

Bolsover District Council

Meeting of the Union/Employee Consultation Committee on 18 September 2025

Sickness Absence - Quarter 1 (April - June 2025)

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 1 (April - June 2025).

REPORT DETAILS

1. Background

- 1.1 Figure 1 shows a summary of sickness absence levels within Bolsover District Council for the months April - June 2025.
- 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 2.8 days.**
- 1.4 **The 2025/26 projected outturn figure for the average number of days lost per employee is 11.2 days.**
- 1.5 The annual target for the Local Performance Indicator to the end of March 2026 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 1.

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

- East Midlands Councils are undertaking a benchmarking exercise as neighbouring Councils have highlighted an increase in sickness as an ongoing trend. These results will be provided in future Quarterly reports.
- The overall average days lost due to sickness in Quarter 1 was 2.8 days, this is the highest Quarter 1 over the last three years. Long term sickness cases have contributed to the escalation of the absence figures (accounting for 74% of sickness) in this Quarter.
- 7 Services experienced zero sickness during Quarter 1.
- Stress/Depression has remained in the top three reasons for absence since Quarter 2 of 2019/20.
- There were 12 cases of absence due to Stress/Depression during Quarter 1, 7 of which were work related, 5 were none work related.
- 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.
- There were 12 days sickness recorded for Covid19 in Quarter 1 this higher than Quarter 3 in 2024/5.
- There are 23 long term cases in this quarter. 15 are due to physical health ailments and 8 cases are related to stress/depression (4 of which were work related, 11 Employees have now returned to work, 10 remain absent, 2 have left the Council's employ. Appropriate support and assistance are being provided to facilitate employees who have returned to work and those planning to do so.

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:

Promoting Health & Wellbeing at Bolsover District Council

We continuously share information on health and wellbeing initiatives, as well as available support, through emails, Eric and the weekly bulletin. Recent highlights include:

- **Autism Awareness Training (April 2025)**
As part of our continued commitment to inclusion and understanding in the workplace, colleagues were invited to attend an optional Autism Awareness training session on Tuesday 1 April 2025.

The online session explored key traits and characteristics of autism, which affects around 2% of the population. Attendees gained a better understanding of how autism can influence perception, communication, and interaction, as well as how these traits can present both challenges and strengths in everyday life. The training aimed to build awareness and empathy, supporting more inclusive practices across our organisation.

- **Mental Health Awareness Week (12–18 May)**

To mark Mental Health Awareness Week, we organised a range of activities to promote positive mental health and wellbeing across the council:

- We hosted two informative sessions, one at The Arc and one at Riverside Depot, delivered by **Andy's Man Club**—a national charity focused on men's mental health and suicide prevention. Open to all staff, the sessions provided valuable insight into the charity's work and highlighted the power of peer support in tackling mental health challenges.
- We also invited staff and councillors to take a break and enjoy the outdoors with two special **Nordic Walking** sessions on 15 and 16 May. Led by qualified guide, the sessions introduced participants to this full-body walking technique using poles, offering a fun and supportive way to improve physical and mental wellbeing. Whether new to Nordic Walking or experienced, it was a great chance to get moving, clear the mind, and connect with others.
- We advertised a range of free online and in-person training sessions organised by Derbyshire County Council. The courses included:
 - Suicide Bereavement Training
 - Mental Health Awareness Training
 - Suicide Awareness & Managing Mental Health ConversationVarious online and in-person sessions were delivered in April and May. Participants registered via Eventbrite using the links provided in the training brochures from Derbyshire County Council Public Health.

- **Men's Health Week (9–15 June)**

Men's Health Week was a chance to check in on the wellbeing of the men in our lives—and ourselves. Men are less likely to seek help early, so the focus was on raising awareness and encouraging small steps towards better physical, mental, and emotional health.

