

Report to Joint Consultative and Safety Committee

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

Date: **27 August 2024**

Author: **Director of Transformation (acting Assistant Director- Workforce)**

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 the outturn for absence for the full year up to March 2024 at 9.88 days. Also shown is the outturn for the year up to the end of the first quarter of this financial year. Both sets of data are shown in this report as the JCSC meeting earlier in the year was cancelled due to the election taking place. Although the outturn is above target (nine days) for both periods, levels of absence have been reducing over the last six months from a peak of 10.1 days in December.
- Earlier in the year the Council did experience periods when there was a high number of employees who were long-term sick. This had a material impact on the levels of absence both in the months in which they occurred but also consequently on the absence levels over the year as a whole. Currently, the number of long-term absence cases has dropped again to a lower level of six cases (the same level both in March and June).
- The larger teams with higher rates of absence are predominantly the “front-facing” services such as Leisure Services, Customer Services, PASC and Waste.
- Active management of long-term cases of absence continues with regular training being offered to managers to help them to effectively support employees back to work. In addition to training the Council also gives access to a 24/7 counselling and talking therapy service for all employees as well as a fast-track physiotherapy service through referral by HR. In the HR work

programme for this coming year is the implementation of a network of “Mental Health First Aiders”.

- Appendix 2 shows the reasons for absence over the last financial year together with the reasons for absence for the previous year. The top three reasons for absence were; colds/ flu, depression or stress (not necessarily work-related) for which the days lost reduced by around 30 against last year’s absence rates, and post-operative recovery.

It is reassuring to see the reduction in absences relating to stress and depression as the Council has continued to support its employees through measures that include:

- An online bespoke mental health awareness package that is available across the Council
- A 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.
- Provision of HR support to managers to help in their management of sickness generally within teams, including giving advice and sharing experience to help with cases of mental ill-health.

Hopefully, the roll out of Mental Health First Aiders across the organisation will also provide further support to employees to manage their mental health issues.

The level of absence relating to muscular/ skeletal is a little higher than last year although not a “top three” reason. The Council has a fast-track referral scheme for physiotherapy to help support people with medical problems that relate to mobility issues.

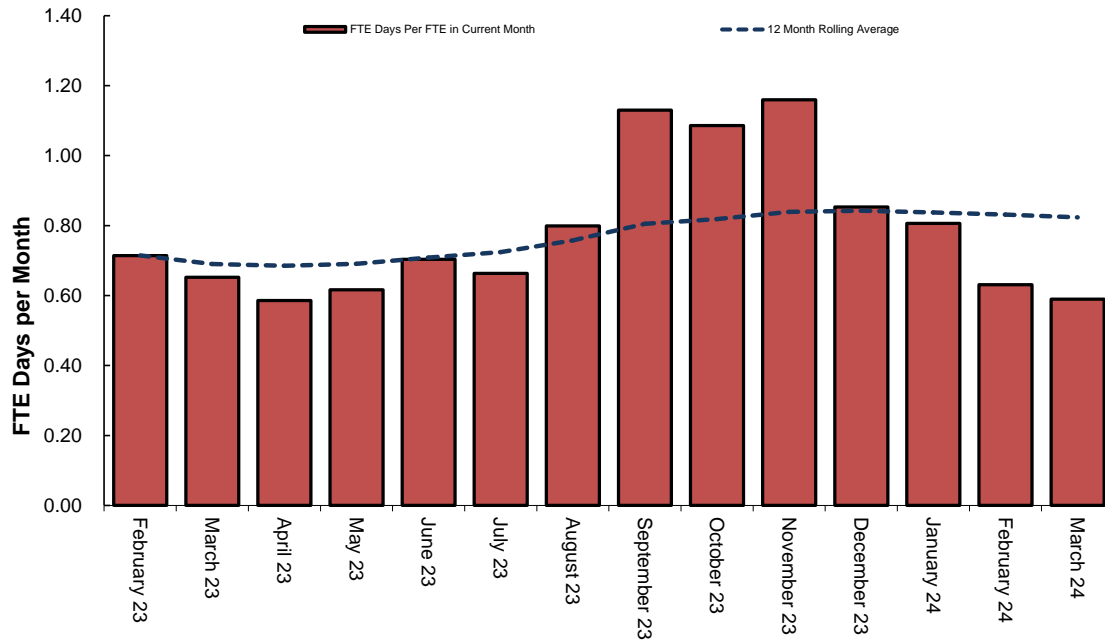
Although post-operative recovery is again one of the top three reasons for absence this year, other than to be generally supportive and looking for creative ways to assist people to make a return at the earliest safe opportunity (things like a applying a “phased return”) it is hard to be able to influence the rates of absence for such cases.

