



EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE – 7 DECEMBER 2023

ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE RESOURCES

Purpose of the Report

- The purpose of this report is to update the Employment Committee on the Council's overall position on sickness absence, as at the end of September 2023 (quarter 2, 2023/24) and to provide details of the corporate attendance management communications campaign launched on 10 November 2023.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

- The Attendance Management Policy supports this report. No changes to this policy are proposed.

Background

- On 28 September 2023, the Committee considered the Council's absence position as at the end of June 2023 (quarter 1 2023/24).

Sickness absence – current position

- The table below details the end of year sickness absence levels of the previous 5 years, and quarter 1 and 2, 2023/24.

	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24 Q1 Jun 23	23/24 Q2 Sept 23	Total FTE days lost 01/10/22– 30/09/23	Total cost of absence 01/10/22 – 30/09/23
Chief Executive's	7.60	5.38	4.41	3.13	4.14	4.41	6.05	1,429.43	£183
Environment & Transport	9.16	8.88	7.04	8.34	11.44	11.31	11.51	9,239.85	£936k
Children & Family Services	10.55	11.12	7.94	10.44	10.14	10.01	9.88	11,522.93	£1,550k
Corporate Resources	7.39	9.39	5.54	9.92	8.84	8.64	10.50	11,941.70	£1,196k
Adults & Communities	10.02	11.74	10.18	8.24	8.84	8.61	9.27	10,712.55	£1,247k
Public Health	8.57	7.12	5.08	5.65	5.58	5.85	5.38	908.91	£105k
LCC total	9.18	10.08	7.51	8.87	9.27	9.11	9.80	45,755.37	£5,217k

ESPO	9.55	7.20	6.80	8.64	8.28	7.50	7.97	2,471.51	£215k
EMSS	7.54	9.69	9.26	9.10	6.26	6.08	6.16	643.83	£67k

5. At the end of quarter 2 2023/24 the Chief Executive's and Public Health departments are below the corporate target of 7.5 days per FTE. Children & Family Services and Public Health departments have both made an improvement since the end of quarter 1, 2023/24.
6. The County Council total is at 9.80 FTE days lost per FTE.
7. Attendance management activity is still required across departments to achieve and maintain the corporate target of 7.5 days per FTE.

Reasons for sickness absence

8. Displayed in order of highest percentage of time lost, the table below details the top 10 reasons for absence, plus the 'not disclosed' category.

Percentage of FTE days lost 12 months cumulative	2021/22 Mar 2022 Q4	2022/23 Jun 2022 Q1	2022/23 Sept 2022 Q2	2022/23 Dec 2022 Q3	2022/23 Mar 2023 Q4	2023/24 Jun 2023 Q1	2023/24 Sept 2023 Q2
Stress/depression, mental health	28.4%	26.7%	27.3%	25.7%	26.2%	25.9%	26.0%
Combined covid-19 & cough/cold&flu	27.4%	39.7%	21.5%	20.8%	17.3%	15.5%	13.4%
Other musculo-skeletal	8.8%	8.5%	8.5%	11.5%	12.4%	12.9%	12.8%
Gastro-stomach, digestion	6.1%	5.8%	5.9%	5.5%	6.1%	6.7%	7.4%
Chest & respiratory	3.8%	3.9%	4.1%	4.7%	6.0%	5.3%	5.4%
Cancer	4.7%	4.2%	4.1%	4.7%	4.3%	5.2%	5.4%
Neurological	4.6%	4.2%	4.2%	4.3%	4.4%	4.4%	4.0%
Back and neck	4.1%	3.9%	3.9%	3.8%	3.8%	3.8%	3.6%
Genito-Urinary/Gynae	2.2%	2.2%	3.1%	3.2%	3.2%	3.3%	3.4%
Eye, ear, nose & mouth/dental & throat	4.3%	4.0%	4.0%	3.0%	2.8%	2.9%	3.3%
<i>Not disclosed</i>	5.7%	6.8%	6.2%	6.1%	5.8%	5.0%	4.4%

9. The table shows that the levels of mental health/stress/depression related sickness absence has slightly increased from quarter 1 to 2 2023/24, and this remains the highest reason for lost time due to sickness absence.

10. At the Employment Committee meeting in May 2023, it was agreed that focus should be given on reducing the amount of non-disclosed absence. This activity continues and an improvement is shown in the trend within the table.
11. As requested by the Employment Committee on 28 September 2023, a table is set out below showing a comparison of absence reasons across all council departments, at the end of quarter 2, 2023/24.

Percentage of FTE days lost 12 months cumulative	Chief Executive's	Environment & Transport	Children & Family Services	Corporate Resources	Adults & Communities	Public Health
Stress/depression, mental health	19.6%	23.6%	42.5%	21.1%	27.0%	32.9%
Combined covid-19 & cough/cold & flu	16.5%	13.6%	11%	11.2%	17.6%	17.5%
Other musculo-skeletal	25.8%	16.9%	7.6%	17.1%	8.1%	17.1%
Gastro-stomach, digestion	5.7%	5.5%	7.2%	7.3%	9.2%	12.2%
Chest & respiratory	10.3%	7.5%	5.0%	2.8%	6.2%	3.4%
Cancer	4.0%	5.6%	3.8%	6.1%	6.8%	0%
Neurological	2.8%	1.4%	4.8%	6.9%	2.7%	1.1%
Back and neck	2.5%	6.1%	3.4%	3.4%	2.2%	2.1%
Genito-Urinary/Gynae	3.8%	1.8%	2%	4.9%	4.8%	1.8%
Eye, ear, nose & mouth/dental & throat	4.4%	2.1%	2.3%	3.4%	5.1%	5.1%
<i>Not disclosed</i>	0.5%	5.8%	3.2%	7.6%	1.8%	0.3%

12. The reasons for absence vary between departments, the key variations being:
- The Chief Executive's department leading cause of absence is musculo-skeletal rather than mental health.
 - Children and Family Services have 42.5% of absences due to mental health, which is more than the county wide total of 26.0%
 - Corporate Resources has 7.6% of absences recorded as 'not disclosed' which is more than the county wide total of 4.4%

Long and Short-term absence split

13. The table below details the number of FTE days lost due to absence and the percentage split of FTE days lost as at the end of September 2023.

