



EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE – 4 FEBRUARY 2021

ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Employment Committee on the County Council's overall position on sickness absence as at the end of November 2020.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The Attendance Management Policy supports this report. No changes to this Policy are proposed.
3. The Employment Committee receives and considers this report at every meeting.

Background

4. On 3 December 2020, the Committee considered the Council's absence position as at the end of September 2020.

Sickness absence – current position

5. The table below details the end of year sickness absence levels of the previous 5 years, quarters 1 and 2, 2020/21, and the latest position at the end of November 2020.

Department	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21 Q1 Jun 20	20/21 Q2 Sept 20	20/21 Nov 20	Total FTE days lost 01/12/19 – 30/11/20	Total cost of absence 01/12/19 – 30/11/20
Chief Executive's	6.99	6.03	6.38	7.60	5.38	5.28	4.61	4.66	1,073	£131,947
Environment and Transport	8.80	9.68	10.09	9.16	8.88	8.46	7.85	7.55	6,042	£546,947
Children and Family Services	10.06	10.05	10.25	10.55	11.12	10.60	10.14	9.46	9,906	£1,192,688
Corporate Resources	6.95	7.94	8.12	7.39	9.39	8.25	7.25	6.65	7,915	£713,144
Adults and Communities	11.31	12.57	11.26	10.02	11.74	11.41	11.19	10.76	13,351	£1,288,557

Public Health	7.84	7.43	6.49	8.57	7.12	6.19	7.20	7.40	727	£90,754
LCC total	9.32	10.01	9.73	9.18	10.08	9.48	8.94	8.47	39,014	£3,963,591
ESPO	10.88	9.75	11.70	9.55	7.20	6.80	6.64	6.36	2,137	£197,074
EMSS	6.69	9.27	7.42	7.54	9.69	9.26	8.09	6.57	1,031	£93,990

6. All departments have either made reductions or kept below the corporate target of 7.5 days, at the end of November 2020. The Chief Executive's department, Corporate Resources and Public Health have met the corporate target of 7.5 days per FTE.

Reasons for sickness absence

7. Displayed in order of percentage of time lost (greatest first), the table below details the top 10 reasons for absence, plus the 'not disclosed' category.

Percentage of FTE days lost 12 months cumulative	2019/20 June 2019 Q1	2019/20 Sept 2019 Q2	2019/20 Dec 2019 Q3	2019/20 Mar 2020 Q4	2020/21 Jun 2020 Q1	2020/21 Sept 2020 Q2	2020/21 Nov 2020
Stress/depression, mental health	29.9%	30.5%	29.7%	29.2%	28.5%	28.9%	28.6%
Other musculo-skeletal	16.5%	14.8%	13.0%	13.1%	11.4%	10.5%	10.7%
Cancer	5.5%	6.2%	6.3%	6.3%	7.0%	7.2%	7.7%
Covid-19	n/a	n/a	n/a	1.4%	3.6%	5.6%	7.4%
Gastro-stomach, digestion	8.6%	8.2%	8.4%	8.4%	7.2%	6.6%	6.0%
Cough/cold/flu	6.0%	5.8%	6.0%	5.9%	5.0%	6.1%	5.4%
Back and neck	5.0%	5.5%	5.3%	5.3%	5.5%	4.9%	5.4%
Viral infection, not cough/cold/flu	4.9%	4.5%	4.7%	4.8%	4.4%	4.7%	4.5%
Neurological	4.9%	5.1%	4.8%	5.0%	4.8%	4.9%	4.3%
Eye, ear, nose and mouth/dental and throat	3.6%	4.1%	4.5%	4.5%	4.4%	4.0%	3.6%
<i>Not disclosed</i>	<i>2.5%</i>	<i>2.7%</i>	<i>3.9%</i>	<i>4.1%</i>	<i>3.6%</i>	<i>4.0%</i>	<i>3.5%</i>

8. Stress/depression, mental health continues to be the highest reason for lost time due to sickness. Cancer and covid-19 continue in the top 4 reasons for time lost due to sickness. Improvements have been made in the level of absence where the reason is not disclosed.

Changing absence trends

9. The Employment Committee, at its meeting on 3 December 2020, reviewed and discussed the reduction in absence levels, in particular categories during the Covid-19 pandemic. The table below shows these categories over the pandemic period to date, compared with the same period last year.

Reason	FTE days lost 24/03/19- 30/11/19	FTE days lost 24/03/20- 30/11/20	FTE days lost difference
Back and neck	1696	1248.2	-447.8
Other musculo-skeletal	4101	2428.4	-1672.6
Stress/depression, mental health	9109.9	6968.6	-2141.3
Gastro-stomach, digestion	2642.1	1193.5	-1448.6
Viral infection, not cough/cold/flu	1161.9	857.3	-304.6
Cough/cold/flu	1355.4	715.6	-639.8
Cancer	1975.4	2018.0	+42.6
Covid-19	0	2750.2	+2750.2
Total	22041.7	18179.8	-3861.9

10. During the pandemic period, since late March 2020, instances of absence relating to back/neck, musculo-skeletal and gastro illness are significantly lower than those reported for the same time period the previous year. There are also reductions in the instances of viral and cough/cold/flu sickness absence compared to the same period the previous year. It is possible to speculate these changes could be due to the lockdowns and social distancing measures preventing all types of illness caused by germs spreading, and homeworking enabling people to continue working with milder symptoms. Lockdowns together with the temporary closure or reduction of services could have led to individuals having less opportunity to have accidents and/or more opportunity to rest pre-existing conditions.
11. Time lost due to absence because of stress/mental health/depression over the pandemic period has been lower than the same period the previous year. The Council continues to actively support wellbeing, with additional measures during the pandemic period. These include the introduction of wellbeing surveys, a manager's charter (with wellbeing checklists), book of wellbeing and continued provision of practical wellbeing support in a remote working environment.
12. Time lost due to absence because of cancer has been at a similar level to the same period last year. NHS challenges in delivering timely cancer treatment during the pandemic may impact on employees and officers are ensuring that individuals are supported appropriately at this difficult time.
13. Monitoring of changing absence trends will continue as the pandemic continues and people work in and interact with the community in different ways.