The number of days lost over the last year is almost identical to the loss in the previous year although the proportion of days lost due to self-certification has reduced by about 20%.

Overall, the managers of the Council remain focussed on sickness absence as an issue and recognise its importance from a financial, business and social perspective.

Summary of trends graph; year to date at March 2024

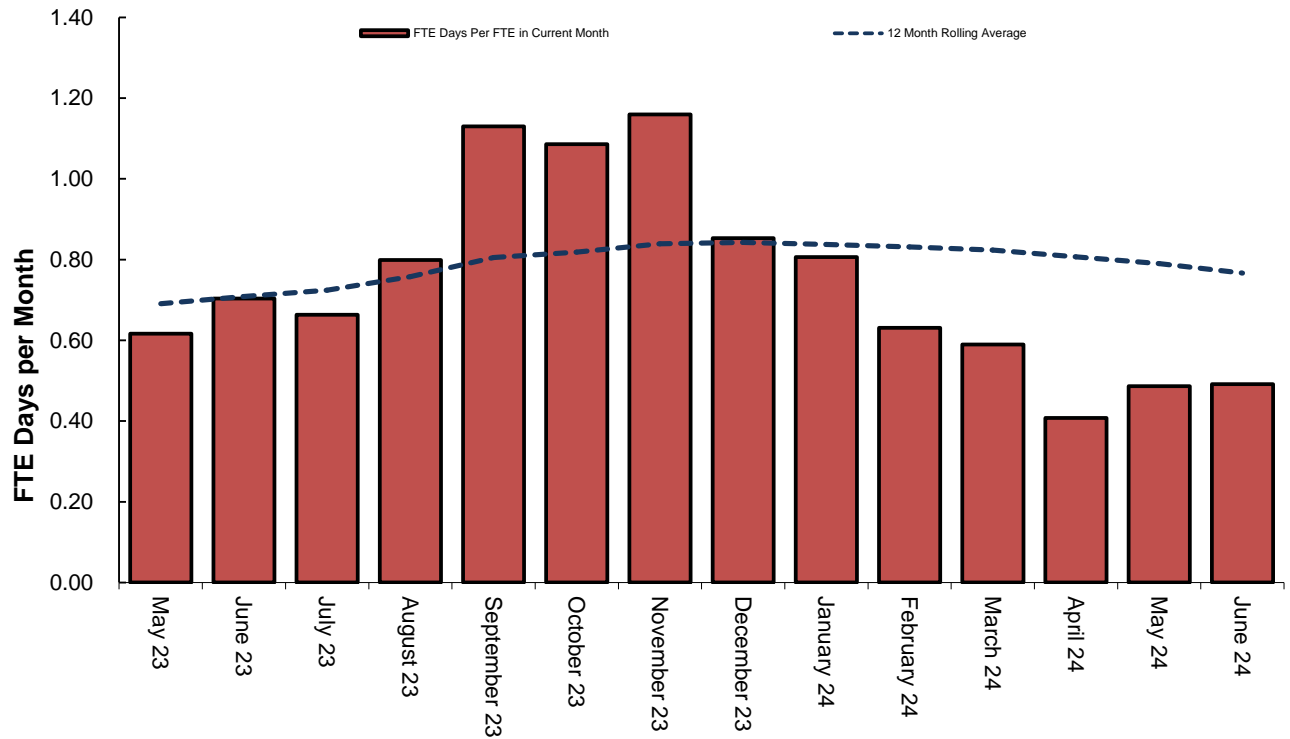
Summary of Trends



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 23	3.57	3.42	0.71	8.58	0.72
March 23	2.84	3.28	0.65	8.28	0.69
April 23	3.25	3.23	0.59	8.22	0.69
May 23	3.08	3.27	0.62	8.29	0.69
June 23	3.20	3.34	0.70	8.50	0.71
July 23	3.16	3.39	0.66	8.69	0.72
August 23	3.63	3.48	0.80	9.09	0.76
September 23	5.38	3.68	1.13	9.66	0.81
October 23	4.94	3.71	1.09	9.82	0.82
November 23	5.27	3.81	1.16	10.07	0.84
December 23	4.49	3.86	0.85	10.11	0.84
January 24	3.66	3.87	0.81	10.05	0.84
February 24	3.01	3.83	0.63	9.98	0.83
March 24	2.95	3.84	0.59	9.88	0.82

Summary of trends graph; year to date at June 2024

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 23	3.08	3.27	0.62	8.29	0.69
June 23	3.20	3.34	0.70	8.50	0.71
July 23	3.16	3.39	0.66	8.69	0.72
August 23	3.63	3.48	0.80	9.09	0.76
September 23	5.38	3.68	1.13	9.66	0.81
October 23	4.94	3.71	1.09	9.82	0.82
November 23	5.27	3.81	1.16	10.07	0.84
December 23	4.49	3.86	0.85	10.11	0.84
January 24	3.66	3.87	0.81	10.05	0.84
February 24	3.01	3.83	0.63	9.98	0.83
March 24	2.95	3.84	0.59	9.88	0.82
April 24	1.94	3.73	0.41	9.68	0.81
May 24	2.32	3.66	0.49	9.48	0.79
June 24	2.46	3.60	0.49	9.20	0.77

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

Days Lost Per FTE Employee: Year to June 2024

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	18.78	19.05	18.91	12.75	176.70	9.34	3.71%	9.08	10.26	12.00	12.91	14.10	16.25
	Democratic Services and H&S	10.30	9.30	9.80	5.11	20.27	2.07	0.82%	2.04	2.04	2.04	1.91	2.00	0.47
	Financial Services	11.73	11.77	11.75	3.81	10.49	0.89	0.35%	0.85	1.13	1.47	1.53	1.53	3.25
	HR, Performance and Svs Planning	4.95	4.34	4.65	1.00	1.00	0.22	0.09%	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.22	0.21
