Quarterly Workforce Report

April – June 2018

Key Observations

Sickness Absence

The overall sickness absence rate has decreased this quarter (to 2.1 days per FTE), reflected by a drop in short term sickness, as would usually be expected in this quarter due to end of the colds/flu season.

The overall number of days lost to sickness in this quarter has reduced by 7% compared to the same quarter last year.

However, an additional 11 people (up to 109) were absent on long-term sickness (more than 20 days) in the quarter, increasing the number of days lost to long term sickness by 472 days (+12.8%).

Greatest Increases in Long Term Sickness

The graph to the right shows much of the increase is due to stress/depression/mental health/fatigue. This can also be seen through the increased number of sickness absence cases which are currently being supported by HR Advisors.

A detailed review of sickness absence in this quarter is featured later in this report
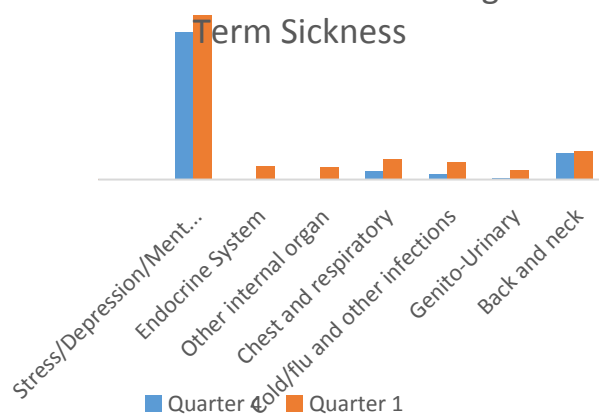
Salary Costs

As predicted in the previous quarterly workforce report, salary costs have increased this quarter. This is due to the 2% pay award and April's reinstatement of progression increments, which had been suspended for the last 2 years. Around 2500 people received an increment from last quarter, resulting in an annual increase of £2.6m. It is anticipated that we will see a decrease in salary costs of around £1m in the next quarter due to the waste collection teams being TUPE transferred out of the council.

Apprenticeships

We have 91 apprentices in the council, representing 2.0% of the total workforce (excluding schools). This compares favourably with the central government target for apprenticeships of 2.1% of workforce as new apprenticeship starts. We are confident that we will achieve this target for our non-schools workforce when the next cohort of apprentices starts on our leadership and management programme. The HR Resourcing team continue to work with schools to promote apprenticeships in their workforces, which should bring us closer to achieving our combined target.

SICKNESS ABSENCE

7317

days lost to absence
this quarter

The council saw a reduction of 13.2% in the number of days lost to absence when compared to the same quarter last year, meaning 7317 days (3.2% of available FTE working days in the quarter) were lost to absence this quarter compared to 7873 last year.

We had also predicted a reduction in sickness absence for this quarter compared to the preceding quarter (January to March) based on our trend analysis of the seasonal variations in sickness absence. This analysis predicted a reduction of 14% and the actual reduction was 13.4%. A major contributory factor in this was the reduction in cold/flu-related absences, consistent with the change in season and weather.

It is notable that this quarter's figure of 7317 days is the lowest April-to-June figure since we started measuring quarterly absence rates. This is particularly interesting given the work recently undertaken by HR to encourage managers to accurately and promptly input sickness absence into the SAP system - a process which could be anticipated to increase sickness absence due to increased reporting.

As mentioned in the key observations, long term absences have increased slightly this quarter. The Learning Disabilities & Mental Health service had a significant increase in long term absence (64%). The Mental Health teams were an area of concern, with one team (Mental Health Team South) seeing 3 long-term cases of depression/anxiety, all of which were Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHP's). Clearly this requires further investigation by HR and the head of that service. The HR business partner is considering what additional support measures can be put in place to help the service identify both the cause and contributing factors, as well as assessing the effects of the absences on remaining staff.

Stress/Depression/Mental Health/Fatigue continues to be the most prevalent reason for sickness absence; more than 1 in 3 days were lost due to a stress related absence this quarter. This is up 3% from the previous quarter and, interestingly given the total number of sickness days for the same quarter last year has reduced by 7%, this absence category is up 24% from the same quarter last year. This requires further investigation and discussion with the service and with Occupational Health professionals to determine the likely causes. These increases may also be partly attributable to raised reporting of stress - an anticipated outcome following recent efforts by Occupational Health to improve the awareness of mental health. This work included programmes such as mental health week and direct support and training sessions for managers.

Stress related absence at Wiltshire Council is most prevalent in staff aged 55-64

A trend was also seen whereby the older age bandings of staff (45-54 and 55-64) have the most stress related absences. It was also noted that this absence type is reported more prevalently for female staff. Our analysis indicates that the majority of stress cases are identified as "non-work related" (as opposed to "work related). It may be worth considering whether the opportunity exists to identify some of these external factors, particularly in respect of the staff groups mentioned above, so appropriate support and/or remedial measures could be considered.