2022/23 as at end of September 2023						
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	795.96	55.68%	18	633.47	44.32%	180
Environment and Transport	6308.64	68.28%	118	2931.21	31.72%	827
Children and Family Services	7778.56	67.51%	151	3744.37	32.49%	911
Public Health	536.71	59.05%	12	372.2	40.95%	110
Corporate Resources	7795.09	65.28%	186	4146.61	34.72%	1692
Adults and Communities	6085.94	56.81%	135	4626.61	43.19%	1087

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

Service level data

14. The table below provides details of the days lost per FTE at the end of the last 5 years and at the end of quarters 1 and 2, 2023/24, for service areas by department.

Department	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23
Days per FTE	Year end	Year end	Year end	Year end	Year end	Q1	Q2
12 months cumulative	(Mar 19)	(Mar 20)	(Mar 21)	(Mar 22)	(Mar 23)	(Jun 23)	(Sept 23)
Chief Executive's	7.6	5.38	4.41	3.13	4.14	4.41	6.05
Planning and Historic and Natural Environment	14.92	9.57	0.79	0.71	3.52	4.19	10.96
Regulatory Services	6.2	7.24	6.30	6.74	9.40	8.43	11.13
Strategy and Business Intelligence	6.93	4.26	3.86	1.87	3.47	3.95	5.08
Democratic Services	14.81	6.70	1.07	2.67	1.43	4.24	4.96

Department	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2022/23	2022/23
Days per FTE	Year end	Year end	Year end	Year end	Year end	Q1	Q2
12 months cumulative	(Mar 19)	(Mar 20)	(Mar 21)	(Mar 22)	(Mar 23)	(Jun 23)	(Sept 23)
Legal Services	5.48	3.63	5.82	3.05	1.34	1.49	1.57
Environment and Transport	9.16	8.88	7.04	8.34	11.44	11.31	11.51
Highways and Transport	8.96	9.30	3.99	9.40	15.01	14.93	14.12
Environment and Waste Management	10.07	12.65	7.68	7.54	9.26	9.11	11.82
Children and Family Services	10.55	11.12	7.95	10.44	10.14	10.01	9.88
Education and SEND	8.42	11.55	7.57	12.24	8.40	7.71	8.94
Children's Social Care & Targeted Early Help	14.18	10.54	9.15	10.11	10.52	10.31	10.14
Corporate Resources	7.41	9.39	5.45	9.92	8.84	8.64	10.50
Finance, Strategic Property & Commissioning	6.63	9.67	2.88	3.99	3.37	3.16	3.58
Corporate Services	4.18	4.84	4.07	7.83	5.07	5.55	7.48
IT, Comms & Digital, Commercial and Customer Services	8.91	11.14	6.77	11.69	11.31	11.02	13.44
Adults and Communities	10.02	11.74	10.18	8.24	8.84	8.61	9.27
Operational commissioning	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	9.74	11.31	11.13
Integration, access & prevention	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	10.27	8.11	7.66
Commissioning and Quality	8.02	7.46	4.66	11.90	10.83	6.11	6.12
Promoting Independence	13.26	11.88	11.91	6.11	7.98	9.88	12.19
Personal Care and Support	13.86	18.10	21.15	7.07	6.28	4.99	7.18
Communities and Wellbeing	6.97	8.73	4.65	5.38	5.41	5.16	5.57
Public Health	8.57	7.12	5.80	5.65	5.58	5.85	5.38

Corporate Attendance Management Communications Campaign

15. A corporate communications campaign was launched in November 2023 to support reductions in sickness absence across the council. The focus of the campaign is on prevention and wellbeing. The message to senior managers outlined the current absence position and set out the required actions, which are to:
 - Proactively and consistently manage sickness absence to at least the corporate target;
 - Role model and support positive wellbeing;
 - Ensure 1-to-1s, team meetings, annual performance reviews and mandatory training are completed;
 - Seek advice and take action to address issues with attendance and wellbeing.
16. A Managers' Digest Special was shared with all managers. The messages were delivered via a video, alongside details of our current absence position, a list of actions for managers, together with the links to the information and support they will need. The key focus for managers is to prevent sickness absence wherever possible and to support the wellbeing of the individuals in their teams.
17. An all-staff message within the monthly Wellbeing Bulletin, focusing on support during ill health was also shared. A video, alongside links to further information, delivered the key messages which are
 - our wellbeing offer, and how to access this;
 - communicating with your line manager during ill-health;
 - having a clear expectation of what will happen if you need to take sick leave.
18. An email from each Director to their department, encouraging them to access both the Manager's Digest and Wellbeing Bulletin messages, as appropriate, reinforced the campaign.

Recommendations

19. The Committee is asked to note the update provided on the Council's overall position on sickness absence as at the end of September 2023, and the corporate attendance management communications campaign.

Background Papers

20. Report to the Employment Committee 28 September 2023 – Attendance Management. <https://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s178750/Attendance%20Management%20-%20Employment%20Committee%20280923.pdf>

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

21. None

Equality Implications/Other Impact Assessments

22. There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Human Right Implications

23. There are no human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

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