

The Arc
High Street
Clowne
S43 4JY

To: Chair & Members of the Union /
Employee Consultation Committee

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Thursday, 21st November 2024

Dear Councillor,

UNION / EMPLOYEE CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Union / Employee Consultation Committee of the Bolsover District Council to be held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Wednesday, 11th December, 2024 at 10:00 hours.

Register of Members' Interests - Members are reminded that a Member must within 28 days of becoming aware of any changes to their Disclosable Pecuniary Interests provide written notification to the Authority's Monitoring Officer.

You will find the contents of the agenda itemised on page 3 onwards.

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

You can request this document or information in another format such as large print or **language** or contact us by:

- **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

**UNION / EMPLOYEE CONSULTATION COMMITTEE
AGENDA**

***Wednesday, 11th December, 2024 at 10:00 hours taking place in the Council Chamber,
The Arc, Clowne***

Item No.		Page No.(s)
1.	Apologies For Absence	
2.	Urgent Items of Business	
	To note any urgent items of business which the Chairman has consented to being considered under the provisions of Section 100(B) 4(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.	
3.	Declarations of Interest	
	Members should declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and Non Statutory Interest as defined by the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of:	
	a) any business on the agenda	
	b) any urgent additional items to be considered	
	c) any matters arising out of those items	
	and if appropriate, withdraw from the meeting at the relevant time.	
4.	Minutes	4 - 6
	To consider the minutes of the last meeting held on 23 rd September 2024.	
5.	Sickness Absence - Quarter 2 (July - September 2024)	7 - 17

Agenda Item 4

UNION / EMPLOYEE CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Union / Employee Consultation Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Monday, 23rd September 2024 at 10:00 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor Mary Dooley in the Chair

Councillors Duncan Haywood, Sandra Peake and Vicky Waplington.

UNISON:- Chris McKinney and Violet Parker.

Officers:- Steve Brunt (Strategic Director of Services), Oliver Fishburn (HR and Payroll Manager), Peter Wilmot (HR Business Partner), Angelika Kaufhold (Governance and Civic Manager) and Matthew Kerry (Governance and Civic Officer).

UECC10-24/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Liz Robinson (Chair and UNISON Convenor) and Councillor Rowan Clarke.

UECC11-24/25 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There was no urgent items of business to be considered.

UECC12-24/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations made.

UECC13-24/25 MINUTES

Moved by Councillor Vicky Waplington and seconded by Councillor Mary Dooley
RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of the Union / Employee Consultation Committee held on 5th June 2024 be approved as a true and correct record.

UECC14-24/25 SICKNESS ABSENCE - QUARTER 1 (APRIL - JUNE 2024)

The HR and Payroll Manager presented the Sickness Absence Quarter 1 report for April to June 2024. The report set out the average number of days lost per employee for Quarter 1 2024/25 was 2.24 days – the projected outturn figure for the average number of days lost per employee for 2024/25 was 8.96 days. The annual target for the Local Performance Indicator to the end of March 2024 was 8.5 days.

Tables 1, 2 and 3 of the attached Appendix 1 detailed the key patterns and trends experienced corporately in relation to sickness absence. Table 1 showed the total loss

UNION / EMPLOYEE CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

from sickness absence for Quarter 1 2024/25 was £88,097.39. Table 2 showed the Long Term (72%) and Short Term (28%) percentages. Table 3 showed the top 3 reasons of absence, being “Other Muscular/Skeletal”, “Operations/Hospital” and “Stress/Depression”.

Key trends in the data revealed the following:

- The overall average days lost due to sickness in Quarter 1 2024/25 was 2.24; this had decreased from Quarter 4 2023/24 and was the lowest Quarter 1 in terms of average days lost since 2022/23;
- There was a direct correlation between employees undertaking physically demanding work and high levels of sickness. This was reinforced by Muscular/Skeletal absences regularly being in the top three reasons for sickness absence;
- Three services had experienced zero sickness in Quarter 1 and a further six services had experienced less than 1 day per full-time equivalent (FTE) employee;
- Stress/Depression had remained in the top three reasons for absence since 2019/20;
- There were ten cases of absence due to Stress/Depression during Quarter 1 2024/25, five of which were work related, five none work related;
- COVID-19 accounted for 12 days lost due to sickness in Quarter 1 2024/25, which had slightly increased in comparison to five days lost in Quarter 4 2023/4;
- There were 18 long term cases in this quarter; 14 were due to physical health ailments and four cases were related to Stress/Depression (all of which were work related). Appropriate support and assistance were being provided to facilitate support for those who had returned to work and those planning to do so. Five employees had since returned to work and eight remained absent, five of which had left the Council's employ.

