

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.***
- 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

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

Appendix One

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%		

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

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.