

## **Report to Joint Consultative and Safety Committee**

**Subject:**      **Sickness Absence: summary of current trends**

**Date:**          **7 June 2022**

**Author:**       **Head of HR, Performance and Service Planning**

### **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 and Appendix 2; 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 March 2022 at 11.22 days lost per employee is above the annual target of nine days.
- The full year outturn is almost 25% above target. Although earlier in the year absence due to Covid was not particularly significant, it has become more so in recent months. In March the number of working days lost due to Covid was 103 out of a total of 386 (26.7% of days lost were due to Covid). In addition, in March 80 days were lost due to "operations/ post op recovery" and this represents almost 21% of all absences in that month. The number of long-term cases has reduced slightly from earlier in the year (now standing at six cases down from 12 at the last quarter end); some of those case have now been resolved and will not be going forwards into 2022/23.
- There is no proposal to review the target; it is clear from our historic performance that nine days is achievable. From April there will be no free testing for Covid and locally our sickness policy will treat all viral infections (including Covid) in the same way; that is, they will count towards the sickness triggers within our policies. As the country begins to "live with Covid" as is the government's strategy going forwards, it is hoped that the rates of absence will again reduce to a lower level.
- Over the whole year Covid accounted for 13.5% of all working days lost.

- A cycle of training has now commenced that is designed to support managers and supervisors in the management of sickness absence.
- Appendix 2 shows the reasons for absence over the last financial year. The top three reasons for absence were; depression or stress (not necessarily work-related), back problems and Covid.

There has been a marked increase in the amount of absence due to depression and stress. The employee survey undertaken at the end of last year did indicate that 34% of people felt that their mental health had worsened over the last year. The absence levels do support this feeling. In response a number of things have already been put into place:

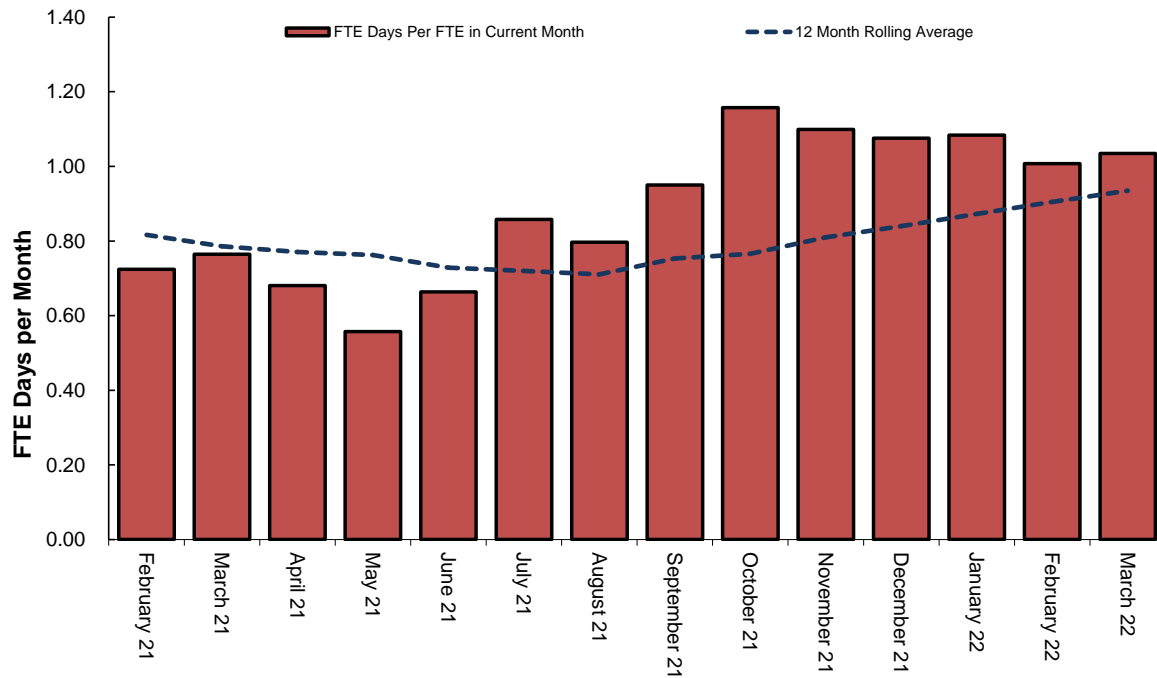
- An online bespoke mental health awareness package has been made available across the Council over the last year
- There has been continued active promotion of the Council's employee assistance programme (EAP) that is open to all employees and offers a variety of "talking therapies" as well as general relationship and financial advice and signposting. This service is publicised not only on the intranet but also by means of posters at the depot and leisure centres.
- Two training courses have been commissioned from an external provider to deliver training and support both to team members and team managers. This training has now started (in April).

