

**EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE: 22 OCTOBER 2015**

**SICKNESS ABSENCE**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES**

**Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Employment Committee with an update on the Council's overall position on sickness absence at the end of Quarter 1 2015 - 16 together with the latest position as at 31 August 2015.

**Background**

2. On 18 June 2015 the Employment Committee considered the end of year sickness absence position and endorsed the creation of an Attendance Management Action Plan.
3. In July, the Council adopted a corporate Attendance Management Action Plan, with the People Strategy Board having a key operational role in relation to the implementation of actions within departments, and monitoring the achievement of the actions and outcomes.

**Absence Data**

Department	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	15/16 Q1	Rolling year as at 31/08/15 (latest position)
Chief Executive's	5.75	5.09	6.47	7.51	5.55	6.01	6.35
Environment & Transport	7.16	7.37	8.29	10.06	8.23	7.66	7.26
Children & Family Services	7.57	7.20	8.30	9.84	10.37	9.31	9.31
Corporate Resources	7.52	6.24	8.35	7.11	7.86	7.86	7.02
Adults and Communities	10.25	10.61	11.36	11.16	12.24	11.98	11.86
Public Health	-	-	-	7.11	9.14	7.48	6.68

<b>Total</b>	<b>8.29</b>	<b>8.56</b>	<b>9.22</b>	<b>9.47</b>	<b>9.83</b>	<b>9.39</b>	<b>9.09</b>
ESPO	-	10.55	9.14	8.58	12.07	12.25	12.05
EMSS	-	-	-	-	6.65	6.76	7.98

Table 1. Absence Data by Department.

4. Table 1 shows that the corporate target of 7.5 days per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) has not been achieved within the last 5 years. Over these 5 years the absence has generally increased, and peaked at the end of 2014-15.
5. However, by the end of Quarter 1 2015-16 the corporate total, together with the absence levels of those departments with the higher levels of absence (Children and Family Services and the Adults and Communities Department) had reduced. By the end of August 2015 all departments were either under the corporate target of 7.5 days per FTE or have made improvements towards this target since the end of 2014-15. ESPO and EMSS sickness absence is not included within the Council's overall figure, however both areas of the organisation are taking action towards achieving the 7.5 days per FTE target.
6. The following table shows how Leicestershire's sickness absence levels and the most frequently reported cause of absence compare to the other County Councils (low to high) at the end of 2014-15. Leicestershire's position is twelfth out of 16 authorities, which confirms that improvements in the attendance management are required. Achieving the corporate target of 7.5 days would place Leicestershire in the top 5 of these County Councils.

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Days absence per FTE 2014/15</b>	<b>Highest absence reasons</b>
1	6.3	Stress & depression 34.5% Infections 22.09% Musculo skeletal
2	6.86	Not available
3	7.3	Not available
4	7.8	Stress 27% Musculo skeletal 13% Stomach 11%
5	7.93	Depression/stress 18.09% Other reason 14.29% Cold/flu 9.93%
6	8.08	Stress 24.26% Infections/Cold/Flu 13.27% Operations 12.84%
7	8.16	Stress 16.8% Musculo skeletal 13.45% Back & neck 8.07%
8	8.35	Viral 29% Mental wellbeing 23% Musculo skeletal 14%

9	8.8	Stress 23.6% Other muscular 13.5% Cold & flu 11.2%
10	9.2	Psychological 21.5% Cold & flu 11% Musculo skeletal 11.7%
11	9.35	Not available
<b>12 Leics</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>Viral 26%</b> <b>Stomach 18%</b>
13	9.77	Not available
14	9.98	Not available
15	10.08	Stress & mental health 19.9% Musculo skeletal 17.7% Viral 13.9
16	10.14	Mental health 27.58% Other musculo skeletal 19.40% Back & neck 10.4%

Table 2. Comparative Sickness Absence.

7. It is interesting to note that whilst other County Councils reported stress/depression and mental health issues as one of the highest reasons for absence, this reason was not amongst the highest reported within the County Council.

### Reasons for Absence

8. The table below details the percentage of days lost at the end of Quarter 1 2015-16. The two highest reasons for absence continued to be viral infections and stomach, liver, kidney or digestion problems.

<b>Reason at the end of Quarter 1 2015/16</b>	<b>% days lost</b>
Back & neck problems	4.76
Other musculo-skeletal	6.04
Stress/depression, mental health	5.94
Viral infection	27.09
Neurological	5.33
Genito-Urinary/Gynaecological	2.77
Pregnancy Related	1.46
Stomach, liver, kidney, digestion	18.73
Heart, blood pressure, circulation	0.79
Chest, respiratory	4.65

Eye, ear, nose & mouth/dental	4.55
Other	10.74
Nothing stated	7.13

Table 3. Percentage of Days Lost.

9. At the last Committee meeting, Members were advised that the "Other" category would be removed with the implementation of the new absence reporting module. The Council's absence data is reported on a rolling twelve month basis and it will now take a further twelve months before data recorded as "Other" is completely excluded from the data presented.

### **Attendance Management Action Plan**

9. The Attendance Management Action Plan is appended to this report. All actions are currently rated as being "green" or "on track". The following activities have taken place:
- (a) Adults and Communities and the Corporate Resources Department have undertaken "Absence Star Chamber" sessions;
  - (b) The Attendance Operational Group has had its first meeting, agreed their terms of reference and generated ideas around infection control and absence recording;
  - (c) Attendance management workshops are being arranged, specifically targeting the areas of the organisation with the highest levels of absence;
  - (d) A survey of the impact across the organisation of Mental Health First Aiders has been conducted and analysis of the data has begun;
  - (e) The scope for the attendance improvement plan audit has been agreed and data is being collected;
  - (f) Infection control protocols and equipment have been provided to support teams as the County Hall master plan is implemented;
  - (g) The Workplace Wellbeing Charter steering group is progressing actions which will have a long-term positive impact.

### **Recommendations**

The Employment Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

### **Officer to Contact**

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### **List of Appendices**

Appendix A – Attendance Management Action Plan

### **Background Papers**

None.

### **Equality and Human Rights Implications**

The attendance management policy has been subject to an Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment, and this was published in 2014. There are no equalities and human rights issues arising directly from this report.