

Report to Joint Consultative and Safety Committee

Subject: Sickness Absence: summary of current trends

Date: 25 August 2020

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1. Purpose of the Report

This is an information item to inform the Committee of the current levels of sickness absence in the organisation and to examine trends. Relevant data is shown at Appendix 1; officers will present a verbal report on the context of this data.

As part of the introduction of this item officers will also highlight to the Committee through verbal report, any matters of particular current interest in respect to absence management.

2. Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note this report.

3. Summary of key data

- The summary of trends graph in Appendix 1 shows that the outturn for the full year up to June 2020 at 9.85 days lost per employee is above the annual target of nine days. Absences in recent months have been substantially higher than for similar months last year. In part the levels of absence over this time have been adversely affected by Covid-related sickness:
 - In March 21% of absences related to Covid-19
 - In April 19% of absences related to Covid-19
 - In May 12% of absences related to Covid-19
 - In June 7% of absences related to Covid-19
- The target for the year 2019/20 remains at nine days
- Total absence levels from March onwards have been high. This is perhaps unsurprising with the additional sickness burden of Covid-related absence although the levels of general absence in June have been high even though Covid-related absences have dropped significantly.
- Long-term absences have accounted for a substantial amount of sickness in recent months with a relatively high number of cases (nine or ten) when compared with four cases in June last year. The long-term cases are due to a variety of reasons.
- During the “lock down” period the structured “case management” meetings between HR, relevant service managers and Directors to discuss case management of long-term absence have not taken place. These have now recommenced in most teams through video meetings. Case management and welfare meetings are again becoming more possible as Covid-safe procedures are developed. This may mean arranging safe meetings at the workplace or possibly conducting meetings distantly by phone.

- Over the year the larger teams that did not hit target were Revenues and Welfare Support, PASC, Leisure and Transport & Waste. All of these teams have long-term cases of absence.
- Appendix 2 shows the reasons for sickness absence for the year to March 2020. The top three reasons (by proportion of days lost) are anxiety & depression (not necessarily work-related) then post-operative recovery and then followed by back problems.

The Organisational Development work programme for 2019/20 contained an action to run workshops within service areas to support both employees affected by mental health issues and managers who may have affected employees within their team. Unfortunately the delivery of these sessions have had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic and it is now hoped to be able to deliver the sessions towards the end of this calendar year or early in 2021.

Telephone (and once current restrictions are lifted, face-to-face) counselling support continues to be offered through the council's employee assistance programme. During "lock down" intranet guidance has been posted to help support employees' physical and mental health. Tips for working safely have been posted together with signposting to other relevant support organisations.

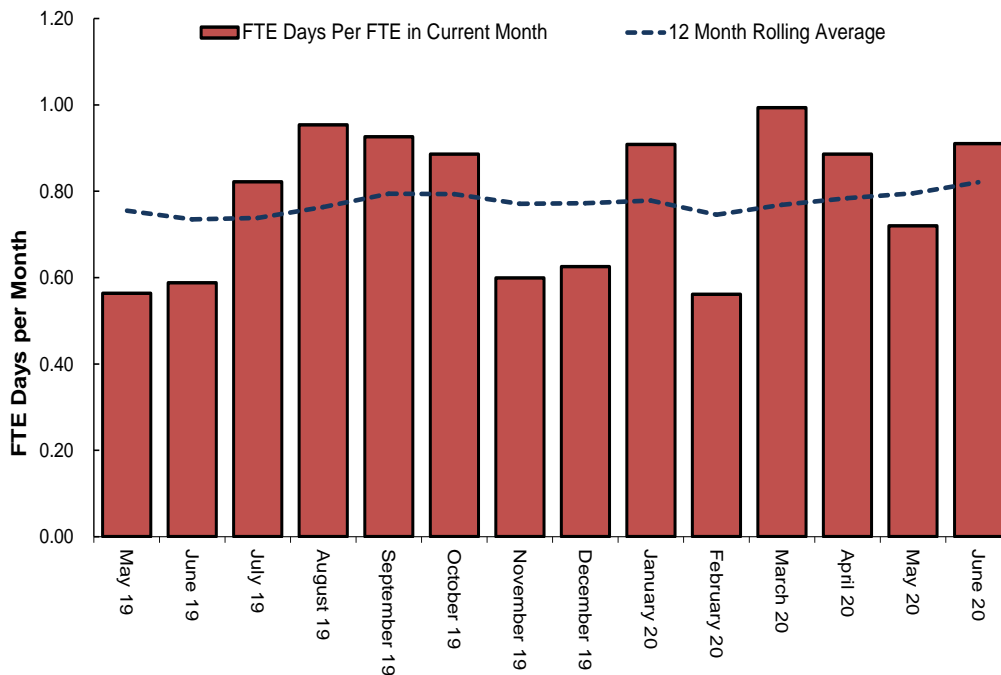
As part of the management of long-term absence the council does now offer fast-track referrals to a local physiotherapy service to help employees suffering from certain types of muscular-skeletal conditions to make an effective return to work. Between 2018/19 and 2019/20 there has been a 66% reduction in absence due to muscular-skeletal problems which had been the third most prevalent reason for absence.