The level of absence relating to back problems remains noticeably high although it is at approximately the same level as last year. The cases predominantly fall within front-line areas of the business and as such, it does not appear to be the case that increased home-working has had a noticeable adverse impact on the rate of absence for this reason.

It is perhaps not surprising that the third highest reason for absence relates to cases of Covid. The rate of absence is about double that of last year. Clearly the effect of more contagious strains of the infection has had an impact upon attendance. Although rates of absence due to Covid were not noticeably high at the start of the year, over recent months there has been a high rate of absence. Risk assessments are in place to ensure that as far as reasonably practicable, the workplace remains safe.

## Summary of trends graph; year to date at March 2022

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
February 21	3.62	3.86	0.72	9.80	0.82
March 21	3.32	3.74	0.76	9.43	0.79
April 21	3.40	3.66	0.68	9.25	0.77
May 21	2.93	3.58	0.56	9.15	0.76
June 21	3.02	3.49	0.66	8.74	0.73
July 21	3.90	3.46	0.86	8.64	0.72
August 21	3.79	3.45	0.80	8.53	0.71
September 21	4.32	3.53	0.95	9.04	0.75
October 21	5.51	3.67	1.16	9.19	0.77
November 21	5.00	3.82	1.10	9.72	0.81
December 21	5.38	3.98	1.08	10.08	0.84
January 22	5.42	4.13	1.08	10.47	0.87
February 22	5.04	4.25	1.01	10.86	0.91
March 22	4.50	4.35	1.03	11.22	0.94

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

### Days Lost Per FTE Employee: Year to March 2022

### 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
Corporate Resources	Customer Services	22.83	19.78	21.30	15.09	290.46	13.63	5.41%	15.18	16.02	15.11	13.38	12.04	11.01
	Democratic Services and H&S	8.38	7.69	8.03	3.58	25.82	3.21	1.28%	4.57	3.82	3.54	3.65	4.68	6.27
	Financial Services	12.80	12.30	12.55	4.62	56.82	4.53	1.80%	4.03	3.36	2.85	2.38	2.03	1.02
	HR, Performance and Svs Planning	4.74	4.74	4.74	0.61	6.67	1.41	0.56%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Information & Communications Technology	8.00	8.00	8.00	5.74	58.00	7.25	2.88%	5.13	4.13	2.88	1.75	1.13	0.75
	Legal Services	5.85	4.46	5.16	1.42	5.07	0.98	0.39%	0.19	1.65	3.79	3.79	3.79	4.58
	Revenues	11.65	12.17	11.91	5.41	103.57	8.69	3.45%	8.83	8.48	8.27	8.86	9.77	9.84
		2.00	3.00	2.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Service Total:</b>		<b>76.25</b>	<b>72.13</b>	<b>74.19</b>	<b>36.47</b>	<b>546.40</b>	<b>7.36</b>	<b>2.92%</b>						
Environment, Communities & Leisure	Community Relations	5.81	4.95	5.38	1.65	7.64	1.42	0.56%	1.40	1.40	0.74	0.74	0.45	0.46
	Leisure Services	52.49	54.84	53.66	36.63	570.83	10.64	4.22%	9.94	9.35	8.65	7.93	6.86	6.24
	Parks and Street Care	49.56	51.61	50.59	33.35	1048.40	20.72	8.22%	19.58	18.47	17.69	16.39	14.22	13.61
	Public Protection	30.76	30.11	30.43	9.76	118.82	3.90	1.55%	3.90	3.07	3.96	5.59	6.32	7.96
	Transport and Waste	61.99	62.72	62.35	45.04	1104.03	17.71	7.03%	16.85	17.43	17.27	17.41	17.67	17.08
		2.00	3.00	2.50	2.00	8.00	3.20	1.27%	3.20	3.20	5.33	5.33	4.00	1.00
<b>Service Total:</b>		<b>202.60</b>	<b>207.22</b>	<b>204.91</b>	<b>128.42</b>	<b>2857.71</b>	<b>13.95</b>	<b>5.53%</b>						
Regeneration, Development and Comms	Communications	4.45	4.50	4.47	2.50	6.17	1.38	0.55%	1.13	1.01	1.01	0.78	0.22	0.29
	Development Services	15.69	16.69	16.19	5.32	42.23	2.61	1.04%	3.51	4.01	3.90	4.39	4.85	5.15
	Economic Growth and Regeneration	7.00	4.00	5.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Facilities- Community Centres	3.08	3.49	3.28	2.35	125.48	38.21	15.16%	31.21	24.13	18.90	11.44	9.16	10.74
	Planning Policy	4.24	4.24	4.24	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Projects	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
	Property	9.85	8.58	9.22	4.24	193.91	21.04	8.35%	19.53	19.14	17.47	16.40	13.90	12.11
	Welfare Support	18.89	18.83	18.86	9.43	84.90	4.50	1.79%	5.38	4.13	3.58	3.83	4.18	4.24
<b>Service Total:</b>		<b>66.20</b>	<b>63.33</b>	<b>64.77</b>	<b>23.85</b>	<b>452.68</b>	<b>7.10</b>	<b>2.77%</b>						
<b>Grand Total:</b>		<b>345.05</b>	<b>342.69</b>	<b>343.87</b>	<b>188.75</b>	<b>3856.79</b>	<b>11.22</b>	<b>4.45%</b>	<b>10.86</b>	<b>10.47</b>	<b>10.08</b>	<b>9.72</b>	<b>9.19</b>	<b>9.04</b>