	Information & Communications Technology	7.59	7.59	7.59	3.00	41.00	5.40	2.14%	5.40	5.14	5.00	6.67	9.23	12.06
	Legal Services	4.65	4.81	4.73	1.81	4.43	0.94	0.37%	0.86	1.02	1.13	1.13	1.02	0.63
	Revenues	12.19	11.78	11.98	5.62	94.11	7.85	3.12%	9.38	10.94	12.22	14.47	11.56	11.56
		2.00	0.61	1.30	1.00	80.00	61.35	24.34%	52.00	63.50	72.00	57.60	57.60	57.60
Service Total:		72.19	69.25	70.72	34.10	427.99	6.05	2.40%						
Environment, Communities & Leisure	Community Relations	3.95	3.95	3.95	0.65	4.05	1.03	0.41%	1.03	1.03	1.03	0.91	0.91	0.91
	Leisure Services	55.28	57.62	56.45	33.66	798.06	14.14	5.61%	15.12	15.69	15.58	15.02	15.16	14.98
	Parks and Street Care	50.09	43.16	46.62	26.44	956.43	20.51	8.14%	20.33	19.64	18.97	18.86	19.18	18.33
	Public Protection	30.68	31.11	30.89	10.50	80.70	2.61	1.04%	2.82	3.07	3.38	3.73	3.01	3.46
	Transport and Waste	59.11	65.28	62.20	29.76	632.32	10.17	4.03%	10.37	10.02	10.06	10.10	10.17	9.62
		2.00	1.00	1.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Service Total:		201.10	202.11	201.60	101.00	2471.56	12.26	4.86%						
Regeneration, Development and Comms	Communications	4.50	4.50	4.50	2.50	6.33	1.41	0.56%	1.41	1.41	1.41	1.63	1.63	1.58
	Development Services	14.69	13.39	14.04	1.80	6.99	0.50	0.20%	0.50	0.51	0.54	0.53	0.25	0.13
	Economic Growth and Regeneration	6.54	6.00	6.27	2.00	18.00	2.87	1.14%	3.42	3.42	3.56	3.44	4.73	5.73
	Facilities- Community Centres	2.81	2.92	2.86	1.46	17.20	6.00	2.38%	10.99	16.19	20.90	25.90	30.95	37.35
	Planning Policy	4.05	5.05	4.55	1.59	4.04	0.89	0.35%	0.89	0.89	0.57	0.50	0.50	0.50
	Projects	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	0.79%	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	4.00	4.00
	Property	10.66	9.74	10.20	4.49	87.84	8.61	3.42%	7.31	7.07	7.11	6.90	6.56	6.27
	Welfare Support	18.25	19.03	18.64	10.24	56.03	3.01	1.19%	3.31	3.35	2.74	2.77	2.71	2.96
		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
Service Total:		64.51	64.64	64.58	25.08	198.44	3.07	1.22%						
Grand Total:		337.79	336.01	336.90	160.19	3098.00	9.20	3.65%	9.48	9.68	9.88	9.98	10.05	10.11