Post-operative recovery remained the second most common reason for absence with a slight increase over the 2018/29 rate. Although support for return to work can be offered in some cases, often the length of absence from work is prescribed by a medical specialist and as such the opportunity for management intervention may be limited.

The sickness absence rate due to Covid-19 was low at year end at 2.81% of all absences (a total of 91 days lost). In the following two months when the rate of Covid infection was at its height the amount of time lost did substantially increase and for the year ending in May this had risen to a total of 207 days lost (an increase of 116 over the additional two-month period) meaning that Covid-related absence accounted for 5.91% of all absences over the year to May.

Summary of trends graph; year to date at June 2020

Summary of Trends



Month	Total Absence %	12 Month Average (%)	FTE Days per FTE in Current Month	FTE Days per FTE 12 Month Average	FTE Days per FTE per Month Average
May 19	2.69	3.52	0.56	9.06	0.76
June 19	2.94	3.46	0.59	8.82	0.74
July 19	3.57	3.44	0.82	8.86	0.74
August 19	4.54	3.57	0.95	9.16	0.76
September 19	4.41	3.70	0.93	9.53	0.79
October 19	3.85	3.71	0.89	9.52	0.79
November 19	2.85	3.66	0.60	9.25	0.77
December 19	3.47	3.65	0.63	9.27	0.77
January 20	4.13	3.69	0.91	9.34	0.78
February 20	2.81	3.52	0.56	8.95	0.75
March 20	4.73	3.60	0.99	9.22	0.77
April 20	4.43	3.70	0.89	9.41	0.78
May 20	3.79	3.79	0.72	9.54	0.80
June 20	4.14	3.89	0.91	9.85	0.82