To a question on the causes of “Other Muscular/Skeletal” absences, the HR and Payroll Manager informed that this was not due to ill posture of staff at their desks (though this was monitored), but from those employed in manual jobs where accidents could occur. While the issue of ill posture was difficult to assess for those Working From Home (WFH), absences as a result of ill posture were decades in the making and still not as common as those in more physically demanding roles.

A Member noted that while the Cycle to Work was available to encourage health and wellbeing and to address carbon emissions, using busy roads with high levels of air pollution may not be as beneficial to staff as desired.

To a question on whether it was possible for information on the types of absences for each department be brought to the Committee, the HR Business Partner explained that with some departments utilising smaller numbers of staff, it would be easier to publicly identify which members of staff were absent and why. It was important for the Council to be cautious with such detailed information.

To a question on WFH and bringing staff back into the office (providing it was safe to do so), the HR Business Partner believed the Council had achieved a sustainable hybrid working environment (e.g., Council Tax and Revenues retained a core team in the office with most WFH). It remained the discretion of managers to negotiate appropriate WFH arrangements.

UNION / EMPLOYEE CONSULTATION COMMITTEE

Members of the Committee noted they had experienced difficulties when attempting to contact departments and members of staff. The HR Business Partner stated officers not answering phone calls or being difficult to contact was unacceptable and that Members could inform Service Managers when this occurred.

A UNISON representative noted the report painted a positive direction and echoed the HR Business Partner that WFH and hybrid working was proving successful. While it was at times very convenient to knock on a desk and chase up Council business, the ability to work from anywhere was useful to have. There was no difference when answering phone calls through MiCollab, and Microsoft Teams was also accessible by Members to directly message and video call officers.

On the "Other Muscular/Skeletal" absences, the UNISON representative explained this was likely as a result of physical work. The Strategic Director of Services added such absences were usually the result of manual handling, twisting, slips trips and falls.

On a question of why only FTE data was presented to the Committee, it was explained that the part-time equivalent (PTE) data was present, and that to ensure representative and easy to use data was reported, PTE was converted to FTE. If this was not done, the HR Team would have to correctly weight every department, costing time and resources.

The Vice-Chair noted the results were an improvement on Quarter 4 2023/24.

Moved by Chris McKinney (UNISON) and seconded by Councillor Sandra Peake
RESOLVED that the report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 10:25 hours.



Bolsover District Council

Meeting of the Union / Employee Consultation Committee on 11th December 2024

Sickness Absence - Quarter 2 (July - September 2024)

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Resources

Classification	This report is Public
Report By	Oliver Fishburn HR and Payroll Manager

PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT

To report the sickness absence figures throughout the Council for Quarter 2 (July - September 2024).

REPORT DETAILS

1. Background

- 1.1 Figure 1 shows a summary of sickness absence levels within Bolsover District Council for the months July - September 2024.
- 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 Councils. For other employees the absences included are for the employing authority only.
- 1.3 **The average number of days lost per employee for Quarter 2 was 2.35 days.**
- 1.4 **The 2024/25 projected outturn figure for the average number of days lost per employee is 9.22 days.**
- 1.5 The annual target for the Local Performance Indicator to the end of March 2025 is 8.5 days.
- 1.6 For the purposes of sickness reporting, Senior Management is accounted for as follows:
 - 1 Joint Assistant Director Post (0.5 FTE). 0 days sickness experienced during Quarter 2.

2. Details of Proposal or Information

2.1 Tables 1, 2 and 3 in Appendix 1 detail the key patterns and trends being experienced corporately in relation to sickness absence.

2.2 Key Trends

- The overall average days lost due to sickness in Quarter 2 2024/25 was 2.35 days, this is lower than Quarter 2 in terms of average days lost in 2023/24.
- 6 Services experienced zero sickness in Quarter 2 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 Quarter 2 of 2019/20.
- There were 6 cases of absence due to Stress/Depression during Quarter 2, 2 of which were work related, 3 were none work related and 1 was a combination of home and work-related issues.
- 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.
- Covid19 accounted for 15 days lost due to sickness in Quarter 2 which have slightly increased in comparison to 12 days lost in Quarter 1.
- There are 16 long term cases in this quarter. 12 are due to physical health ailments and 4 cases are related to stress/depression (3 of which were work related and 1 case was a combination of home/work stressors.). Appropriate support and assistance are being provided to facilitate support for those who have returned to work and those planning to do so. 8 Employees have now returned to work, 5 remain absent, 3 have left the Council's employ.