Long and Short-term absence split

14. The table below details the number of FTE days lost due to absence and the percentage split of FTE days lost at the end of November 2020.

20/21 as at end of November 2020						
12 months cumulative						
Department	Long term			Short term		
	FTE days lost	% FTE days lost	Individual occurrences	FTE days lost	% FTE days lost	Individual occurrences
Chief Executive's	885.73	56.3%	19	688.66	43.7%	163
Environment and Transport	3,799.03	57.0%	97	2,871.68	43.0%	671
Children and Family Services	6,517.67	65.5%	169	3,428.98	34.5%	852
Corporate Resources	5,600.06	56.5%	147	4,313.69	43.5%	1,206
Adults and Communities	8,218.04	61.6%	249	5,113.96	38.4%	1,161
Public Health	486.11	62.4%	11	293.43	37.6%	61

Note: Long term is categorised as over 4 weeks of continuous absence.

Service level data

15. The table below provides details of the days lost per FTE at the end of 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20 and at the end of quarter 1 and 2 2020/21 and November 2020, for service areas by department.

Department	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2020/21	2020/21
Days per FTE	Year end	Year end	Year end	Year end	End of Q1	End of Q2	Nov 20
12 months cumulative	(Mar 17)	(Mar 18)	(Mar 19)	(Mar 20)	(Jun 20)	(Sept 20)	
Chief Executive's	6.03	6.38	7.6	5.38	5.28	4.61	4.66
Planning and Historic and Natural Environment	3.81	4.04	14.92	9.57	9.46	5.00	4.02
Regulatory Services	6.95	4.87	6.2	7.24	7.03	5.99	6.07
Strategy and Business Intelligence	6.28	8.04	6.93	4.26	4.98	4.57	4.12
Democratic Services	10.69	8.91	14.81	6.70	4.97	2.95	2.64

Department	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2020/21	2020/21
Days per FTE	Year end	Year end	Year end	Year end	End of Q1	End of Q2	Nov 20
12 months cumulative	(Mar 17)	(Mar 18)	(Mar 19)	(Mar 20)	(Jun 20)	(Sept 20)	
Legal Services	3.01	4.02	5.48	3.63	3.28	4.36	5.06
Environment and Transport	9.68	10.09	9.16	8.88	8.46	7.85	7.55
Highways and Transport	10.38	10.62	8.96	9.30	9.32	8.95	3.97
Environment and Waste Management	4.85	7.98	10.07	12.65	11.27	9.44	8.96
Children and Family Services	10.05	10.25	10.55	11.12	10.60	10.14	9.46
Education and SEND*	9.13	9.28	8.42	11.55	11.45	10.47	9.34
Children's Social Care and Targeted Early Help**	11.90	11.62	14.18	10.54	10.45	10.15	10.25
Corporate Resources	7.94	8.12	7.41	9.39	8.25	7.25	6.65
Finance, Strategic Property and Commissioning***	4.89	4.25	6.63	9.67	8.37	5.47	4.34
Corporate Services	4.68	5.88	4.18	4.84	4.45	4.46	4.55
IT, Comms and Digital, Commercial and Customer Services****	10.55	10.04	8.91	11.14	9.72	8.72	8.23
Adults and Communities	12.57	11.26	10.02	11.74	11.41	11.19	10.76
East care pathway	n/a	11.06	9.51	11.32	10.96	10.69	10.86
West care pathway	n/a	13.16	12.01	12.84	12.41	11.27	9.60
Commissioning and Quality	n/a	8.01	8.02	7.46	7.30	6.38	5.80
Promoting Independence	12.26	15.11	13.26	11.88	10.99	11.65	10.38
Personal Care and Support	15.62	11.99	13.86	18.10	18.76	20.55	21.53
Communities and Wellbeing	7.67	7.98	6.97	8.73	7.69	6.61	5.97
Public Health	7.43	6.49	8.57	7.12	6.19	7.20	7.40

*from 1st April 2020 Education and Early Help changed to Education and SEND

**from 1st April 2020 Children's Social Care changed to Children's Social Care and Targeted Early Help

***from 1st Nov 2020 Finance and Assurance changed to Finance, Strategic Property and Commissioning

****from 1st Nov 2020 Commercial and Customer Services to IT, Comms and Digital, Commercial and Customer Services

Recommendations

16. The Committee is asked to note the update provided on the County Council's overall position on sickness absence as at the end of November 2020.

Background papers

17. Report to the Employment Committee 3 December 2020 – Attendance Management.
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s158346/Attendance%20Management.pdf>

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

18. None.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

19. There are no equalities and human rights implications arising directly from this report.

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