

Bolsover District Council

Report of HR & OD Manager

Sickness Absence Quarter 4 (January – March 2021)

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To report the sickness absence figures throughout the Council for Quarter 4, (January – March 2021).

2. Issues for Consideration

2.1 Figure 1 shows a summary of sickness absence levels within Bolsover District Council for the months January to March 2021.

2.2 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.

2.3 The **average number of days lost per employee** for Quarter 4 was **1.58 days**

2.4 The **2020/21** outturn figure for the **average number of days lost per employee** is **5.57 days**

2.5 The annual target for the Local Performance Indicator to the end of March 2021 is **8.5 days**.

2.6 For the purposes of sickness reporting, following recent restructures Senior Management is split as follows

- 1 x Joint Director (2 x 0.5 fte), 1 x Director (BDC), 1 Assistant Director (BDC only) ,1.5 x Joint Heads of Service (3 x 0.5 fte), 0.5 Joint Assistant Director (1 X 0.5 fte) and 4 x Heads of Service (BDC). No sickness was experienced during Quarter 4.

3. Summary of Key Corporate Trends

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)

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Current Year 20/21	Current Year Costs
Quarter One	2.00	2.23	1.85	1.50	£51,292.61
Quarter Two	2.12	1.86	1.84	1.35	£52,351.59
Quarter Three	2.38	2.52	2.43	1.14	£46,411.80
Quarter Four	2.80	2.09	1.68	1.58	£66,731.07
Overall Outturn	9.3	8.7	7.8	5.57	£216,787.07

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

	2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	
	Short term	Long Term	Short term	Long Term	Short term	Long Term	Short Term	Long Term
Quarter One	31.4%	69.6%	34.0%	66.0%	43%	57%	33%	67%
Quarter Two	35.5%	64.5%	35.0%	65.0%	54%	46%	37%	63%
Quarter Three	50.3%	49.7%	32.4%	67.6%	44.8%	55.2%	47.1%	52.9%
Quarter Four	49.4%	50.6%	43.6%	56.4%	60.1%	39.9%	42.90%	57.10%
Overall Outturn	37.4%	62.6%	36.25%	63.75%	48.1%	51.9%	40.71%	59.29%

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

	2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	
	Short term	Long Term	Short Term	Long Term	Short Term	Long Term	Short Term	Long Term
Quarter One	69	16	104	18	94	15	48	15
Quarter Two	96	18	85	14	87	11	50	11
Quarter Three	112	18	98	21	102	14	48	6
Quarter Four	144	18	103	14	90	9	57	10
Overall Outturn	421	70	390	67	373	49	203	42

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)

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Current Year 2020/21
Quarter One	1. Customer Services 2. Housing 3.Planning	1.Customer Services 2.Property/Estates 3.Housing/CS	1.Elections 2.Customer Services 3.CEO/Dir/HoS	1. Leaders/Exec.Team 2. Legal 3. Planning
Quarter Two	1. Planning 2. Customer Services 3. Democratic	1. Customer Services 2. Elections 3 .Revs & Bens	1.Customer Services 2.Revs & Bens 3.Housing	1. Dev/Bus. Growth 2. Elections 3. Housing Repairs
Quarter Three	1. Customer Services 2. ICT 3. Democratic	1. Elections 2..HR/Payroll/H&S 3 CEO/Dir/HoS	1. Customer Services 2.HR/Health & Safety 3. Revs & Bens	1. Elections 2. Streetscene 3. Democratic Services
Quarter Four	1. Streetscene 2. Customer Services 3. Revenues	1. CEO/Dir/HoS 2. Democratic 3. Customer Services	1.Legal 2.Revs & Bens 3.Partnership	1. Elections 2. Governance 3. Customer Services
Overall Outturn	1. Customer Services 2. Housing 3. Revenues	1. Customer Services 2 .CEO/Dir/HoS 3. HR &Payroll	1.Customer Services 2.Comms 3.Housing/CS	1. Elections 2. Democratic 3. LEPT

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)