Year to date absence data, by service area with six month trend

Days Lost Per FTE Employee: Year to June 2020

Year to date trend

Service	Section	Fte At Start	Fte At End	Average Fte	No Emps Sick FTE	FTE Days Lost	FTE Days Lost per FTE	% Rate of absence	Days lost 1 month ago	Days lost 2 months ago	Days lost 3 months ago	Days lost 4 months ago	Days lost 5 months ago	Days lost 6 months ago
Deputy Chief Exec & Director of Finance	Financial Services	13.97	14.61	14.29	4.62	98.38	6.88	2.74%	8.33	9.66	10.32	11.03	12.11	12.30
	H&S/ Marketing/ Project Management	3.00	2.00	2.50	1.00	3.00	1.20	0.48%	1.20	1.80	1.80	2.25	1.80	1.80
	Parks and Street Care	53.58	53.22	53.40	30.80	961.10	18.00	7.17%	17.71	17.71	17.25	16.87	17.64	16.81
	Property	10.85	11.42	11.14	4.53	35.78	3.21	1.28%	3.21	3.73	4.36	4.54	5.32	5.59
	Revenues and Welfare Support	35.77	31.64	33.71	21.68	318.23	9.44	3.76%	9.07	9.03	9.15	8.65	9.97	11.14
	Transport and Waste	65.01	65.59	65.30	30.86	790.30	12.10	4.82%	10.82	10.55	10.70	9.93	10.31	10.34
		1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Service Total:		183.19	179.48	181.33	93.50	2206.80	12.17	4.85%						
Director of Health & Community Wellbeing	Public Protection	32.57	31.11	31.84	13.76	241.30	7.58	3.02%	7.81	6.96	6.09	6.21	7.36	8.19
		1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Service Total:		33.57	32.11	32.84	13.76	241.30	7.35	2.93%						
Director of OD & Democratic Services	Community Relations	9.65	10.36	10.01	5.28	139.13	13.90	5.54%	12.37	12.55	12.65	11.97	11.17	10.63
	Customer Services and Communications	37.95	37.08	37.52	20.15	208.85	5.57	2.22%	6.03	6.22	6.33	6.58	6.15	5.94
	Democratic Services	10.39	8.09	9.24	5.58	17.29	1.87	0.75%	1.87	1.98	1.98	1.88	2.05	2.61
	Legal Services	7.62	6.85	7.24	2.42	23.85	3.30	1.31%	5.90	8.47	11.53	14.33	16.53	19.30
	Organisational Development	5.30	4.91	5.10	0.81	2.66	0.52	0.21%	0.53	0.53	0.51	0.49	0.49	0.00
		1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Service Total:		71.91	68.30	70.10	34.24	391.78	5.59	2.23%						
Planning, Leisure, EG & Regen	Development Services	15.59	18.09	16.84	4.41	118.04	7.01	2.79%	5.38	4.21	2.76	1.68	2.55	2.36
	Economic Growth and Regeneration	6.40	8.00	7.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.15	2.00	2.00
	Leisure Services	53.90	54.53	54.22	28.88	672.30	12.40	4.94%	11.88	11.28	10.49	9.70	9.06	8.03
	Planning Policy	5.43	5.43	5.43	1.00	1.00	0.18	0.07%	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.94	1.31	1.31
		1.00	0.00	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Service Total:		82.33	86.06	84.19	34.29	791.34	9.46	3.74%						
Grand Total:		370.99	365.95	368.47	175.79	3631.23	9.85	3.93%	9.54	9.41	9.22	8.95	9.34	9.27

Current month's absence data, by service area with six month trend

Days lost per FTE employee: June 2020

Service	Section	Fte At Start	Fte At End	Average Fte	No Emps Sick FTE	FTE Days Lost	FTE Days Lost per FTE	% Absence	Current month trend					
									Days lost 1 month ago	Days lost 2 months ago	Days lost 3 months ago	Days lost 4 months ago	Days lost 5 months ago	Days lost 6 months ago
Deputy Chief Exec & Director of Finance	Financial Services	14.61	14.61	14.61	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.08	0.58
	H&S/ Marketing/ Project Management	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Parks and Street Care	53.22	53.22	53.22	5.65	52.49	0.99	4.48%	0.77	1.77	1.69	1.03	2.35	1.71
	Property	11.42	11.42	11.42	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.47	0.00	0.00	1.25
	Revenues and Welfare Support	31.64	31.64	31.64	3.43	31.07	0.98	4.46%	0.86	0.68	1.08	0.10	0.64	0.23
	Transport and Waste	65.59	65.59	65.59	8.00	124.00	1.89	8.59%	0.98	0.96	1.75	0.60	0.97	0.50
		1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Service Total:		179.48	179.48	179.48	17.08	207.56	1.16	5.26%						
Director of Health & Community Wellbeing	Public Protection	31.11	31.11	31.11	1.00	22.00	0.71	3.21%	0.85	0.95	0.24	0.10	0.46	0.30
		1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Service Total:		32.11	32.11	32.11	1.00	22.00	0.69	3.11%						
Director of OD & Democratic Services	Community Relations	10.36	10.36	10.36	0.81	18.04	1.74	7.91%	0.87	0.95	1.28	1.87	1.04	1.09
	Customer Services and Communications	37.08	37.08	37.08	1.51	4.57	0.12	0.56%	0.00	0.04	0.47	0.81	0.61	0.22
	Democratic Services	8.09	8.09	8.09	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.22	0.00	0.30
	Legal Services	6.85	6.85	6.85	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.73	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.14
	Organisational Development	4.91	4.91	4.91	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.50	0.00
		1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Service Total:		68.30	68.30	68.30	2.32	22.61	0.33	1.50%						
Planning, Leisure, EG & Regen	Development Services	18.09	18.09	18.09	1.00	22.00	1.22	5.53%	1.16	1.49	1.11	0.17	0.06	0.05
	Economic Growth and Regeneration	8.00	8.00	8.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Leisure Services	54.53	54.53	54.53	4.19	58.87	1.08	4.91%	1.36	1.33	1.13	0.95	1.31	0.83
	Planning Policy	5.43	5.43	5.43	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Service Total:		86.06	86.06	86.06	5.19	80.87	0.94	4.27%						
Grand Total:		365.95	365.95	365.95	25.60	333.03	0.91	4.14%	0.72	0.89	0.99	0.56	0.91	0.63

