



Date of Meeting	22 September 2020
Portfolio	Corporate & Resources
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## Health Related Absence Reporting

### Executive Summary

1. The report provides third quarter, fourth quarter and year end health related absence figures to Members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Overall the number of days lost per FTE is 9.67 for 2019/20 with the main reasons for absence being stress/depression and operative/post-operative. The directorates with the highest number of days lost per FTE are Adult Care, Children's Services and Neighbourhoods.

Looking at the latter part of 2019/20, the third quarter health related absence figures (October - December 2019) indicate that 2.73 days per FTE were lost, with an decrease in the fourth quarter (January – March 2020) to 2.60 days per FTE lost.

Although not relevant to the reporting period for this report, appendix one details an overview of recorded Covid-19 related absences.

### Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the Council's position for 2019/20.

### Reason for Recommendation

3. To provide Members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update of the health related absence data.

### Key Points for Consideration

4. The **third quarter** health related absence figures indicate that the overall level for the Authority was 2.73 days per FTE (an increase of 0.47 days from the same quarter in 2018/19). 62% were due to long term sickness absence with the remaining 38% due to short term absence. When compared to the same

period in 2018/19, the percentage split is similar with long term absence taking 63% of the number of FTE days lost and 37% for short term absence.

The **fourth quarter** figures show a slight reduction compared to the same period last year in that 2.60 days were lost per FTE, a reduction of 0.14 days (2.74 days lost).

Compared to the same period last year, long term absence has increased in the fourth quarter with 1.64 days (63%) of the total days lost (an increase of 0.24 days compared to 2018/19). 0.97 days (37%) were lost to short term absence (a reduction of 0.36 days compared to 2018/19).

**Table 1** below shows the third and fourth quarter absence data per Directorate.

Directorate	Quarter 3 absence data (September – December 2019)				Quarter 4 absence data (January – March 2020)			
	Days lost to long term absence	Days lost to short term absence	Total Days lost	Days lost per FTE	Days lost to long term absence	Days lost to short term absence	Total Days lost	Days lost per FTE
Executive	0.00	0.00	0.00	<b>0.00</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	<b>0.00</b>
Adult Care Service	464.08	304.56	768.65	<b>2.27</b>	405.54	444.00	849.55	<b>2.56</b>
Public Health	72.00	2.00	74.00	<b>5.21</b>	46.00	7.00	53.00	<b>3.27</b>
Children's Services	1159.52	728.57	1888.09	<b>2.80</b>	1226.26	738.85	1965.11	<b>2.93</b>
Economy	36.46	27.94	64.40	<b>0.83</b>	0.00	31.62	31.62	<b>0.39</b>
Neighbourhoods	1967.91	1012.54	2980.45	<b>3.32</b>	1798.64	818.27	2616.90	<b>2.88</b>
Resources	139.00	233.57	372.57	<b>1.48</b>	222.00	152.07	374.07	<b>1.49</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3838.98</b>	<b>2309.18</b>	<b>6148.16</b>	<b>2.73</b>	<b>3698.44</b>	<b>2191.82</b>	<b>5890.25</b>	<b>2.60</b>

Schools	4694.94	3475.29	8170.23	<b>2.42</b>	4773.42	3084.18	7857.60	<b>2.31</b>
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The **year-end** absence figures indicate that the overall level of days lost for the Council was 9.67 days per FTE, compared to 9.86 days per FTE for 2018/19. Of the 9.67 days lost per FTE, 6.29 (65%) were lost to long term absence, and 3.39 (35%) to short term absence. This is similar to the breakdown of days lost in 2018/1 where 6.20 (63%) were lost to long term absence, and 3.66 (37%) were lost to short term absence.

**Table 2** below shows the year-end absence data per Directorate, and the year-end position compared to each Directorate's target.

Year-end absence data (April 2019 – March 2020)					
Directorate	Days lost to long term absence	Days lost to short term absence	Total Days lost	Days lost per FTE	2019/20 Target
Executive	0.00	0.00	0.00	<b>0.00</b>	<b>1.00</b>

Adult Care Service	1863.10	1293.80	3156.89	9.50	9.00
Public Health	118.00	25.00	143.00	8.83	5.00
Children's Services	4145.38	2336.71	6482.08	9.66	7.90
Economy	119.84	110.89	230.73	2.82	5.00
Neighbourhoods	7120.06	3260.35	10380.41	11.44	8.00
Resources	848.73	631.98	1480.71	5.91	6.13
<b>Total</b>	<b>14215.09</b>	<b>7658.73</b>	<b>21873.83</b>	<b>9.67</b>	<b>8.45</b>

