

The Arc
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To: Chair & Members of
the Safety Committee

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Wednesday 19th April 2023

Dear Councillor

SAFETY COMMITTEE – THURSDAY 20TH APRIL 2023 AT 10:00 HOURS

I refer to your recently circulated agenda for the above meeting and now enclose the following item of business;

Open Item
Agenda Item 5 - Sickness Absence - Quarter 4 (January – March 2023)

Yours faithfully



Solicitor to the Council & Monitoring Officer

Equalities Statement

Bolsover District Council is committed to equalities as an employer and when delivering the services it provides to all sections of the community.

The Council believes that no person should be treated unfairly and is committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination, advancing equality and fostering good relations between all groups in society.

Access for All statement

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- **Phone:** [01246 242424](tel:01246242424)
- **Email:** enquiries@bolsover.gov.uk
- **BSL Video Call:** A three-way video call with us and a BSL interpreter. It is free to call Bolsover District Council with Sign Solutions, you just need WiFi or mobile data to make the video call, or call into one of our Contact Centres.
- Call with [Relay UK](#) - a free phone service provided by BT for anyone who has difficulty hearing or speaking. It's a way to have a real-time conversation with us by text.
- **Visiting** one of our [offices](#) at Clowne, Bolsover, Shirebrook and South Normanton

SAFETY COMMITTEE

Thursday 20th April 2023 at 10:00 in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne

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Bolsover District Council

Meeting of the Safety Committee on 20th April 2023

Sickness Absence - Quarter 4 (January – March 2023)

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Portfolio Holder - Corporate Governance

Classification	This report is Public
Report By	Oliver Fishburn, HR and Payroll Manager Tel 01246 242525 oliver.fishburn@bolsover.gov.uk
Contact Officer	As above

PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT

To report the sickness absence figures throughout the Council for Quarter 4, (January – March 2023).

REPORT DETAILS

1. Background

- 1.1 Figure 1 shows a summary of sickness absence levels within Bolsover District Council for the months January – March 2023.
- 1.2 Absence for the Senior Managers Group is shown as 50% of the total absence for Joint Senior Managers as this is split with Bolsover/NE Derbyshire District Council. For other employees the absences included are for the employing authority only.
- 1.3 The average number of days lost per employee for Quarter 4 was 2.82 days.
- 1.4 The Quarter 4 figure for the average number of days lost per employee if COVID related symptoms were discounted was 2.66 days.
- 1.5 The 2022/23 actual outturn figure for the average number of days lost per employee is 9.4 days.
- 1.6 The 2022/23 outturn figure for the average number of days lost per employee if COVID related symptoms were discounted is 7.83 days.

- 1.7 The annual target for the Local Performance Indicator to the end of March 2023 is 8.5 days.
- 1.8 For the purposes of sickness reporting, Senior Management is accounted for as follows:-
 - 1 Joint Assistant Director Post (0.5 fte)

2. **Details of Proposal or Information**

Summary of Key Corporate Trends

- 2.1 The following tables detail the key pattern and trends being experienced corporately in relation to sickness absence.

Table One: Organisational Outturn Average Number of Days Absence
(Average sickness days per fte employee)

	2019/20	2019/20 Costs	2020/21	2020/21 Costs	2021/22	2021/22 Costs	2022/23	2022/22 Costs
Quarter One	1.85	£79,136.56	1.50	£51,292.61	1.91	£81,917.94	2.29	£84,309.63
Quarter Two	1.84	£69,134.38	1.35	£52,351.59	2.31	£91,025.58	2.02	£84,144.83
Quarter Three	2.43	£84,863.87	1.14	£46,411.80	2.29	£85,306.37	2.27	£93,954.00
Quarter Four	1.68	£56,257.50	1.58	£66,731.07	2.19	£84,857.65	2.82	£118,763.85
Overall Outturn	7.8	£289,392.31	5.57	£216,787.07	8.7	£343,107.54	9.4	£381,172.31

Table Two: Organisational Long Term/Short Term Split Days Percentage

	2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23	
	Short term	Long Term						
Quarter One	43%	57%	33%	67%	40%	60%	48%	52%
Quarter Two	54%	46%	37%	63%	67%	33%	46%	54%
Quarter Three	45%	55%	47%	53%	48%	52%	46%	54%
Quarter Four	60%	40%	43%	57%	69%	31%	43%	57%
Overall Outturn	48%	52%	41%	59%	57%	43%	46%	54%

Table Three: Number of Long Term/Short Term Cases
(long and short term occurrences of sickness in the quarter)