Key messages we shared:

- Talk, don't bottle it up – 1 in 4 men face mental health issues. Speaking to someone can make a big difference.
- Check yourself – Testicular cancer is common in young men. A monthly self-check can save lives.
- Know your numbers – Over 40? You're eligible for a free NHS Health Check. Workplace checks are also coming soon – email laura.slater@bolsover.gov.uk for info.
- Move more – Just 10 minutes of movement a day can boost mood and focus.

- Support is out there – You're not alone.
MIND: 0300 123 3393, CALM: 0800 58 58 58, Samaritans: 116 123

- **Carers Week (9–15 June)**

During Carers Week, we raised awareness of the vital role unpaid carers play in supporting families and communities across the UK. We highlighted the challenges carers face and acknowledged their invaluable contribution. We encouraged everyone to show appreciation for carers—whether by spending time with them, offering a kind gesture, or simply saying thank you. The Caring About Equality report, published on 9 June 2025, revealed that over one in five people (22%) in the UK were providing unpaid care at the time, with 46% having cared for someone at some point in their lives.

- **Heatwave Safety Reminder**

With temperatures reaching up to 30°C in June, we reminded everyone to stay safe in the heat. Key advice included keeping homes cool by closing windows and curtains, wearing suitable clothing and sunscreen when outdoors, avoiding the sun between 11am and 3pm, and scheduling physical activities for cooler parts of the day. We also shared information on recognising heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

- **Sun Safe Workplace Training**

As part of the Colin Bloomfield Sun Safe Campaign, BBC Radio Derby partnered with skin cancer charity SKCIN to offer free Sun Safe Workplace training for outdoor workers.

The online training helped raise awareness of the risks of UV radiation, skin cancer prevention, and how to spot early warning signs. It was accessible on any device and took around 40–60 minutes to complete.

Staff were encouraged to complete the training in their own time, as it was available for a limited period.

- **New eLearning Platform Launched**

We are excited to announce the official launch of Bolsover District Council's new eLearning platform, SkillGate.

What is SkillGate?

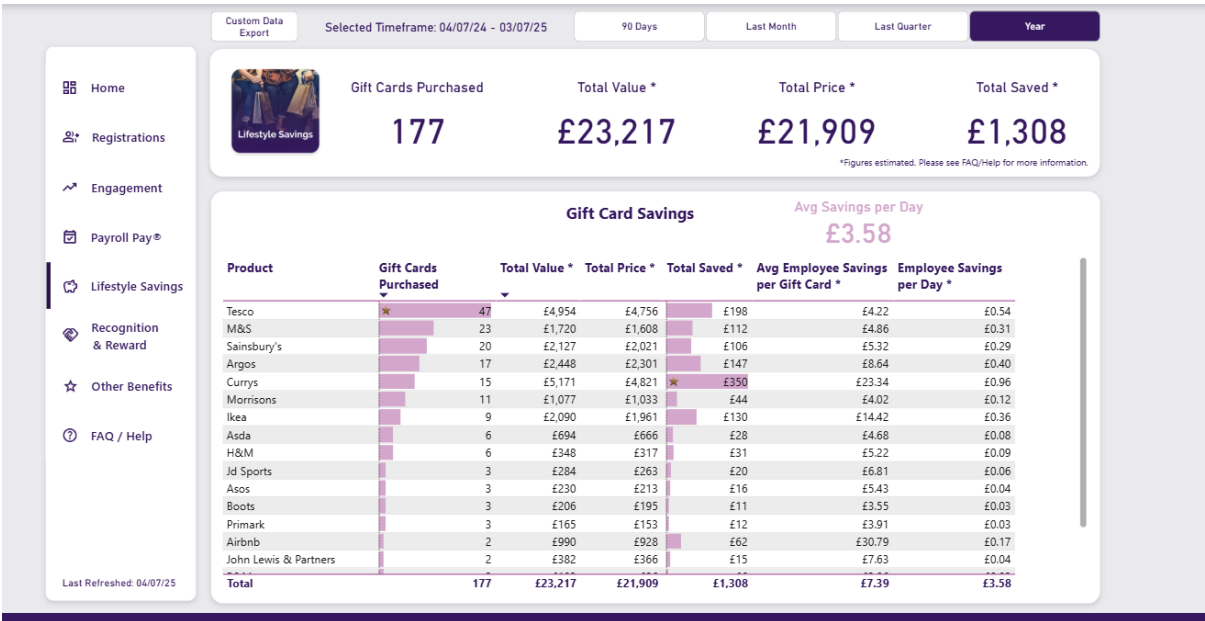
SkillGate is an online learning platform designed to support both personal development and compliance training. It offers a broad range of interactive courses covering topics such as leadership, health and safety, IT skills, and more. The platform is accessible anytime, anywhere, and tailored to meet individual learning needs.

