

**Bolsover District Council**

**Meeting of the Safety Committee on 6 March 2025**

**Sickness Absence - Quarter 3 (October - December 2024)**

**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 3 (October - December 2024).

**REPORT DETAILS**

**1. Background**

- 1.1 Figure 1 shows a summary of sickness absence levels within Bolsover District Council for the months October - December 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 3 was 2.09 days.**
- 1.4 **The 2024/25 projected outturn figure for the average number of days lost per employee is 8.93 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 3.

## 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 3 was 2.09 days, this is lowest Quarter in terms of average days lost during 2024/5 to date.
- 6 Services experienced zero sickness in Quarter 3 and a further 5 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 3 cases of absence due to Stress/Depression during Quarter 3, 1 of which was work related, 1 was 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 2 days lost due to sickness in Quarter 3 this is lowest Quarter in terms of average days lost during 2024/5 to date.
- There are 12 long term cases in this quarter. 9 are due to physical health ailments and 3 cases are related to stress/depression (1 of which was work related. 1 was non 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. 5 Employees have now returned to work, 5 remain absent, 2 have left the Council's employ (1 resigned and 1 was retired on the grounds of Ill Health).

### 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:

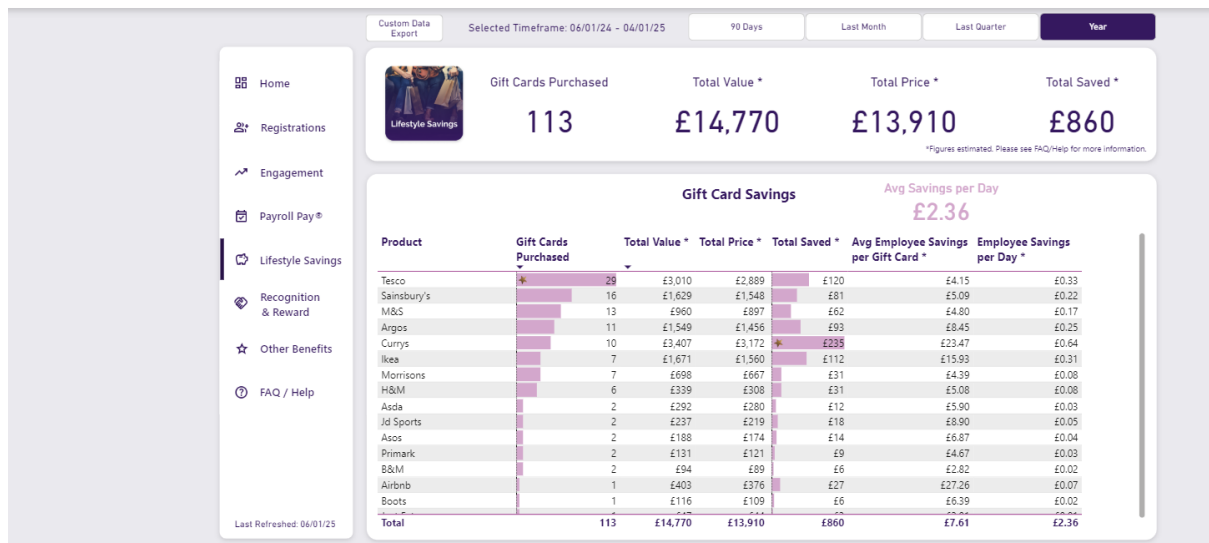
### Health & Wellbeing initiatives to support employees.

- Health & Wellbeing awareness initiatives and possible support is continually publicised via Eric and the weekly bulletin. Recent examples of which include:
  - **Christmas energy saving tips:** With energy bills still high, we provided employees with 12 energy saving tips to try and save some money over Christmas, as well as providing [Energy Saving Trust website](#) as a source for further support.
  - **Mental Health First Aider Trainers:** Our Mental Health First Aiders were advertised as part of World Mental Health Day 2024 (10<sup>th</sup> October). We currently have 10 members of staff who are qualified Mental Health First Aiders and are available to

support colleagues. We continue to advertise free Mental Health First Aider training as and when sessions become available via DCC.

- **Safeguarding Adults Webinars:** National Safeguarding Adults Week 2024 took place from 18 - 22 November and throughout the week Derbyshire and Derby Safeguarding Adults Boards hosted a number of webinars that were FREE to professionals working for Derbyshire and Derby agencies.
  
  - **Are you a carer? :** An event organised by Chesterfield Equality and Diversity Forum took place between 10am-2pm on Tuesday, 12th November at Grace Chapel in New Square, Chesterfield. This was an ideal opportunity for carers to meet useful, local groups who were be able to provide an abundance of support where required.
  
  - **Support When You Need It:** A Guide to Vivup's Confidential Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) was advertised on Eric & the Weekly Bulletin in October, providing a reminder to employees that this service is available and how to access it if required.
- **Vivup Rewards & Benefits:** platform provides 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)**
    - ✓ **Your Care**
    - ✓ **Cycle to Work Scheme**
    - ✓ **Lifestyle Savings**
    - ✓ **Home & Electronics**

Since the launch in September 2024, the Lifestyle Savings feature of Vivup has helped our employees save a combined total of £860.



