

Bolsover District Council

Meeting of the Union / Employee Consultation Committee on 7th December 2023

Sickness Absence - Quarter 2 (July – September 2023)

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 2023).

REPORT DETAILS

1. Background

- 1.1 Figure 1 shows a summary of sickness absence levels within Bolsover District Council for the months July – September 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 2 was 2.39 days.**
- 1.4 **The 2023/24 projected outturn figure for the average number of days lost per employee is 9.3 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). There was 3 days sickness (50% which equates to 1.5 days for BDC reporting purposes) 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 was 2.39, this has increased from Quarter1.
- 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.
- 7 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 of 2019/20.
- There were 13 cases of absence due to Stress/Depression during Quarter 2, three of which were work related, and 10 were none work related.
- Covid19 accounted for 18 days lost due to sickness in Quarter 2 in comparison to 22 days lost in Quarter1.
- There are 21 long term cases in this quarter, 15 are due to physical health ailments and 6 are related to stress/depression (one of which is 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. 16 have returned to work, 3 remain absent (2 of which the Council are pursuing the Ill Health Retirement route), 1 has retired on Ill Health Grounds and 1 has been dismissed (sickness capability) as at 30 September 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

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

District Wards Significantly Affected	None
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.
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)

	2020/21	2020/21 Costs	2021/22	2021/22 Costs	2022/23	2022/22 Costs	2023/24	2023/24 Costs
Quarter One	1.50	£51,292.61	1.91	£81,917.94	2.29	£84,309.63	2.26	£74,265.11
Quarter Two	1.35	£52,351.59	2.31	£91,025.58	2.02	£84,144.83	2.39	£86,396.88
Quarter Three	1.14	£46,411.80	2.29	£85,306.37	2.27	£93,954.00		
Quarter Four	1.58	£66,731.07	2.19	£84,857.65	2.82	£118,763.85		
Overall Outturn	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

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

Table Three: Top Three Reasons for Absence

(Top 3 reasons based on sickness days lost)

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Current Year 2023/24
Quarter One				
Quarter Two	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
Quarter Three	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	1. Other Musc. Skeletal 2.Stress/Depression 3.Operations/Hospital
Quarter Four	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. 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	

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	13.5	2	0	0	13.5	6	2.25
Governance	3	1	0	0	3	3.6	0.83
Elections	0	0	0	0	0	1.5	0
Health & Safety	8	2	0	0	8	4	2
Human Resources & Payroll	0	0	0	0	0	6.43	0
Legal	0	0	0	0	0	5.82	0
Communications	0	0	0	0	0	5	0
Procurement	0	0	0	0	0	2.96	0
Performance	1	1	0	0	1	2.82	0.35
Finance	0	0	0	0	0	8	0
Revenues & Benefits	37	7	0	0	37	25.78	1.43
Customer Services	30	7	0	0	30	23	1.30
Leisure	25	7	51	3	76	51.28	1.48
Leaders/Executive Team	0	0	0	0	0	8.2	0

Streetscene	117	31	310	13	427	99.84	4.28
Housing Management (including CS)	66	14	158	4	224	69.24	3.23
Planning	8	3	0	0	8	22.15	0.36

Figure Two: Stress Cases During Quarter Two

Work Related	Outside of Work Related	Total
3	10	13