Importantly, SkillGate also features a dedicated wellbeing section, offering courses focused on mental health, resilience, and overall wellbeing—supporting staff to look after themselves and each other.

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:

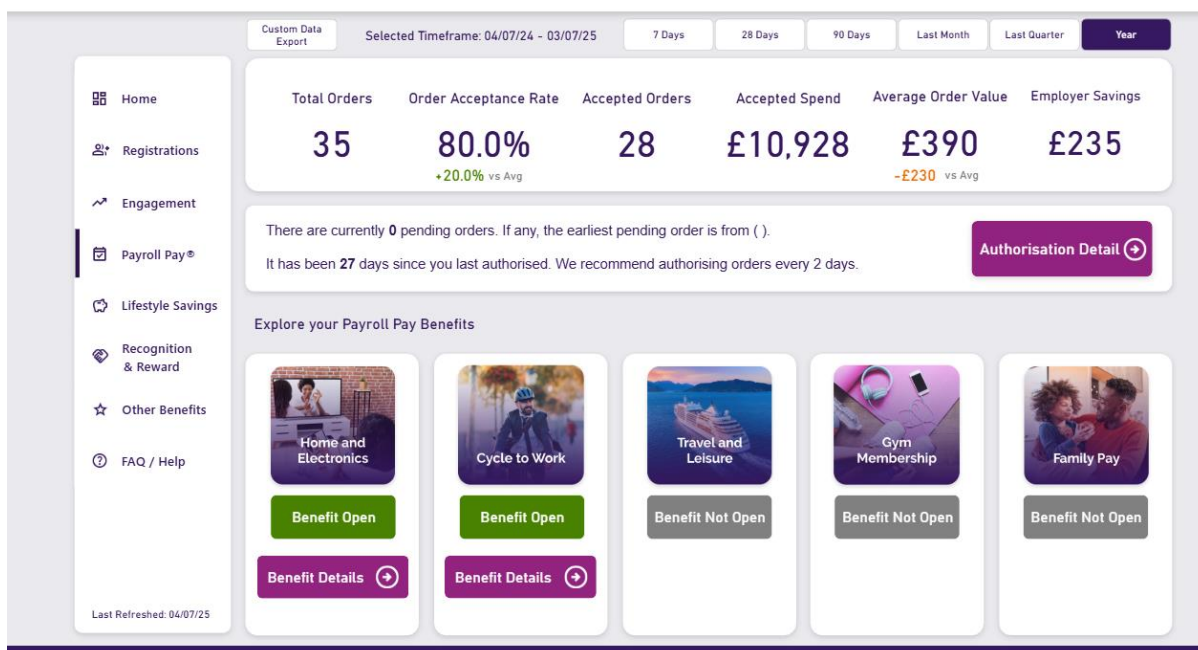
- ✓ **EAP (Employee Assistance Programme)**
- ✓ **Your Care**
- ✓ **Cycle to Work Scheme**
- ✓ **Lifestyle Savings**
- ✓ **Home & Electronics**

Since the launch in September 2024, the Lifestyle Savings feature of Vivup has helped our employees save a combined total of £1308.



Since September 2024, we've also approved 28 orders through the Home & Electronics and Cycle to Work Schemes via Vivup. This has saved employees a total of £235 and given them the flexibility to spread the cost of their purchases over 12 months through payroll deductions.