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

Days lost per FTE employee: March 2022

Service	Section	Fte At Start	Fte At End	Average Fte	No Emps Sick FTE	FTE Days Lost	FTE Days Lost per FTE	% 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
Corporate Resources	Customer Services	20.17	19.78	19.97	3.41	17.23	0.86	3.75%	0.74	0.87	1.93	1.47	1.63	0.14
	Democratic Services and H&S	7.69	7.69	7.69	0.50	2.99	0.39	1.69%	0.78	0.00	0.00	0.23	0.00	0.12
	Financial Services	11.30	12.30	11.80	1.50	8.28	0.70	3.05%	0.79	0.68	0.39	0.36	1.49	0.33
	HR, Performance and Svs Planning	4.74	4.74	4.74	0.61	6.67	1.41	6.12%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Information & Communications Technology	8.00	8.00	8.00	3.00	17.00	2.13	9.24%	1.00	1.25	1.13	0.63	0.38	0.38
	Legal Services	5.07	4.46	4.76	0.81	4.05	0.85	3.70%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.21
	Revenues	11.47	12.17	11.82	1.00	3.24	0.27	1.19%	0.21	0.21	0.00	0.00	1.03	2.43
Service Total:		71.43	72.13	71.78	10.82	59.46	0.83	3.60%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Environment, Communities & Leisure	Community Relations	4.95	4.95	4.95	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.66	0.00	0.34	0.00	0.00
	Leisure Services	54.50	54.84	54.67	11.17	62.87	1.15	5.00%	1.00	1.14	1.08	1.08	1.04	0.86
	Parks and Street Care	52.97	51.61	52.29	9.35	109.26	2.09	9.08%	2.31	2.20	2.42	2.63	2.52	1.58
	Public Protection	30.11	30.11	30.11	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.59	0.00	0.32	0.99	0.36	0.37
	Transport and Waste	63.72	62.72	63.22	12.68	89.69	1.42	6.17%	0.69	1.50	1.17	1.15	1.75	1.77
Service Total:		209.24	207.22	208.23	33.20	261.82	1.26	5.47%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.67	0.00
Regeneration, Development and Comms	Communications	4.50	4.50	4.50	0.50	1.67	0.37	1.61%	0.00	0.00	0.22	0.56	0.00	0.29
	Development Services	16.69	16.69	16.69	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.12	0.00	0.42
	Economic Growth and Regeneration	4.00	4.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Facilities- Community Centres	3.49	3.49	3.49	1.00	23.00	6.60	28.68%	6.67	6.40	7.46	2.27	0.00	0.00
	Planning Policy	4.24	4.24	4.24	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Projects	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
	Property	8.58	8.58	8.58	0.81	9.30	1.08	4.71%	2.48	2.49	2.56	2.83	2.42	2.34
	Welfare Support	18.83	18.83	18.83	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	1.14	0.81	0.15	0.21	0.08	0.40
Service Total:		63.33	63.33	63.33	2.31	33.96	0.54	2.33%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Grand Total:		344.00	342.69	343.34	46.34	355.24	1.03	4.50%	1.01	1.08	1.08	1.10	1.16	0.95