Actions

2.3 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 daily via HR21 Self Service.

2.4 Steps the Council has taken to support employees include:

Health & Wellbeing initiatives to support employees.

- Mental Health awareness sessions are now available 'on demand' for all employees via Eric and have previously been delivered across the Council as part of the Council's quarterly corporate training programme.
- 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.
- Mental Health awareness initiatives and possible support is continually publicised via Eric and the weekly bulletin. Recent examples of which include:
 - **Suicide Prevention Day (10th Sept 2024):** Employees were provided with comprehensive guides on how to assist someone

in a mental health crisis, access support services in Derbyshire, and seek suicide bereavement support.

- **Mental Health Awareness Day (10th Oct 2024):** Awareness was raised about available mental health guidance and support, with resources provided by the Derbyshire County Council (DCC) Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Team.
- **Mental Health First Aider Training:** Employees were offered training to help them identify, understand, and support individuals experiencing mental health issues. The course equips participants with the skills to signpost people to appropriate resources.
- **High-Quality Conversations Training:** This Public Health-commissioned programme, delivered by the Quality Conversations Team across Joined Up Care Derbyshire, teaches employees how to engage in meaningful conversations about mental health.
- **Alcohol Awareness Week (1st July 2024):** Information was shared on how to access support for alcohol-related issues, while staff were encouraged to participate by discussing how alcohol harm impacts their lives, in line with this year's theme.
- **Vivup Rewards & Benefits:** platform launched in September 2024 providing tools and solutions to support mental, financial and physical wellbeing all under one online platform. Below are the key features of Vivup:
 - ✓ **EAP (Employee Assistance Programme)**
Access confidential, impartial assistance in times of need via a 24/7, 365 days helpline and face to face or virtual counselling.
 - ✓ **Your Care**
Embrace a healthier lifestyle with the help of assessments, goals, and tools available on the dynamic wellbeing management platform.
 - ✓ **Cycle to Work Scheme**
Available via Vivup to encourage health and wellbeing and to address carbon emissions.
 - ✓ **Lifestyle Savings**
Access to a huge range of savings from the UK's leading retailers, restaurants, food delivery services, utility providers, and attractions.

✓ **Home & Electronics**

Help spread the cost on 1000s of tech, appliances, and homeware items fulfilled by companies such as Currys and John Lewis and Partners

- ***Free NHS Health Checks & Body MOTs: Delivered by Live Life Better Derbyshire from July onwards, these sessions offered staff valuable insights into their health. A total of 8 sessions were conducted, with 56 staff members participating across both the Depot and the Arc, with the option to organise more sessions if required.***
 - ***Menopause Awareness: Senior Leaders received specialised Menopause Awareness Sessions, while all staff had access to drop-in sessions to consult with an Exercise/Fitness Referral Officer who specialises in menopause-related health & exercise.***
 - ***Pension Awareness: Informative sessions were held to help staff better understand the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), ensuring they are well-informed about their retirement options.***
 - ***Wellbeing Walks & 50 4 50 BDC Walking Challenge: Regular lunchtime walks were organised at both the Arc and the Depot throughout the summer. Staff were encouraged to join two walking challenges: a team challenge to collectively walk 50 miles over 4 weeks, and an individual challenge to complete 50 miles solo over 10 weeks. A community walking group was also established on the 'Strava' mobile app, allowing participants to track each other's progress and offer encouragement.***
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- The number of Employees subscribing to the Gym for Quarter 2 2024/25 are 57 including 5 who have chosen to freeze their Memberships.
 - 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, all employees can access the Bolsover Wellness Programme if they meet the criteria. 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.

- 2.5 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.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The report contains data relating to employees' absence levels.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 Not applicable – this report is for information.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That the report be noted.