Long term (20 days+ in month)/ short term sickness analysis for June 2020

Analysis of Short and Long Term Absence - June 2020

Head of Service	Section	No Occurrences Long Term	Total No Occurrences Absent	Long Term FTE Days Lost	Total FTE Days Lost	Long Term as a % of Days Lost	Long Term as a % of Occurrences
Deputy Chief Exec & Director of Finance	Parks and Street Care	1	6	21.52	51.49	41.80%	16.67%
	Revenues and Welfare Support	0	4	0.00	30.25	0.00%	0.00%
	Transport and Waste	4	8	86.10	121.32	70.97%	50.00%
Head of Service Total:		5	18	107.62	203.06	53.00%	27.78%
Director of Health & Community Wellbeing	Public Protection	1	1	21.52	21.52	100.00%	100.00%
Head of Service Total:		1	1	21.52	21.52	100.00%	100.00%
Director of OD & Democratic Services	Community Relations	1	2	8.92	17.31	51.52%	50.00%
	Customer Services and Communications	0	2	0.00	4.47	0.00%	0.00%
Head of Service Total:		1	4	8.92	21.78	40.95%	25.00%
Planning, Leisure, EG & Regen	Development Services	1	1	21.52	21.52	100.00%	100.00%
	Leisure Services	2	8	29.88	61.28	48.76%	25.00%
Head of Service Total:		3	9	51.40	82.80	62.08%	33.33%
Grand Total:		10	32	189.47	329.16	57.56%	31.25%

Long term (20 days+ in month)/ short term sickness analysis for May 2020

Analysis of Short and Long Term Absence - May 2020

Head of Service	Section	No Occurrences Long Term	Total No Occurrences Absent	Long Term FTE Days Lost	Total FTE Days Lost	Long Term as a % of Days Lost	Long Term as a % of Occurrences
Deputy Chief Exec & Director of Finance	Parks and Street Care	1	4	20.55	40.37	50.90%	25.00%
	Revenues and Welfare Support	1	4	20.55	27.15	75.67%	25.00%
	Transport and Waste	2	5	41.09	62.62	65.63%	40.00%
Head of Service Total:		4	13	82.18	130.14	63.15%	30.77%
Director of Health & Community Wellbeing	Public Protection	1	3	20.55	25.44	80.77%	33.33%
Head of Service Total:		1	3	20.55	25.44	80.77%	33.33%
Director of OD & Democratic Services	Community Relations	1	2	8.51	9.66	88.17%	50.00%
Head of Service Total:		1	2	8.51	9.66	88.17%	50.00%
Planning, Leisure, EG & Regen	Development Services	1	1	20.55	20.55	100.00%	100.00%
	Leisure Services	3	9	57.00	77.67	73.38%	33.33%
Head of Service Total:		4	10	77.54	98.22	78.95%	40.00%
Grand Total:		10	28	188.79	263.44	71.66%	35.71%