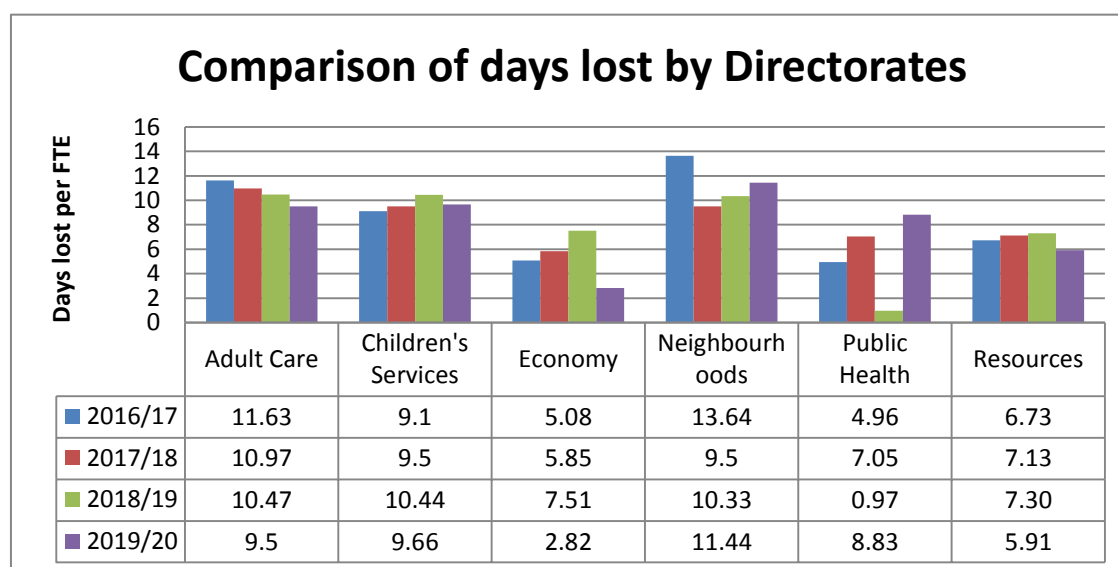
Schools	16928.64	11145.06	28073.70	8.26	7.00
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It should be noted that 75% of individuals working in schools are employed by the Council, and the remaining 25% are employed by the Governing Body.

Based upon an analysis of the data for 2019/20, long term absence accounted for the majority of absences. *Stress/depression*, was the top reason for long term absence, with *operative/post operative* and *back/neck problems* being the other 2 top reasons. These are the same top reasons for long term absence in 2018/19.

Short term absence accounted for 35% of absences, with *colds/flu/viral infections* being the top reason for short term absence, and *gastric/stomach/kidney/ liver* and *stress/depression* accounting for the other 2 top reasons. These were the same top 3 reasons for short term absence in period in 2018/19.

**Table 3** below provides a 4 year trend by Directorate of the days lost.



This report notes that the year-end absence figures for the Council has improved compared to last year however stress/depression continues to be one of the top absence reasons.

Each Directorate is committed to continue to monitor and manage absence to meet the challenging targets set on an annual basis. In addition, the HR Service continues to provide strategic advice and support to Services including

attendance at Absence clinics. Regular support is also provided to managers who have staff off on long term sick or persist short term absences. The HR Service also continues to provide training (including e-learning and face to face training) and support to managers across the Authority on effective absence management, whilst also providing support to staff.

In relation to stress/depression, employees have access to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which is a free 24/7 confidential telephone advice and counselling support service covering a range of topics.

The Council has a Health & Wellbeing group which has developed a programme of activities including but not limited to:

Pre Covid-19:

- Massage and yoga sessions
- Mindful and sleep sessions
- Stress management training
- MOTs – checks of blood pressure, weight, etc
- Book club

Since lockdown:

- A staff health & wellbeing Facebook group
- A further book club
- Virtual cafes
- You're ACE e-card
- Advice on staying well whilst working at home
- A film club
- A virtual gardening club

Along with these activities, there are currently 50 Workplace Wellbeing Champions with a role to support staff and promote and share health & wellbeing information.

### **Alternatives Considered**

As this is part of the Council's performance management process, there are no other alternatives.

<b>Costs and Budget Summary</b>
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5. The number of working days lost to absence for the period 2019/20 is a total of 21,873 days. The cost of working days lost can be calculated using an average salary of £103 per day and equates to £2,252,919. Any financial implications arising from sickness absence are reported by Directorates through the Revenue Finance Updates reports presented to Cabinet on a quarterly basis.

<b>Risk and Policy Implications</b>
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6. Significant health related absence will impact on the Council's capacity to deliver its corporate objectives, therefore effective management of health related absence is a whole organisation responsibility.

<b>Consultation</b>
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7. In compiling this report, Directors and Assistant Directors have been advised on performance relating to their service areas. Trade Unions have also been provided with information.

<b>Background Papers</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>
8. There are no background papers to this report.	N/A

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