

Job Description

Job title	Senior ER Consultant (Absence)
Directorate	BUSINESS : Business Support
Division	HR
Range	MPR 6
Reports to	Head of Learning and Development and HR Systems

Main purpose of the job:

Lead and line manage the Employee Relations (ER) Consultants (Absence Lead), driving a reduction in the Council's absence rate, and ensuring delivery against the employee relations service plan.

To support and/or lead on ER related projects that support the delivery of the Workforce Strategy.

Liaise with stakeholders in a way that promotes the [One Medway Council Plan](#) and embeds our [values and behaviours](#).

Accountabilities and outcomes:

Manage the ER Consultant Absence Lead posts, providing effective coaching, guidance and support to develop expertise, build confidence and ensure consistent, customer focused employee relations services.

Drive a reduction in the Council's sickness absence rate through the effective leadership of the ER Consultant Absence Leads, ensuring proactive case management, early intervention and consistent application of absence management processes, while building managers' capability to manage attendance in line with HR policy and the Council's Values and Behaviours.

Ensure the effective management of sickness absence casework, identifying trends, patterns and barriers to timely resolution, and implementing targeted interventions to improve attendance outcomes, reduce absence levels and support organisational performance.

Manage contracts such as occupational health and the Employee Assistance Programme, monitoring performance, utilisation and compliance with service level agreements to ensure high quality support is delivered, value for money is achieved, and organisational wellbeing and attendance objectives are met.

To provide professional HR advice and support to investigating officers, chairs of hearings and appeals panels across the Council and schools (in accordance with the service level contract that has been purchased.)

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Deliver training, coaching and expert guidance to managers on sickness absence management and wider employee relations matters (as required), enhancing their capability to manage cases proactively, apply policies consistently, address workplace issues effectively and make informed decisions that support employee wellbeing, organisational performance and the Council's Values and Behaviours.

At the discretion of the Head of Service, such other activities as may from time to time be agreed consistent with the nature of the job described above.

Key Corporate Accountabilities:

To work with colleagues to achieve service plan objectives and targets.

To understand and actively keep up to date with GDPR responsibilities, including completing regular refresher training.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: all employees are required to act in such a way that safeguards the health and well-being of children and vulnerable adults.

As a corporate parent, all council employees are responsible for ensuring the well-being and positive outcomes of Medway's care-experienced children and young people.

To participate in the Performance Appraisal process and contribute to the identification of own and team development needs utilising the Career Progression Framework.

Work in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Promoting equality of opportunity, fostering good relations and improving the quality of life and opportunities for everyone living and working in Medway.

To ensure full compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Council's Health and Safety Policy and all locally agreed safe methods of work.

To fully understand and be aware of the commitment to the duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to prevent crime and disorder.

Promote the Medway Carbon Neutral by 2050 commitment; supporting the Council action plan to ensure we play our part in addressing the climate emergency.

Medway Council is a Category One responder in relation to the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) and as a result all staff working for the Authority may be asked to carry out Category One response duties or stand into the role of another member of staff who is responding to a Major Civil Incident.

Organisation:

This role reports to the Head of Learning and Development and HR Systems.

The post holder will have line management responsibility.

The post holder will be required to liaise with all stakeholders both internal and external to the organisation.

Working Style:

HYBRID - a flexible working arrangement whereby an employee can undertake their work either in the office and/or partially or mainly from home on a temporary or permanent basis.

Person specification

All criteria at level A are considered essential

Qualifications

Level A

GCSE's level 4-9 in English and Maths or equivalent level qualification

CIPD Level 5, or equivalent level relevant qualification

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

Continuing professional development

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

Continuing professional development

Knowledge

Level A

Expert and up to date knowledge of employment legislation and regulations, changes to employment legislation and regulations and it's practical implications.

Developed knowledge of how to apply employment/labour law in a wide range of complex work situations and how to mitigate risk

Good practical and procedural knowledge of employee relations management

Knowledge of sickness absence management best practice, including attendance improvement strategies and early intervention approaches.

Knowledge of wellbeing initiatives and their role in reducing absence and supporting workforce resilience.

Awareness of job evaluation practices

Knowledge of workplace conflict and a range of dispute resolution techniques including a good understanding of mediation and conciliation and how this can be applied in case management resolution

Knowledge of how to apply analytical and strategic information to achieve risk adverse results.

Awareness of Council's procurement processes.

An understanding of data protection considerations when managing sensitive data.

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

Advanced theoretical, practical and procedural knowledge across Medway Councils organisational HR policies, practices and procedures including a level of public sector, procedural and policy knowledge

Excellent knowledge of case management processes and systems

An understanding of different learning styles and methods in training others

An understanding of the Council's governance route for HR Policies

Good knowledge of tribunal processes/legal disputes

Detailed knowledge of Council's procurement processes.