Long term (20 days+ in month)/ short term sickness analysis for April 2020

Head of Service	Section	No Occurrences Long Term	Total No Occurrences Absent	Long Term FTE Days Lost	Total FTE Days Lost	Long Term as a % of Days Lost	Long Term as a % of Occurrences
Deputy Chief Exec & Director of Finance	Financial Services	0	3	0.00	11.70	0.00%	0.00%
	Parks and Street Care	3	4	62.62	67.51	92.75%	75.00%
	Property	1	2	5.95	7.03	84.62%	50.00%
	Revenues and Welfare Support	1	3	21.52	25.44	84.62%	33.33%
	Transport and Waste	2	6	43.05	55.97	76.91%	33.33%
Head of Service Total:		7	18	133.14	167.65	79.41%	38.89%
Director of Health & Community Wellbeing	Community Relations	1	1	8.39	8.39	100.00%	100.00%
	Leisure Services	0	11	0.00	28.97	0.00%	0.00%
	Public Protection	0	1	0.00	4.32	0.00%	0.00%
Head of Service Total:		1	13	8.39	41.69	20.13%	7.69%
Director of OD & Democratic Services	Customer Services and Communications	0	2	0.00	3.91	0.00%	0.00%
	Legal Services	1	1	17.84	17.84	100.00%	100.00%
Head of Service Total:		1	3	17.84	21.75	82.03%	33.33%
Planning, Economic Growth & Regeneration	Development Services	0	1	0.00	1.15	0.00%	0.00%
Head of Service Total:		0	1	0.00	1.15	0.00%	0.00%
Grand Total:		9	35	159.36	232.23	68.62%	25.71%

Sickness Reasons April 2019- March 2020

Reason	Self Cert	Med Cert	Absence as % of total absence	2018-19 Absence as % of total absence
Unstated	1	19	0.62%	0.11%
(0001) Injury at work	3	0	0.09%	1.09%
(0002) Injury, not at work	36	52	2.72%	3.32%
(0003) Respiratory system problems	53	178	7.14%	3.99%
(0004) Cold, flu, sore throat or similar	162	34	6.06%	8.29%
(0005) Digestion	120	26	4.52%	8.49%
(0006) Depression, stress or similar	57	681	22.82%	14.08%
(0007) Headache, migraine or similar	16.5	6	0.70%	0.85%
(0008) Pregnancy- related	6	68	2.29%	2.05%
(0009) Gynaecological problems	6	0	0.19%	0.57%
(0010) Operation or post-operative recovery	17	496	15.87%	11.16%
(0011) Hospital visit	23	32	1.70%	0.57%
(0012) Kidney problem or similar	11.5	10	0.66%	3.31%
(0013) Heart or circulation problems	1	23	0.74%	4.73%
(0014) Allergy, hayfever or similar	16	0	0.49%	0.05%
(0015) Arthritis, rheumatism or similar	10	5	0.46%	2.30%
(0016) Dental problems	10.5	25	1.10%	0.63%
(0017) "Childhood" Illness	0	8	0.25%	0.05%
(0018) Nasal problems	2	0	0.06%	0.03%
(0019) Dizziness, vertigo or similar	6	12	0.56%	0.25%
(0020) Other reason for absence	23	151	5.38%	0.49%
(0022) Problems with ears	6	0	0.19%	1.12%
(0023) Problems with eyes	7.5	34	1.28%	0.14%
(0024) Viral infection (not cold etc)	44.5	16	1.87%	2.91%
(0025) Back problem	38	246	8.78%	8.75%
(0026) Muscular/ skeletal problems (not back)	24	118	4.39%	12.95%
(0027) Cancer Treatment (not screening visits)	9	191	6.19%	7.70%
(0028) Liver problems or similar	2	0	0.06%	
(0030) Coronavirus	16	75	2.81%	
	727.5	2506		