within their organisation.