	2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23	
	Short Term	Long Term						
Quarter One	94	15	48	15	90	15	116	14
Quarter Two	87	11	50	11	115	12	99	17
Quarter Three	102	14	48	6	105	13	122	16
Quarter Four	90	9	57	10	126	13	118	19
Overall Outturn	373	49	203	42	436	53	455	66

Table Four: Top Three Services Proportionately Experiencing Highest Levels of Absence
(The three service areas who have the highest average fte employee sickness absence days in the quarter)

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Current Year 2022/23
Quarter One	1.Elections 2.Customer Services 3.CEO/Dir/HoS	1. Leaders/Exec. Team 2. Legal 3. Planning	1. Elections 2.Democratic Services 3.Streetscene	1. LEPT 2. Property & Estates 3. Finance
Quarter Two	1.Customer Services 2.Revs & Bens 3.Housing	1. Dev/Bus. Growth 2. Elections 3. Housing Repairs	1.Elections 2.DemocraticServices 3.Customer Services	1. Streetscene 2. Housing Mgt. 3. Housing Repairs
Quarter Three	1. Customer Services 2.HR/Health & Safety 3. Revs & Bens	1. Elections 2. Streetscene 3. Democratic Services	1.DemocraticServices 2.Health & Safety 3. Housing Mgt.	1.Performance 2.Housing Mgt. 3.Streetscene
Quarter Four	1.Legal 2.Revs & Bens 3.Partnership	1. Elections 2. Governance 3. Customer Services	1.Leisure 2. Customer Services 3. Streetscene	1. Performance 2. Housing Mgt. 3. Streetscene
Overall Outturn	1.Customer Services 2.Comms 3.Housing/CS	1. Elections 2.DemocraticServices 3. LEPT	1. Elections 2. Governance 3. Streetscene	1. Elections 2. Planning 3. Health & Safety

Table Five: Top Three Services Proportionately Experiencing Lowest Level of Absence

(The three service areas who have the lowest average fte employee sickness absence days in the quarter)

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Current Year 2022/23
Quarter One	1. Performance 2. HR& HS 3. Econ Dev	1. Finance 2. Democratic Services 3. Customer Services	1. Human Resources 2. Revs. & Bens 3. Customer Services	1.Dirs/HofS 2. Governance 3. Planning
Quarter Two	1. Legal 2. Governance 3. HR&Health& Safety	1. Finance 2. Revs & Bens 3. Directors/HofS	1. Legal 2. Communications 3. Revs & Bens	1. Finance 2. Comms. 3. Governance
Quarter Three	1. Elections 2. Performance 3. Econ Dev	1. Finance 2. Customer Services 3. Property & Estates	1. Dirs/HofS 2. Legal 3. Communications	1.Dirs/HofS 2.HR & Payroll 3.Governance
Quarter Four	1. Elections 2. Econ Dev 3. Legal	1. Finance 2. Planning 3. LEPT	1. Dirs/HofS 2. Legal 3. Communications	1.Dirs/HofS 2. Finance 3.HR & Payroll
Overall Outturn	1. Performance 2. Econ Dev 3. Planning	1. Finance 2. Directors/HofS 3. Property & Estates	1. Performance 2. Communications 3. Human Resources	1. Dirs/HofS 2. Governance 3. Procurement

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Table Six: Top Three Reasons for Absence

(Top 3 reasons based on sickness days lost)

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Current Year 2022/23
Quarter One	1. Viral Infection 2. Other Musc. Skeletal 3. Other	1. Stress/Depression 2. Other 3. Headaches/Migraines	1. Stress/Depression 2. Other Musc Skeletal 3. Operations/Hospital	1. COVID Symptoms 2. Other Musc. Skeletal 3. Stress/Depression
Quarter Two	1. Stress/Depression 2. Other Musc. Skeletal 3. Chest/Respiratory	1. Operations/Hospital 2. Other Musc Skeletal 3. Stress/Depression	1. COVID 19 Symptoms 2. Other Musc. Skeletal 3. Stress/Depression	1. Stress/Depression 2. COVID 19 Symptoms 3. Other Musc. Skeletal
Quarter Three	1. Stress/Depression 2. Chest/Respiratory 3. Other Musc. Skel	1. Other Musc. Skel 2. Stress/Depression 3. COVID 19 Symptoms	1. Stress/Depression 2. COVID19 Symptoms 3. Other Musc. Skeletal	1. Stress/Depression 2. COVID 19 Symptoms 3. Other Musc. Skeletal