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Current Year 20/21
Quarter One	1. Perf/Comms 2. ICT 3. Legal	1. HR & Payroll 2. Elections 3. Procurement	1. Performance 2. HR& HS 3. Econ Dev	1. Finance 2. Democratic 3. Customer Services
Quarter Two	1. Finance 2. Perf/Comms 3. CEPT	1. Perf/Comms 2. CEPT 3. Econ Growth	1. Legal 2. Governance 3. HR&Health& Safety	1. Finance 2. Revs & Bens 3. Directors/HofS
Quarter Three	1. Finance 2. Planning 3. Econ. Dev	1. Procurement 2. Partnerships 3. Finance	1. Elections 2. Performance 3. Econ Dev	1. Finance 2. Customer Services 3. Property & Estates
Quarter Four	1. Finance 2. CEPT 3. Legal	1. Finance 2. Partnerships 3. Procurement	1. Elections 2. Econ Dev 3. Legal	1. Finance 2. Planning 3. LEPT
Overall Outturn	1. Finance 2. Legal 3. CEPT	1. Procurement 2. Finance 3. CEPT	1. Performance 2. Econ Dev 3. Planning	1. Finance 2. Directors/HofS 3. Property & Estates

Table Six: Top Three Reasons for Absence

(Top 3 reasons based on sickness days lost)

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Current Year 20/21
Quarter One	1. Operations/Hospital 2. Stress/Depression 3. Other Musc. Skeletal	1. Stress/Depression 2. Other Musc. Skeletal 3. Other	1. Viral Infection 2. Other Musc. Skeletal 3. Other	1. Stress/Depression 2. Other 3. Headaches/Migraines
Quarter Two	1. Stress/Depression 2. Operations/Hospital 3. Other Musc. Skeletal	1. Stress/Depression 2. Other Musc Skeletal 3. Other	1. Stress/Depression 2. Other Musc. Skeletal 3. Chest/Respiratory	1. Operations/Hospital 2. Other-Musc Skeletal 3. Stress/Depression
Quarter Three	1. Stress/Depression 2. Operations/Hospital 3. Other Musc. Skeletal	1. Other Musc. Skeletal 2. Operations/Hosp 3. Stress/Depression	1. Stress/Depression 2. Chest/Respiratory 3. Other Musc. Skel	1. Other Musc. Skel 2. Stress/Depression 3. COVID 19 Symptoms
Quarter Four	1. Other Musc. Skeletal 2. Operations/Hospital	1. Ops/Hospital 2. Stress/Depression	1. Stress/Depression 2. COVID19 Symptoms	1. Stress/Depression 2. Other Musc. Skeletal

	3. Stress/Depression	3. Viral	3. Other Musc. Skel	3. Operations/Hospital
Overall Outturn	1. Stress/Depression 2. Other Musc. Skeletal 3. Operations/Hospital	1. Other Musc Skeletal 2. Stress/Depression 3. Back Problems	1. Stress/Depression 2. Other Musc. Skel 3. Operations/Hospital	1. Other Musc. Skeletal 2. Stress/Depression 3. Operations/Hospital

Key Trends

- Sickness levels for the Council for 2020/21 are at their lowest for the last 7 years. This is reflected nationally as employees across all sectors have experienced less sickness during the Covid Pandemic. In addition, less fit notes have been issued by GP'S over the last 12 months.
- 9 Services experienced zero sickness in Quarter 4 and a further 4 Services have experienced less than 1 day per FTE employee.
- Stress/depression remains consistently in the top 3 through 2020/21, a significant proportion of these cases however are as a result of non-work related issues. Steps the Council has taken to support employees include:
 - Mental Health awareness sessions have been rolled out across the Council and are now included on the quarterly corporate training programme
 - Resilience Training rolled out in April, made available to managers and employees to support workforce mental and physical health
 - Health and Wellbeing Bulletins have been issued on a monthly and bi-weekly basis during the pandemic
 - Managers and Employees have accessed Occupational Health, Counselling, EAP and other support.
- An additional 93 days were lost in quarter 4 due to Covid19 symptoms (employees reporting unfit for work).
- There appears to be a direct correlation between employees aged over 50 undertaking physically demanding work and high levels of sickness.
- Analysis work has been undertaken on whether the lockdown period has increased specific sickness issues, there has been an increase in days lost due to stress and depression, but decrease in muscular/skeletal and back problems related sickness. As shown throughout the report the Council has been proactive in supporting employees.
- Possible factors which may be impacting on sickness include:
 - Housing, Streetscene and Customer services have maintained service provision throughout the lockdown period. Sickness levels in terms of days lost have reduced significantly in Customer Services, slightly increased in Housing Repairs whereas in Streetscene the days lost have remained static compared to 2019/20.
 - Many Leisure employees have been furloughed (for up to 43 weeks) during 2020/21 and therefore it is unlikely that any spells of sickness would have been reported during these periods as they were not required to attend for work.

