

Appendix One - Covid-19 Related Absences

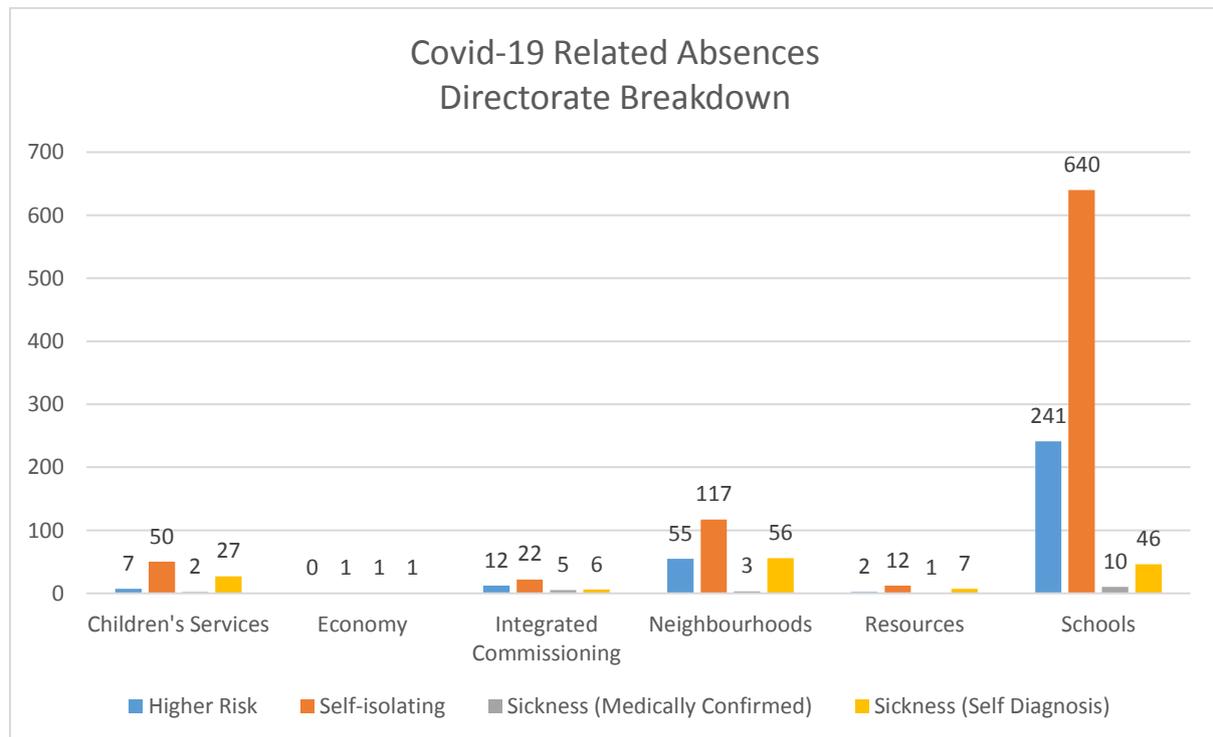
On 23rd March 2020 the Prime Minister announced lockdown in response to the growing coronavirus pandemic. Soon after this date the Council established specific Covid-19 absence reasons on its HR & Payroll system and recording of such absences commenced.

In response to a request from Unison (and in line with other GM Authorities) it was agreed that any absence relating to Covid-19 would not be included in sickness monitoring. Also, following NJC guidance, the same absences would also be excluded from sick pay arrangements meaning that an employee would continue to receive normal contractual pay whilst absent from work due to Covid-19.

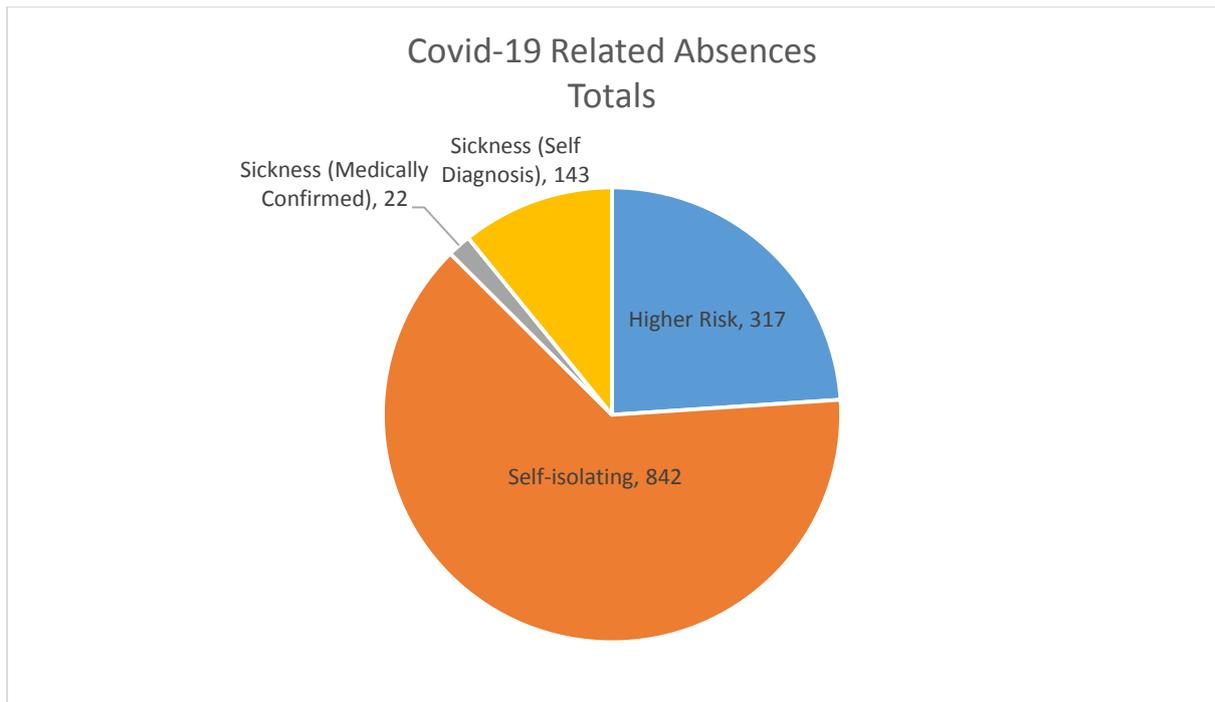
The categories of absences are:

