

**Bolsover District Council**

**Meeting of the Union / Employee Consultation Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

**Sickness Absence - Quarter 1 (April - June 2023)**

**Report of the Portfolio Holder for Resources**

<b>Classification</b>	This report is Public
<b>Report By</b>	Oliver Fishburn HR and Payroll Manager

**PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT**

To report the sickness absence figures throughout the Council for Quarter 1 (April – June 2023).

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**REPORT DETAILS**

**1. Background**

- 1.1 Figure 1 shows a summary of sickness absence levels within Bolsover District Council for the months April - June 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 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 1 was 2.26 days.**
- 1.4 **The 2023/24 projected outturn figure for the average number of days lost per employee is 9.04 days.**
- 1.5 The annual target for the Local Performance Indicator to the end of March 2024 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).

## 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 1 was 2.26, this has decreased in comparison to Quarter 4, 2022/23 (2.82 days).
- The short term sickness has decreased from Q4 (2022/23), however long term sickness has 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.
- 5 Services experienced zero sickness in Q1 and a further 6 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 9 cases of absence due to Stress/Depression during Q1, one of which was work related, and 8 were not work related.
- Covid19 accounted for just 22 days lost due to sickness in Q1.
- There are 16 long term cases in this quarter, 11 are due to physical health ailments and 5 are related to stress/depression (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. 4 have returned to work, 12 remain absent as at 30 June 2023.

### 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 on a daily basis via HR21 Self Service.

2.4 Steps the Council has taken to support employees include:

- 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:
  - the Mental Health Map, which features all the pathways and support options available in Derbyshire.
  - Mental Health Awareness week – promoting the available guidance and support available.
  - SHOUT – an organisation which provides 24/7 confidential support to anyone struggling to cope.

- Cycle to Work Scheme is also available to encourage health and wellbeing and to address carbon emissions, the number of employees who have subscribed during 2023/24 will be reported in Quarter 4 report.
- The number of Employees subscribing to the Gym during 2023/24 will be reported in Quarter 4 report.
- 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.

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

<b>Is the decision a Key Decision?</b> 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:  <b>Revenue - £75,000</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Capital - £150,000</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i>	No
<b>Is the decision subject to Call-In?</b> <i>(Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</i>	No

<b>District Wards Significantly Affected</b>	None
<b>Consultation:</b> <b>Leader / Deputy Leader</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Executive</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>SLT</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Relevant Service Manager</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Members</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Public</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	Details:

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

## DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Appendix No	Title
1	Figures for the Quarter by Directorate

<b>Background Papers</b> <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

**Appendix One**

**Table One: Organisational Outturn Average Number of Days Absence**

*(Average sickness days per fte employee)*

	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2020/21 Costs</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2021/22 Costs</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2022/22 Costs</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2023/24 Costs</b>
<b>Quarter One</b>	1.50	£51,292.61	1.91	£81,917.94	2.29	£84,309.63	2.26	£74,265.11
<b>Quarter Two</b>	1.35	£52,351.59	2.31	£91,025.58	2.02	£84,144.83		
<b>Quarter Three</b>	1.14	£46,411.80	2.29	£85,306.37	2.27	£93,954.00		
<b>Quarter Four</b>	1.58	£66,731.07	2.19	£84,857.65	2.82	£118,763.85		
<b>Overall Outturn</b>	<b>5.57</b>	<b>£216,787.07</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>£343,107.54</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>£381,172.31</b>		

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

	2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24	
	Short Term	Long Term	Short Term	Long Term	Short Term	Long Term	Short Term	Long Term
<b>Quarter One</b>	33%	67%	40%	60%	48%	52%	23%	77%
<b>Quarter Two</b>	37%	63%	67%	33%	46%	54%		
<b>Quarter Three</b>	47%	53%	48%	52%	46%	54%		
<b>Quarter Four</b>	43%	57%	69%	31%	43%	57%		
<b>Overall Outturn</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>54%</b>		

Table Three: Top Three Reasons for Absence

*(Top 3 reasons based on sickness days lost)*

	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Current Year 2023/24</b>
<b>Quarter One</b>				
<b>Quarter Two</b>	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	1 Operations/Hospital 2. Stress/Depression 3. Other Musc. Skeletal
<b>Quarter Three</b>	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	
<b>Quarter Four</b>	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	
<b>Overall Outturn</b>	<b>1. Other Musc. Skeletal</b> <b>2. Stress/Depression</b> <b>3. Operations/Hospital</b>	<b>1. COVID19 Symptoms</b> <b>2. Stress/Depression</b> <b>3. Other Musc. Skeletal</b>	<b>1. Other Musc. Skeletal</b> <b>2. Stress/Depression</b> <b>3. COVID19 Symptoms</b>	

**Summary Figures for the Quarter by Directorate/Service**

**Figure One – Service Breakdown Short/Long Term Split**

<b>Service</b>	<b>Short term days</b>	<b>No. of Employees absent</b>	<b>Long term days</b>	<b>No. of Employees Absent</b>	<b>Total Days lost</b>	<b>FTE No. in Section</b>	<b>Average days lost per FTE</b>
Directors and Assistant Directors	0	0	0	0	0	6	0
Governance	0	0	25	1	25	5.1	4.9
Elections	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Health & Safety	4	1	0	0	4	4	1
Human Resources & Payroll	0	0	0	0	0	6.43	0
Legal	0	0	0	0	0	3.82	0
Communications	0	0	0	0	0	5	0
Procurement	2	1	0	0	2	3.34	0.6
Performance	0	0	65	1	65	2.82	23.05
Finance	1	1	0	0	1	8	0.12
Revenues & Benefits	9	3	0	0	9	25.68	0.35
Customer Services	8	5	0	0	8	19.94	0.40
Leisure	15	4	33	1	48	38.51	1.24
Leaders/Executive Team	2	1	0	0	2	7.8	0.25



Streetscene	104	29	248	7	352	89.35	3.94
Housing Management (including CS)	17	6	168	6	185	65.83	2.81
Planning	2	2	0	0	2	17.96	0.11

**Figure Two: Stress Cases During Quarter Two**

Work Related	Outside of Work Related	Total
1	8	9