## Long term (20 days+ in month)/ short term sickness analysis for March 2022

### Analysis of Short and Long Term Absence - March 2022

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
Corporate Resources	Customer Services	0	4	0.00	16.94	0.00%	0.00%
	Democratic Services and H&S	0	1	0.00	2.93	0.00%	0.00%
	Financial Services	0	3	0.00	7.99	0.00%	0.00%
	HR, Performance and Svs Planning	0	1	0.00	6.59	0.00%	0.00%
	Information & Communications Technology	0	3	0.00	16.63	0.00%	0.00%
	Legal Services	0	1	0.00	4.05	0.00%	0.00%
	Revenues	0	1	0.00	3.24	0.00%	0.00%
Head of Service Total:		0	14	0.00	58.38	0.00%	0.00%
Environment, Communities & Leisure	Leisure Services	1	21	21.66	63.91	33.89%	4.76%
	Parks and Street Care	2	8	43.05	95.88	44.90%	25.00%
	Transport and Waste	2	13	45.01	85.80	52.45%	15.38%
Head of Service Total:		5	42	109.71	245.60	44.67%	11.90%
Regeneration, Development and Communities	Communications	0	1	0.00	1.65	0.00%	0.00%
	Facilities- Community Centres	1	1	22.50	22.50	100.00%	100.00%
	Property	0	3	0.00	9.20	0.00%	0.00%
Head of Service Total:		1	5	22.50	33.35	67.47%	20.00%
Grand Total:		6	61	132.21	337.32	39.20%	9.84%

## Long term (20 days+ in month)/ short term sickness analysis for December 2021

### Analysis of Short and Long Term Absence - December 2021

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
Corporate Resources	Customer Services	1	5	22.50	38.95	57.77%	20.00%
	Financial Services	0	2	0.00	4.12	0.00%	0.00%
	Information & Communications Technology	0	1	0.00	8.81	0.00%	0.00%
Head of Service Total:		1	8	22.50	51.87	43.38%	12.50%
Environment, Communities and Leisure	Leisure Services	2	13	29.46	55.93	52.68%	15.38%
	Parks and Street Care	4	9	87.08	118.23	73.65%	44.44%
	Public Protection	1	1	9.09	9.09	100.00%	100.00%
	Transport and Waste	2	12	42.07	71.42	58.90%	16.67%
Head of Service Total:		9	35	167.70	254.67	65.85%	25.71%
Regeneration, Development and Housing	Communications	0	1	0.00	0.98	0.00%	0.00%
	Facilities- Community Centres	1	1	22.50	22.50	100.00%	100.00%
	Property	1	1	22.50	22.50	100.00%	100.00%
	Welfare Support	0	2	0.00	2.97	0.00%	0.00%
Head of Service Total:		2	5	45.01	48.96	91.93%	40.00%
Grand Total:		12	48	235.20	355.50	66.16%	25.00%

## Sickness Reasons April 2021- March 2022

Reason	Self Cert	Med Cert	As a % total 21-22	As a % total 20-21
(0000) Unknown or unspecified sickness absence	5	50	1.31%	0.25%
(0001) Injury at work	5	0	0.12%	1.48%
(0002) Injury, not at work	3	44	1.12%	1.94%
(0003) Respiratory system problems	2	43	1.07%	0.53%
(0004) Cold, flu, sore throat or similar	169	67	5.63%	1.52%
(0005) Digestion	57	163	5.25%	4.06%
(0006) Depression, stress or similar	27	1053	25.76%	16.63%
(0007) Headache, migraine or similar	10.5	20	0.73%	0.55%
(0008) Pregnancy- related	4	0	0.10%	0.25%
(0009) Gynaecological problems	8	0	0.19%	0.60%
(0010) Operation or post-operative recovery	36	493	12.62%	21.18%
(0011) Hospital visit	5	10	0.36%	1.41%
(0012) Kidney problem or similar	6	10	0.38%	0.74%
(0013) Heart or circulation problems	0	133	3.17%	7.52%
(0014) Allergy, hay fever or similar	0	0	0.00%	0.04%
(0015) Arthritis, rheumatism or similar	7	0	0.17%	3.74%
(0016) Dental problems	0	0	0.00%	0.14%
(0017) "Childhood" Illness	0	0	0.00%	0.18%
(0018) Nasal problems	0	0	0.00%	0.00%
(0019) Dizziness, vertigo or similar	3	0	0.07%	0.14%
(0020) Other reason for absence	30	48	1.86%	3.39%
(0021) Problems with glands	0	0	0.00%	0.32%
(0022) Problems with ears	0	6	0.14%	0.25%
(0023) Problems with eyes	17	0	0.41%	0.14%
(0024) Viral infection (not cold etc)	7	0	0.17%	1.13%
(0025) Back problem	67	509	13.74%	13.94%
(0026) Muscular/ skeletal problems (not back)	42	322	8.68%	4.66%
(0027) Cancer Treatment (not screening visits)	1	147	3.53%	6.60%
(0030) Coronavirus	247	316	13.43%	6.69%
<b>Days</b>	<b>758.5</b>	<b>3434</b>		
		<b>Total</b>	<b>4192.5</b>	