- **Higher Risk** – employees who received the letter from the NHS confirming they are clinically extremely vulnerable and must follow shielding guidance.
- **Self-isolation** – employees who were required to self-isolate in line with government guidance or at the instruction of NHS Test & Trace.
- **Sickness (Medically Confirmed)** – employees who were sick with a confirmed diagnosis of Covid-19 following testing.
- **Sickness (Self Diagnosis)** – employees who were sick with symptoms of Covid-19 and unable to work but had not been tested.

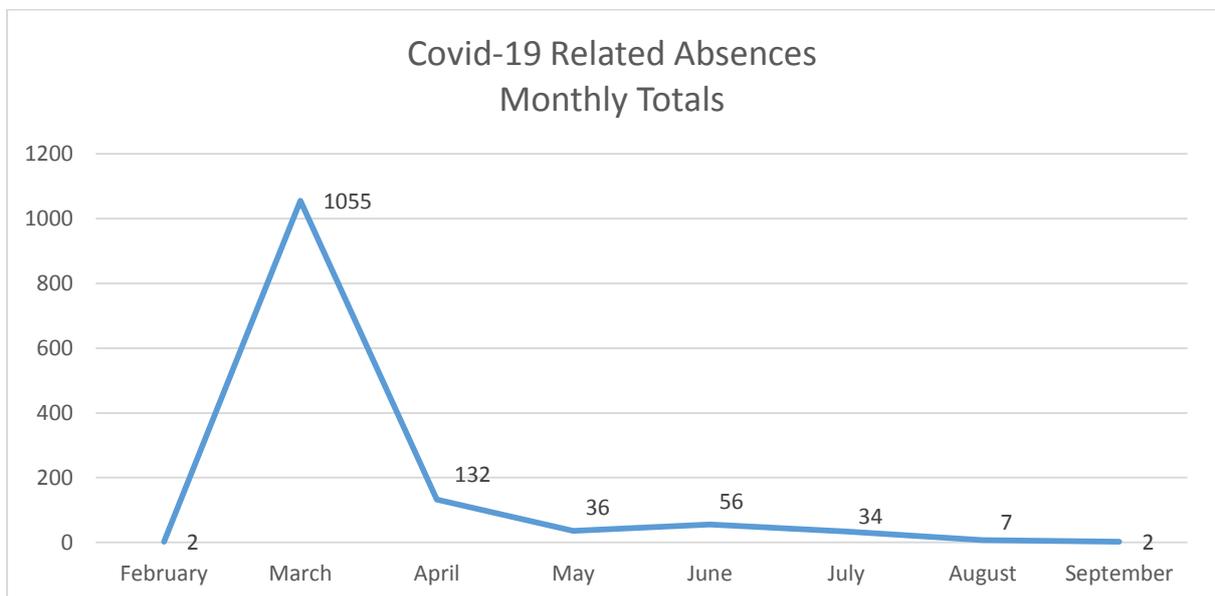
Below are a number of graphs summarising recorded Covid-19 related absences:



The Directorates with the highest numbers of absences are those providing critical frontline services during the pandemic. Resources Directorate has the highest % of staff working from home.



As can be seen self-isolation has been the main reason for staff absences relating to Covid-19. This equates to 11.81% of staff (including schools) with 0.31% of staff testing positive (sickness (medically confirmed)) of the coronavirus. 4.48% of staff were in the higher risk category meaning that they were required to follow shielding guidance which paused as from 1 August.



Throughout this period of the pandemic the Council has provided support and guidance to staff, managers and schools, not only on the practicalities of responding to the coronavirus but also in terms on managing staff health and wellbeing. This has included:

- Excluding Covid-19 absences in sickness monitoring and sick pay arrangements;
- Facebook page for Council & CCG staff;
- Virtual café;
- Staff chatters;
- Guidance for staff and managers in relation to working from home;

- Weekly HR guidance and FAQs;
- Manager's Pack including Individual Wellbeing Risk Assessment;
- "You're ACE" e-cards.

With effect from 1 September we have been welcoming more office-based staff back into the workplace in a gradual way with a view to having populated 50% capacity by the end of the month. There will be variations on how different teams operate dependent on service requirements and the individual wellbeing risk assessments of staff. As a result some staff may continue to work from home, some will return to the workplace and some are likely to do a mixture of the two.