



**Safest People, Safest Places**

## **Human Resources Committee**

**20 February 2024**

### **Additional Health Care Benefit**

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## **Report of Director of People and Organisational Development**

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### **Purpose of report**

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Human Resources Committee (HRC) on the implementation of the trial of an additional workforce healthcare benefit, through Benenden Health.

### **Background**

2. A paper was presented to the HRC on the 5 September 2023 outlining the Service's intention to trial the use of Benenden Health care to offer both a cost effective solution to reduce sickness absence and to support the wellbeing of the workforce.
3. Sickness figures across the Service over recent years have been steadily increasing and are above the target for the number of shifts lost, per person, in a year. The target set by the service is currently 7 shifts per person, and the average over the last three years is 9.5 shifts, with current projected statistics for 23/24 remaining at 9.5 shifts per person.
4. Benenden Services is a not-for-profit healthcare provider which is complementary to the NHS, where NHS waiting times are longer than 5 weeks. It allows for pre-existing conditions (which is contra to private healthcare providers), with services being immediately accessible upon joining where the Service opt for a fully funded provision. The scheme provides for diagnostic treatment up to £2,500 per condition.

### **Implementation**

5. The Service went live with the Service on 1 January 2024. Of the workforce, only 10 employees have chosen to opt out meaning 98.5% of the workforce are covered under this initiative. There are also 107 family members who have been opted in from the workforce (at their own cost).
6. Over December several visits were made to teams and stations to allow staff to ask questions and understand what services were on offer. We also received posters, leaflets, and resources such as videos, imagery, and information for internal communications to help launch and promote the benefit. The Benenden Health App has also been advertised across the Service and added to work devices.

## Services used to date

7. Quarterly reporting is provided to outline which services have been accessed and total corporate usage per period. However, at a recent meeting we were provided with the following data showing usage over the first month (January):

**Table 1**

<b>Service used</b>	<b>Number of cases</b>
24-hour GP Advice	8
Care Advice	1
Diagnostics and Tests	4
Mental Health Services	1
Physiotherapy	4
Potential Cases	2
Treatment and Surgery	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>

8. One success story to date using Benenden Health is that an employee was able to bring forward a consultation appointment by 11 weeks and is awaiting a date for surgery through Benenden. Whilst its unknown how much quicker the process would have been in comparison to that of the NHS, the 11 weeks along is a significant cost saving to the service in terms of sick pay.
9. It is too early to see any impact on sickness absence numbers.

## Conclusion

10. A key theme of the People Strategy is Wellbeing and we have committed to ensuring that we create an environment where our People are physically and emotionally sustained to enable them to give their best and to be able to be at work more of the time to better serve our communities. The Benenden Health initiative is one of many which appears to be making a positive difference and a further supportive intervention which will hopefully positively impact on wellbeing indicators in the next staff survey.

## Recommendations

11. Members are requested to:
  - a) Note the contents of the report and receive further updates in due course.

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