Quarter Four	1. Stress/Depression 2. COVID19 Symptoms 3. Other Musc. Skel	1. Stress/Depression 2. Other Musc. Skeletal 3. Operations/Hospital	1.COVID19 Symptoms 2. Other Musc. Skeletal 3. Stress/Depression	1.Stress/Depression 2.Operations/Hospital 3. Other Musc. Skeletal
Overall Outturn	1. Stress/Depression 2. Other Musc. Skel 3. Operations/Hospital	1. Other Musc. Skeletal 2. Stress/Depression 3. Operations/Hospital	1.COVID19 Symptoms 2. Stress/Depression 3. Other Musc. Skeletal	1. Other Musc. Skeletal 2. Stress/Depression 3. COVID19 Symptoms

4. Key Trends

- The overall average days lost due to sickness has increased to 2.82 in Quarter Four, this has increased from Quarter 3 (2.27 days) but is marginally lower Quarter One (2.29 days)
- 65 days were lost in Q4 due to Covid19 symptoms (employees unfit for work) compared with 160 days lost in the last quarter.
- The short term sickness has decreased from Q3, however long term sickness has slightly increased.
- There is a direct correlation between employees undertaking physically demanding work and high levels of sickness. This is reinforced by Muscular/Skeletal absences regularly being in the top three reasons for sickness absence.
- 6 Services experienced zero sickness in Q4 and a further 3 Services experienced less than 1 day per FTE employee.
- Stress/Depression has remained in the top three reasons for absence since Q2 of 2019/20.
- There were 13 cases of absence due to Stress/Depression during Q4, three of which were work related, and 10 were not work related.
- There are 19 long term cases in this quarter, 13 are due to physical health ailments and 6 are related to stress/depression (3 work related and 3 none work related), appropriate support and assistance has/is being provided to facilitate support for those who have returned to work and those planning to do so. 9 have returned to work, 3 have chosen to resign and 7 remain absent as at 31 March 2023.
- Covid19 sickness has drastically reduced in Quarter 4 and is not now within the top 3 reasons for sickness. However, Covid19 has remained a significant factor for the Council's sickness absence resulting in the annual target for the Local Performance Indicator of 8.5 days not being achieved.

5. Actions

5.1 Managers have support from the HR Advisor and are issued monthly sickness absence information. Managers are also able to access sickness information for their teams' on a daily basis via HR21 Self Service.

5.2 Steps the Council has taken to support employees include:

- Mental Health awareness sessions are being delivered across the Council as part of the Council's quarterly corporate training programme the number of attendees during 2022/23 are 23.
- Awareness training explains that colleagues and managers are not specialists in mental health and their role is to listen to employees and signpost them to appropriate support.
- Resilience Training was rolled out and made available to managers and employees to support workforce mental and physical health.
- Cycle to Work Scheme is also available to encourage health and wellbeing and to address carbon emissions, four employees subscribed during 2022/23.
- The number of Employees subscribing to the Gym during 2022/23 was 64.

- Managers and Employees have accessed Occupational Health, Counselling, Physiotherapy, the Council's Employee Assistance Programme and other support.

Employees are signposted to incentives which are available via Leisure i.e.

- To encourage health and wellbeing staff can take up membership for Go! Active which includes gym, swim and classes for only £15 per month.
- There is a Health Referral Programme (Physical Activity & Lifestyle Support) which is available to Employees residing within the BDC Area – This is a programme aimed at changing behaviours and finding solutions to assist people facing daily challenges resulting in a concentrated approach regarding service users health and wellbeing.

5.3 Operational concerns about the management of sickness absence cases that exist are being raised with the respective managers and dealt with as per standard practice and policy.

6. Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 The report contains data relating to employees' absence levels.

Appendix One: Summary Figures for the Quarter by Directorate/Service

Figure One – Service Breakdown Short/Long Term Split

Service	Short term days	No. of Employees absent	Long term days	No. of Employees Absent	Total Days lost	FTE No. in Section	Average days lost per FTE
Directors and Assistant Directors	0	0	0	0	0	9	0
Governance	0	0	0	0	0	4.7	0
Elections	5	1	0	0	5	2	2.5
Health & Safety	5	2	0	0	5	4	1.25
Human Resources & Payroll	0	0	0	0	0	6.43	0
Legal	0	0	0	0	0	3.21	0
Communications	0	0	0	0	0	5	0
Procurement	0	0	0	0	0	3.34	0
Performance	0	0	65	1	65	2.81	23.13
Finance	0	0	0	0	0	8	0
Revenues & Benefits	16	3	70	2	86	25.09	3.43
Customer Services	24	9	19	1	43	23.45	1.83
Leisure	29	12	55	2	84	39.72	2.11
Leaders/Executive Team	7	3	0	0	7	7.8	0.90
Streetscene	205	49	148	4	353	98.62	3.58
Development/Business Growth	18	7	24	1	42	10.86	3.87
Housing Management (including CS)	85	15	201	6	286	65.81	4.34
Housing Repairs (BDC)	80	13	21	1	101	60.4	1.67
Planning	0	0	64	1	64	19.77	3.24
Property/Commercial/Estates	34	4	0	0	34	16.76	2.03