- Many employees have been working at home therefore limiting personal interaction and adhering to social distancing practices resulting in less infections being transmitted between employees leading to reduced sickness. This is reinforced by significant reductions across the range of short term absences and specific sickness reasons such as Viral Infections and Chest/Respiratory issues.
- There is also the possibility that in some cases employees may not have reported poor health as they were working at home.

5. Actions

- 5.1 Managers have support from dedicated service area HR Link Officers 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 Support for managers and employees is provided by Occupational Health where appropriate and employees have access to a 24 hour, 7 days a week Employee Assistance Programme where confidential advice is provided on a range of issues
- 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.

Recommendations

- 6.1 To note the contents of this report

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 Heads of Service	0	0	0	0	0	9	0
Democratic	7.5	3	51	1	58.5	6.52	8.97
Elections	0	0	64	1	64	5	12.8
Health & Safety	0	0	0	0	0	5	0
Human Resources	0	0	0	0	0	2.43	0
Legal	0	0	0	0	0	8.7	0
Communications	0	0	0	0	0	5	0
Performance	0	0	0	0	0	2.82	0
Finance	0	0	0	0	0	12.42	0
Revenues & Benefits	19.5	9	0	0	19.5	28.89	0.67
Customer Services	47	8	0	0	47	21.91	2.14
Leisure	0	0	0	0	0	40.01	0
Leaders/Executive Team	1	1	0	0	1	3.82	0.26
Streetscene	107	25	94	4	201	98.98	2.03
Development/Business Growth	0	0	0	0	0	9.23	0
Housing Management (including CS)	33	5	173	4	206	64.38	3.2
Housing Repairs (BDC)	47	6	0	0	47	61	0.77
Planning	2	2	0	0	2	19.85	0.1
Prop/Commercial/Estates	23	2	0	0	23	18.1	1.27

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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	11	5	0	0	11	37.78	0.29
ICT	28	10	31	1	59	30.95	1.91

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
Directors/Heads of Service	9	0	0	0	0
Corporate Services	142.52	75	20	115	2
Development BDC	108.18	72	10	0	0
Env/Enforcement	163.36	140	30	267	8

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
Directors/Heads of Service	9	Zero Sickness
Corporate Services	142.52	1. Stress/Depression 2. COVID 19 Symptoms 3. Viral Infection
Development	108.18	1. Back Problems 2. Heart/Blood Pressure 3. COVID 19 Symptoms
Env/Enforcement	163.36	1. Other Musc/Skeletal 2. Operations/Hospital 3. COVID 19 Symptoms

Figure Four: Stress Cases During Quarter Four

Work Related	Outside of Work Related	Total
2	4	6

Figure Five: COVID-19 During Quarter Four and Totals for 2020/21

Quarter 4	The Arc	Depot Based	Grouped Dwellings	Remote Contact Centres	Total
No Self-Isolating	3	9	3	1	16
No Shielding	1	2	2	3	8
No of confirmed cases	7	22	2	2	33
No of Covid symptoms related absence days	32	59	0	2	93

Totals for 2020/21	The Arc	Depot Based	Grouped Dwellings	Remote Contact Centres	Total
No Self-Isolating	15	40	8	3	66
No Shielding	3	8	4	6	21
No of confirmed cases	9	33	4	2	48
No of Covid symptoms related absence days	41	134	1	15	191

**The totals above represent quarters 2 to 4, as detailed information in this format was not recorded until Quarter 2 as numbers of cases and self-isolation became more prominent.*