- Flu Vaccinations:** Flu vaccinations were made available to all employees this quarter. Employees could claim reimbursement for the cost of the vaccination, up to a maximum of £18.
- Menopause Support Group:** The authority is in the early stages of establishing a dedicated Menopause Support Group for employees. This initiative aims to:
  - Provide a safe and supportive environment for employees to share their experiences and challenges related to menopause.
  - Foster open discussions to reduce stigma and promote understanding in the workplace.
  - Offer access to resources and guidance.
  - Raise awareness among all staff and managers to create a more inclusive and empathetic work culture.
- Wellbeing and first aid rooms now available:** Two wellbeing and first aid rooms are available for employees to use at The Arc (GF20) and Riverside Depot (U12). The facilities provided include:
  - A rest area with a fan providing additional air circulation for menopausal people
  - A place for praying – with direction to Qibla shown
  - A couch for pregnant employees to lie down if feeling tired
  - A private place for breastfeeding and nursing mothers
  - A location close to the main entrance, toilets and running water which will support anyone with first aid needs

To ensure privacy, both rooms have been fitted with roller blinds at each door and a vacant/occupied sign on the outside of the door.

- **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.
- **Neurodiversity Awareness Training:** In November and December, two sessions of Neurodiversity Awareness training were delivered by NeuroInclusive Solutions. These sessions were made available to Senior Managers, Councillors, and other employees who would benefit from the training. A further session is scheduled to take place in March.
- **Go-Active @ the Arc**
  - The number of Employees subscribing to the Gym for Quarter 3 2024/25 are 62.
  - 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.

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## **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>
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N/A
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**DOCUMENT INFORMATION**

<b>Appendix No</b>	<b>Title</b>
1	Figures for the Quarter by Directorate

<b>Background Papers</b>
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<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>
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None
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**Appendix One**

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

*(Average sickness days per fte employee)*

	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2021/22 Costs</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2022/23 Costs</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2023/24 Costs</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2024/25 Costs</b>
<b>Quarter One</b>	1.91	£81,917.94	2.29	£84,309.63	2.26	£74,265.11	2.26	£88,097.39
<b>Quarter Two</b>	2.31	£91,025.58	2.02	£84,144.83	2.39	£86,396.88	2.35	£97,373.93
<b>Quarter Three</b>	2.29	£85,306.37	2.27	£93,954.00	1.89	£73,327.02	2.09	£96,052.51
<b>Quarter Four</b>	2.19	£84,857.65	2.82	£118,763.85	2.44	£99,520.51		
<b>Overall Outturn</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>£343,107.54</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>£381,172.31</b>	<b>8.98</b>	<b>£333,509.52</b>		

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

	<b>2021/22</b>		<b>2022/23</b>		<b>2023/24</b>		<b>2024/25</b>	
	Short Term	Long Term	Short Term	Long Term	Short Term	Long Term	Short Term	Long Term
<b>Quarter One</b>	40%	60%	48%	52%	23%	77%	28%	72%
<b>Quarter Two</b>	67%	33%	46%	54%	37%	63%	35%	65%
<b>Quarter Three</b>	48%	52%	46%	54%	41%	59%	45%	55%
<b>Quarter Four</b>	69%	31%	43%	57%	41%	59%		
<b>Overall Outturn</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>64%</b>		

Table Three: Top Three Reasons for Absence

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

	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>Current Year 2024/25</b>
<b>Quarter One</b>	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

<b>Quarter Two</b>	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	1.Other Musc. Skeletal 2.Stress/Depression 3.Other
<b>Quarter Three</b>	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, Operations/Hospital 2.Stress/Depression 3.Other Musc. Skeletal
<b>Quarter Four</b>	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.
<b>Overall Outturn</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>	<b>1.Stress/Depression</b> <b>2.Other Musc. Skeletal</b> <b>3.Operations/Hospital</b>	<b>1.</b> <b>2.</b> <b>3.</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	9.5	0
Governance	0	0	0	0	0	3.6	0
Elections	0	0	0	0	0	2.5	0
Health & Safety	4	2	0	0	4	5	0.8
Human Resources & Payroll	0	0	0	0	0	7.4	0
Legal	0	0	87	2	87	6	14.5
Communications	2	1	24	1	26	6	4.33
Procurement	0	0	0	0	0	0.5	0
Performance	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
Finance	2	1	0	0	2	9	0.22
Revenues & Benefits	12	8	0	0	12	26.1	0.46
Customer Services	15	9	0	0	15	24.4	0.61
Leisure	42	6	107	3	149	48.5	3.07

Leaders/Executive Team	4	1	0	0	4	9.6	0.42
Streetscene	168	39	88	3	256	102.1	2.51
Housing Management (including CS)	85	20	54	2	139	73	1.9
Planning	3	2	54	1	57	22.4	2.54

**FOR INFORMATION ONLY – EMPLOYEES HOSTED BY NEDDC**

<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>
Environmental Health	17	7	59	3	76	50.7	1.50
ICT	34.5	7	20	1	54.5	35.1	1.55

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

Work Related	Outside of Work Related	Total
*2	1	3

\*Please note one of these cases was a combination of home and work related stress.