FOR INFORMATION ONLY – EMPLOYEES HOSTED BY NEDDC

Service	Short term Days	No. of Employees absent	Long term days	No. of Employees Absent	Total Days Lost	FTE No. in Section	Average days lost per FTE
Environmental Health	28	10	72	2	100	43.48	2.3
ICT	36	6	55	2	91	30.45	2.99

Figure Two: Directorate Breakdown Short/Long Term Split

Directorate	No. of FTE Employees	Short term days	No of employees absent	Long term Days	No of employees absent
Executive Directors/Assistant Directors	9	0	0	0	0
Strategy & Development	147.08	149	29	174	4
Resources	260.69	359	89	493	15

Figure Three: Top Three Reasons for Absence per Directorate

(Top 3 reasons based on sickness days lost – Also include the number of employees in brackets in each directorate)

Directorate	No. of FTE Employees	Top 3 Reasons for Absences
Executive Directors/Assistant Directors.	9	N/A
Strategy and Development	147.08	1. Operations/Hospital 2. Viral Infection 3. Other
Resources	260.69	1. Stress/Depression 2. Operations/Hospital 3. Other Musc. Skeletal

Figure Four: Stress Cases During Quarter Four

Work Related	Outside of Work Related	Total
3	10	13

Figure Five: COVID-19 Cases During Quarter One

Quarter 1	The Arc	Depot Based	Grouped Dwellings	Remote Contact Centres	Total
No Self-Isolating	0	0	0	0	0
No Shielding	0	0	0	0	0
No of confirmed cases	41	17	0	0	58
No of Covid symptoms related absence days	209	74	0	0	283

Quarter 2	The Arc	Depot Based	Grouped Dwellings	Remote Contact Centres	Total
No Self-Isolating	0	0	0	0	0
No Shielding	0	0	0	0	0
No of confirmed cases	21	15	0	1	37
No of Covid symptoms related absence days	64	91.5	0	2	157.5

Quarter 3	The Arc	Depot Based	Grouped Dwellings	Remote Contact Centres	Total
No Self-Isolating	0	0	0	0	0
No Shielding	0	0	0	0	0
No of confirmed cases	13	19	0	1	33
No of Covid symptoms related absence days	59	100	0	1	160

Quarter 4	The Arc	Depot Based	Grouped Dwellings	Remote Contact Centres	Total
No Self-Isolating	0	0	0	0	0
No Shielding	0	0	0	0	0
No of confirmed cases	3	13	0	0	16
No of Covid symptoms related absence days	10	55	0	0	65

Accumulative Total for the year	The Arc	Depot Based	Grouped Dwellings	Remote Contact Centres	Total
No Self-Isolating	0	0	0	0	0
No Shielding	0	0	0	0	0
No of confirmed cases	78	64	0	2	144
No of Covid symptoms related absence days	342	320.5	0	3	665.5

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4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

4.1 N/A

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Safety Committee consider and note the report.

Approved by Councillor Duncan McGregor Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance

IMPLICATIONS:

Finance and Risk: Yes No

Details: High absence levels can contribute to poor service levels, low morale and higher costs for the Council.

On behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Legal (including Data Protection): Yes No

Details:

On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

Environment:

Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal/report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment.

Details:

Staffing: Yes No

Details: The report's topic relates to employees and their absence levels.

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

DECISION INFORMATION

<p>Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:</p> <p>Revenue - £75,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £150,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i></p>	No
<p>Is the decision subject to Call-In? (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</p>	No

District Wards Significantly Affected	(please state which wards or state All if all wards are affected)
Consultation: Leader / Deputy Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Executive <input type="checkbox"/> SLT <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Members <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Details:

Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy and Environment.

DOCUMENT INFORMATION	
Appendix No	Title
	The appendices are contained in report.

Background Papers
<i>(These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Executive you must provide copies of the background papers).</i>

1