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

Days lost per FTE employee: June 2024

Current month 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	19.05	19.05	19.05	3.33	31.20	1.64	8.19%	1.07	0.46	1.13	1.23	0.77	0.80	
	Democratic Services and H&S	9.30	9.30	9.30	0.91	1.34	0.14	0.72%	0.00	0.00	0.22	0.00	1.50	0.00	
	Financial Services	11.58	11.77	11.68	1.00	4.05	0.35	1.74%	0.23	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.10	0.11	
	HR, Performance and Svs Planning	4.95	4.34	4.65	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
	Information & Communications Technology	7.59	7.59	7.59	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.26	0.00	0.66	0.00	0.00	0.00	
	Legal Services	5.65	4.81	5.23	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.35	0.00
	Revenues	11.78	11.78	11.78	1.00	1.93	0.16	0.82%	0.00	0.07	0.07	1.87	0.00	0.17	
		1.00	0.61	0.80	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	
Service Total:		70.90	69.25	70.08	6.24	38.52	0.55	2.75%							
Environment, Communities & Leisure	Community Relations	3.95	3.95	3.95	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
	Leisure Services	56.01	57.62	56.82	5.19	19.44	0.34	1.71%	0.32	0.45	1.07	0.95	1.03	0.85	
	Parks and Street Care	43.16	43.16	43.16	3.60	40.61	0.94	4.71%	1.26	1.24	1.25	0.90	2.00	2.64	
	Public Protection	31.11	31.11	31.11	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.06	0.03	0.08	0.04	0.08	0.22	
	Transport and Waste	65.28	65.28	65.28	4.00	47.00	0.72	3.60%	0.90	0.52	0.68	0.91	1.01	1.08	
			2.00	1.00	1.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Service Total:		201.50	202.11	201.81	12.79	107.05	0.53	2.65%							
Regeneration, Development and Comms	Communications	4.50	4.50	4.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.44	0.00	0.25	0.00	
	Development Services	13.39	13.39	13.39	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.27	0.14	0.00	
	Economic Growth and Regeneration	6.00	6.00	6.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.20	0.40	0.00	0.00	0.22	
	Facilities- Community Centres	2.92	2.92	2.92	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.20	0.00	0.14	0.00	
	Planning Policy	5.05	5.05	5.05	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
	Projects	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	
	Property	9.74	9.74	9.74	1.24	19.59	2.01	10.06%	0.55	0.06	0.30	0.50	0.64	1.29	
	Welfare Support	19.03	19.03	19.03	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	0.05	0.57	0.00	0.22	0.65	0.15	
		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	
Service Total:		63.64	64.64	64.14	1.24	19.59	0.31	1.53%							
Grand Total:		336.05	336.01	336.03	20.27	165.17	0.49	2.46%	0.49	0.41	0.59	0.63	0.81	0.85	