Excellent knowledge of the Council's absence policy and procedures with the ability to advise others on this

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Knowledge of workforce analytics and absence trend analysis.

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

Excellent knowledge of a range of conflict resolution techniques which are regularly applied to casework

Excellent knowledge of tribunal processes/legal disputes and preparation required

Expert knowledge of Medway's structure / hierarchy

Applied knowledge to changes to employment law/legislation, proactively considering how these may impact Medway's policies and casework advice

Expert knowledge of strategic organisational interventions that improve attendance outcomes.

Knowledge of benchmarking absence performance and applying best practice from local government and wider public sector organisations.

Experience

Level A

Previous experience of managing a team and delivering results

Extensive experience of applying HR policies to support effective case management and employee relations practice

Demonstrable experience of managing complex HR Employee relations casework, in particular managing absence.

Developed experience of working with senior managers to support informal and formal employee relations case management and organisational change programmes with support from HRBPs

Good operational experience of delivering and supporting management of associated HR, Payroll and Systems activities in relation to Employee Relations

Experience of working in a customer-focused organisation

Demonstrable experience of working with different subject matter experts (e.g. occupational health, line managers, health and safety) to address wellbeing concerns

Experience of working with and developing relationships with trade unions

Experience of identifying improvements within existing HR policies and escalating these accordingly and supporting with amends

Experience of managing contracts such as occupational health and the employee assistance programme.

Experience of consistently providing advice and guidance to HR colleagues and signposting staff and managers to a range of HR policies, supporting with interpretation and application

Experience of analysing data to identify trends, patterns and areas for intervention.

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

Demonstrable experience of leading, mentoring, coaching and supporting a team

Developed operational experience of linking wider Medway HR services (e.g. Payroll and Systems) to Employee Relations casework

Experience of using Medway's systems including Resourcelink, IDOX etc to support casework

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In depth experience of supporting and coaching managers and staff through ER processes, including complex and contentious cases

Experience of delivering measurable reductions in sickness absence through targeted interventions and manager support.

Experience of designing absence management training for managers.

Experience in developing, implementing, and updating HR policies and procedures

Experience of working with Trade Union's on collaborative strategic approaches

Experience of working with ACAS to explore resolution in relation to employment tribunal case work or settlement agreements

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

Experience of working collaboratively at a senior HR level with all relative stakeholders and HR partners

Experience of presenting absence trends, risks and recommendations to senior leadership teams.

Skills

Level A

Excellent communication skills with an adaptable style and able to use a variety of information and tailor communication style to suit different need, advising and supporting managers and staff throughout organisational change processes, with some ability to mediate, influence and negotiate.

Excellent organisational skills and ability to multi-task whilst maintaining communication, accuracy and attention to detail whilst adhering to policy and procedures

Ability to analyse absence information and identify trends and risks.

Ability to coach managers to confidently address attendance concerns and hold sensitive wellbeing conversations.

Ability to demonstrate initiative, using own judgement and creativity to assess and resolve work situations and be proactive in identifying potential issues relating to casework and organisational change

Ability to self-manage multiple cases at one time, maintaining standards and communicating throughout

Proficient in the use of all Microsoft packages including TEAMS

Able to support on a range of informal and formal HR processes

Ability to complete job evaluation sessions with managers, providing a high standard of support throughout

Developed negotiation and influencing skills to support case resolutions

Developed mediation and influencing skills, in conciliation, negotiation, and settlement agreements, working constructively with trade union representatives

Able to support Managers in preparation for formal hearings

Able to support Hearing Chairs to provide a consistent, fair and detailed outcome for formal hearings

Able to support the formal investigation process adhering to Medway's policies throughout

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

Ability to maintain a high standard and level of attention to detail across multiple cases when volume and pressure is increased

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Ability to confidently use Resourcelink, and IDOX

Ability to deal with high levels of work-related pressure from deadlines, interruptions or conflicting demands

Strong interpersonal skills, with the ability to build positive relationships and work collaboratively

Strong organisational and time management abilities and the ability to plan ahead for the year

Ability to develop manager capability in attendance management

Able to support Hearing Chairs to provide a consistent, fair and detailed outcome for complex and contentious formal hearings

Strong mediation and negotiation skills, and expert in conciliation

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

High level of skill relating to Investigatory process and analysis of information

Able to draw on evidence-based practice and case law, providing advice to managers on benefits and risks on people matters

Able to confidently use Gauge+

Ability to develop and implement strategic attendance improvement plans aligned to organisational objectives.

Ability to present complex workforce data and recommendations to senior management, influencing strategic decision making.

Able to implement policy/process changes which contribute to Service targets

Able to identify risk and provide mitigation

Ability to gain the confidence of and influence people at all levels

Ability to challenge existing practices and approaches and deliver improved HR solutions and services