Approved by Councillor Clive Moesby Portfolio Holder for Resources

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: Yes No

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? <i>(Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</i></p>	No

District Wards Significantly Affected	None
<p>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"/></p>	Details:

Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy and Environment.
N/A

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Appendix No	Title
1	Figures for the Quarter by Directorate

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>
None

Table One: Organisational Outturn Average Number of Days Absence

(Average sickness days per fte employee)

	2021/22	2021/22 Costs	2022/23	2022/23 Costs	2023/24	2023/24 Costs	2024/25	2024/25 Costs
Quarter One	1.91	£81,917.94	2.29	£84,309.63	2.26	£74,265.11	2.26	£88,097.39
Quarter Two	2.31	£91,025.58	2.02	£84,144.83	2.39	£86,396.88	2.35	£97,373.93
Quarter Three	2.29	£85,306.37	2.27	£93,954.00	1.89	£73,327.02		
Quarter Four	2.19	£84,857.65	2.82	£118,763.85	2.44	£99,520.51		
Overall Outturn	8.7	£343,107.54	9.4	£381,172.31	8.98	£333,509.52		

- The overall average days lost due to sickness in Quarter 2 was 2.35 days, this is lower than Quarter 2 in terms of average days lost since 2023/24.

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

	2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25	
	Short Term	Long Term	Short Term	Long Term	Short Term	Long Term	Short Term	Long Term
Quarter One	40%	60%	48%	52%	23%	77%	28%	72%
Quarter Two	67%	33%	46%	54%	37%	63%	35%	65%
Quarter Three	48%	52%	46%	54%	41%	59%		
Quarter Four	69%	31%	43%	57%	41%	59%		
Overall Outturn	57%	43%	46%	54%	36%	64%		

14

Table Three: Top Three Reasons for Absence

(Top 3 reasons based on sickness days lost)

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Current Year 2024/25
Quarter One	1.Stress/Depression 2. Other Musc Skeletal 3.Operations/Hospital	1. COVID Symptoms 2. Other Musc. Skeletal 3.Stress/Depression	1. Operations/Hospital 2.Stress/Depression 3. Other Musc. Skeletal	1.Other Musc. Skeletal 2.Operations/Hospital 3.Stress/Depression
Quarter Two	1. COVID 19 Symptoms	1. Stress/Depression	1 Operations/Hospital	1.Other Musc. Skeletal

	2. Other Musc. Skeletal 3.Stress/Depression	2. COVID 19 Symptoms 3. Other Musc. Skeletal	2. Stress/Depression 3.Other Musc. Skeletal	2.Stress/Depression 3.Other
Quarter Three	1.Stress/Depression 2.COVID19 Symptoms 3. Other Musc. Skeletal	1. Stress/Depression 2.COVID 19 Symptoms 3.Other Musc. Skeletal	1. Stress/Depression 2. Other 3. Other Musc. Skeletal	1, 2. 3.
Quarter Four	1.COVID19 Symptoms 2. Other Musc. Skeletal 3. Stress/Depression	1.Stress/Depression 2.Operations/Hospital 3. Other Musc. Skeletal	1. Stress/Depression 2.Other Musc. Skel 3.Operations/Hospital	1. 2. 3.
Overall Outturn	1.COVID19 Symptoms 2. Stress/Depression 3. Other Musc. Skeletal	1. Other Musc. Skeletal 2. Stress/Depression 3. COVID19 Symptoms	1.Stress/Depression 2.Other Musc. Skeletal 3.Operations/Hospital	1. 2. 3.

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	8.5	0
Governance	2	1	0	0	2	3.6	0.55
Elections	0	0	0	0	0	2.5	0
Health & Safety	0	0	0	0	0	5	0
Human Resources & Payroll	0	0	0	0	0	7.43	0
Legal	2	1	20	1	22	6	3.67
Communications	0	0	66	1	66	6	11
Procurement	0	0	12	1	12	2.36	5.08
Performance	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
Finance	0	0	0	0	0	9	0
Revenues & Benefits	8	3	0	0	8	26.58	0.3
Customer Services	11	7	0	0	11	26.42	0.42
Leisure	24	6	96	3	120	50.38	2.38

Leaders/Executive Team	17	2	0	0	17	8.6	1.98
Streetscene	192	45	215	6	407	102.25	3.98
Housing Management (including CS)	34	8	122	3	156	73.23	2.13
Planning	10	4	24	1	34	22.35	1.52

FOR INFORMATION ONLY – EMPLOYEES HOSTED BY NEDDC

17 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	13	5	214	4	227	52.17	4.35
ICT	24	8	0	8	24	35.15	0.68

Figure Two: Stress Cases During Quarter Two

Work Related	Outside of Work Related	Total
*3	3	6

*PLEASE NOTE ONE OF THESE CASES IS A COMBINATION OF HOME AND WORK-RELATED STRESSORS.