Vivup's **Home & Electronics and Cycle to Work Salary-Sacrifice Scheme** allows employees to spread the cost of home appliances, electronics, furniture, bikes, and more via interest-free monthly payments deducted from gross or net salary, no credit checks or upfront payments needed.



• **Go-Active @ the Arc**

- The number of Employees subscribing to the Gym for Quarter 1 2025/26 are 67, 3 up from the last quarter.
- 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 ☐ Capital - £150,000 ☐ ☒ Please indicate which threshold applies	No
Is the decision subject to Call-In? (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)	No

District Wards Significantly Affected	None
Consultation: Leader / Deputy Leader ☐ Executive ☐ SLT ☐ Relevant Service Manager ☐ Members ☐ Public ☐ Other ☐	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)

	2022/23	2022/23 Costs	2023/24	2023/24 Costs	2024/25	2024/25 Costs	2025/26	2025/26 Costs
Quarter One	2.29	£84,309.63	2.26	£74,265.11	2.26	£88,097.39	2.8	£135,582.88
Quarter Two	2.02	£84,144.83	2.39	£86,396.88	2.35	£97,373.93		
Quarter Three	2.27	£93,954.00	1.89	£73,327.02	2.09	£96,052.51		
Quarter Four	2.82	£118,763.85	2.44	£99,520.51	2.80	£121,809.68		
Overall Outturn	9.4	£381,172.31	8.98	£333,509.52	9.5	£403,333.51		

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

	2022/23		2023/24		2024/25		2025/26	
	Short Term	Long Term	Short Term	Long Term	Short Term	Long Term	Short Term	Long Term
Quarter One	48%	52%	23%	77%	28%	72%	26%	74%
Quarter Two	46%	54%	37%	63%	35%	65%		
Quarter Three	46%	54%	41%	59%	45%	55%		
Quarter Four	43%	57%	41%	59%	34%	66%		
Overall Outturn	46%	54%	36%	64%	35%	65%		

Table Three: Top Three Reasons for Absence

(Top 3 reasons based on sickness days lost)

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Current Year 2025/26
Quarter One	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	1. Other Musc. Skeletal 2. Stress/Depression 3. Operations/Hospital
Quarter Two	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	1, 2. 3,

Quarter Three	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	1, 2. 3.
Quarter Four	1.Stress/Depression 2.Operations/Hospital 3. Other Musc. Skeletal	1. Stress/Depression 2.Other Musc. Skel 3.Operations/Hospital	1.Operations/Hospital 2.Stress/Depression 3.Other Musc. Skeletal	1. 2. 3.
Overall Outturn	1. Other Musc. Skeletal 2. Stress/Depression 3. COVID19 Symptoms	1.Stress/Depression 2.Other Musc. Skeletal 3.Operations/Hospital	1. Operations/Hospital 2. Other Musc. Skeletal 3. Stress/Depression	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	16	1	43	1	59	9.5	6.21
Governance	5	1	0	0	5	4	1.25
Elections	0	0	0	0	0	2.5	0
Health & Safety	8	2	59	1	67	5	13.4
Human Resources & Payroll	0	0	0	0	0	8.43	0
Legal	0	0	20	1	20	5	4
Communications	0	0	0	0	0	6	0
Procurement	0	0	0	0	0	1.5	0
Performance	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Finance	0	0	0	0	0	10	0
Revenues & Benefits	8	4	21	1	29	26.23	1.1
Customer Services	16	5	19	1	35	24.23	1.4

Leisure	39	11	80	3	119	48.02	2.48
Leaders/Executive Team	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Devolution	2	1	30	1	32	6.8	4.7
Streetscene/Enforcement	92	29	421	12	513	115.42	4.4
Housing Management	64	15	35	1	99	60	1.65
Planning	7	3	20	1	27	21.35	1.26

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	40	8	42	2	82	50.60	1.62
ICT	29	7	11	1	40	33.55	1.19

Figure Two: Stress Cases During Quarter One

Work Related	Outside of Work Related	Total
5	7	12