Long term (20 days+ in month)/ short term sickness analysis for March 2024

Analysis of Short and Long Term Absence - March 2024

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	2	4	13.00	20.84	65.00%	50.00%
	Democratic Services and H&S	0	1	0.00	1.97	0.00%	0.00%
	Information & Communications Technology	0	1	0.00	4.89	0.00%	0.00%
	Revenues	0	1	0.00	0.81	0.00%	0.00%
Head of Service Total:		2	7	13.00	28.52	45.60%	28.57%
Environment, Communities	Leisure Services	2	12	35.15	53.80	65.32%	16.67%
	Parks and Street Care	2	8	41.09	53.81	76.36%	25.00%
	Public Protection	0	1	0.00	2.47	0.00%	0.00%
	Transport and Waste	0	5	0.00	42.32	0.00%	0.00%
Head of Service Total:		4	26	76.24	152.40	50.02%	15.38%
Regeneration, Development	Communications	0	1	0.00	1.96	0.00%	0.00%
	Economic Growth and Regeneration	0	1	0.00	1.96	0.00%	0.00%
	Facilities- Community Centres	0	1	0.00	0.08	0.00%	0.00%
	Property	0	2	0.00	2.97	0.00%	0.00%
Head of Service Total:		0	5	0.00	6.96	0.00%	0.00%
Grand Total:		6	38	89.24	187.89	47.50%	15.78%

Analysis of Short and Long Term Absence - June 2024

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	4	7.00	30.45	22.98%	33.33%
	Democratic Services and H&S	0	1	0.00	1.65	0.00%	0.00%
	Financial Services	0	1	0.00	4.05	0.00%	0.00%
	Revenues	0	1	0.00	1.80	0.00%	0.00%
Head of Service Total:		1	7	7.00	37.96	18.44%	14.29%
Environment, Communities & Leisure	Leisure Services	1	11	2.00	20.08	9.96%	9.09%
	Parks and Street Care	1	4	19.57	39.61	49.40%	25.00%
	Transport and Waste	2	4	39.14	45.98	85.11%	50.00%
Head of Service Total:		4	19	60.70	105.68	55.55%	57.44%
Regeneration, Development and Comms	Property	1	2	10.81	19.59	55.17%	50.00%
Head of Service Total:		1	2	10.81	19.59	55.17%	50.00%
Grand Total:		6	28	78.51	163.24	48.09%	21.43%

Sickness Reasons April 2023- March 2024

Reason	Working days lost: Self-certified	Working days lost: Medically certified	CURRENT YEAR Days lost per condition as a % of total days lost	LAST YEAR Days lost per condition as a % of total days lost
(0000) Unknown or unspecified sickness absence	21	0	0.70%	0.07%
(0001) Injury at work	17	103	4.02%	0.00%
(0002) Injury, not at work	8	60	2.28%	6.29%
(0003) Respiratory system problems	33	19	1.74%	2.74%
(0004) Cold, flu, sore throat or similar	168	452	20.76%	9.97%
(0005) Digestion	73	47	4.02%	3.88%
(0006) Depression, stress or similar	26	512	18.01%	26.16%
(0007) Headache, migraine or similar	19	9	0.94%	0.87%
(0008) Pregnancy- related	14	173	6.26%	1.27%
(0009) Gynaecological problems	10	17	0.90%	1.22%
(0010) Operation or post-operative recovery	20	341	12.09%	14.89%
(0011) Hospital visit	12.5	6	0.62%	1.59%
(0012) Kidney problem or similar	4	0	0.13%	0.43%
(0013) Heart or circulation problems			0.00%	1.07%
(0015) Arthritis, rheumatism or similar	7	39	1.54%	0.37%
(0016) Dental problems	7	6	0.44%	0.17%
(0018) Nasal problems			0.00%	0.10%
(0019) Dizziness, vertigo or similar	7	0	0.23%	0.10%
(0020) Other reason for absence	16	34	1.67%	2.78%
(0021) Problems with glands	8	109	3.92%	0.13%
(0022) Problems with ears	6	0	0.20%	0.27%
(0023) Problems with eyes			0.00%	0.17%
(0024) Viral infection (not cold etc)	22	11	1.10%	1.24%
(0025) Back problem	21	145	5.56%	6.62%
(0026) Muscular/ skeletal problems (not back)	39	298	11.28%	10.90%
(0027) Cancer Treatment (not screening visits)	6	0	0.20%	0.23%
(0030) Coronavirus	32	9	1.37%	6.31%
(029) Swine Flu			0.00%	0.17%
	596.5	2390		

Last year's totals: 2022/23 752.5 2237