Should the current trend between these staff groups and stress-related absence continue, it could be predicted that service areas with higher proportions of staff in these groups may require additional support in the future. Current employee data shows these are likely to include:

- Registration Services
- Mental Health Service (especially given the increase in long-term sickness mentioned previously)
- Passenger Transport
- Finance (Care)
- Children's Support and Safeguarding

The HR advisory team, HR business partners and Occupational Health have been informed of this and will be supporting services to take a proactive approach if it appears that stress is becoming an issue in these services. In addition, a review of how to best support these staff groups (including through resources to help with mindfulness and wellbeing) is planned.

The Families and Children directorate had a 10% increase in stress-related absence days this quarter. 16% of these were from Emergency Duty Service (EDS) alone; as this is a relatively small team (approx. 50 staff), this is significant area of concern. Around 15 days per FTE were attributed to stress related absence in the quarter alone (against a corporate average of 0.8 days for stress-related absences). Around half of the days lost to stress in EDS were specifically noted as work-related. When considering the elevated rates of these types of cases in this area, it should also be noted that there are several ongoing disciplinary and grievance cases within the team which are nearing completion. Several options are being explored to help support the team, including improving resilience in the short- to medium term; this includes work by the Family's and Children's Transformation (FACT) team to look at the structure of this team, and options for integrating with other teams. An agency team manager has been also brought in to support the management of the team.

The directorate with the highest overall absence rate this quarter was Commissioning, with 4.5 days lost per FTE - more than twice the corporate average of 2.1 days. 91% of these days lost relate to 5 long-term absence cases. The most common reason for these are 'muscular/skeletal reasons' followed once again by 'stress/depression/mental health/fatigue'. The relevant HR Business Partner has been informed of this and will be discussing with the service how they can support them through this period.
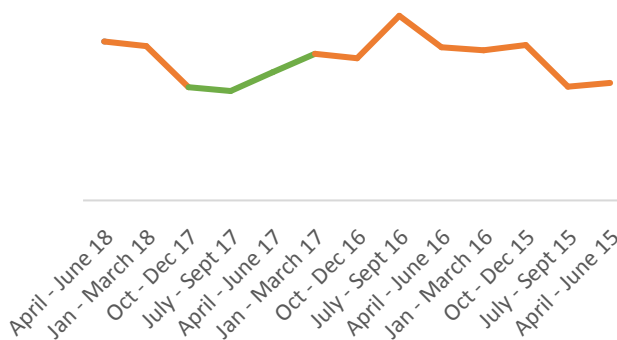
"The absence rate in commissioning was double the corporate rate"

This quarter has seen a marked increase in sickness absence in Waste and Environment. During 2017, the HR business partner spent around 12 months working closely with this service, particularly looking at sickness absence. This included a number of training sessions with team leaders and managers to improve their competence and confidence in managing sickness absence.

Until recently, the sickness absence rates for this directorate showed a significantly improving trend. This period of support (highlighted in green on the graph to the right) yielded, on average, 17% lower absence rates than our forecasts for the same period. This supports the softer intelligence we had from the service that managers were starting to take a more proactive and consistent approach to sickness following the intervention by the HR business partner.

However, despite continued efforts by both the service and HR to manage sickness levels, they have started to increase again since January 2018. The long periods of

Waste and Environment Sickness Absence Rate

(x-axis labels: April - June 18, Jan - March 18, Oct - Dec 17, July - Sept 17, April - June 17, Jan - March 17, Oct - Dec 16, July - Sept 16, April - June 16, Jan - March 16, Oct - Dec 15, July - Sept 15, April - June 15)

Waste Collection is being TUPE transferred out of Wiltshire Council

uncertainty relating to the impending TUPE transfer of the waste collection teams in this service (due to take place next quarter) is likely to be a significant and expected factor in this increase.

Notwithstanding the probable effect of the TUPE transfer, the trends in this area clearly demonstrate that additional support and training, delivered collaboratively with service managers, is an important factor in supporting improvements in absence rates.

Our forecasting predicts that we will see a notable decrease in the corporate sickness absence rate once the higher than average rates of sickness in the waste collection teams are removed post TUPE transfer. We anticipate this to reduce to around 1.9 days lost per FTE, representing the lowest absence rate for 4 years.

It is widely recognised that there is a clear link between employee wellbeing at work, appropriate and adequate working environments and staff sickness rates.

To gain a better insight into how each of these areas influence one another, Occupational Health conducted a Health Survey in late 2017. Complimentary to the 2016 staff survey, it attempted to gauge employees' sentiment towards their wellbeing and working environment, so that key trends which crossed over between the two surveys could be investigated.

Some of the key messages from the survey were:

- Staff largely felt they had achieved a healthy work-life balance
- Respondents cited mindfulness workshops and yoga as being the programmes that would be of most value to them
- 68% of respondents stated that they had worked when they didn't feel well enough to do so effectively.
- Staff responded that, apart from occupational health staff, they felt most comfortable speaking about their mental health to their immediate manager. It was also indicated that up-skilling managers to support these conversations was key to encouraging this dialogue.
- 27% of respondents said that the workplace has had a negative impact on their health over the last 12 months, citing stress and workload as the biggest contributors to this.

As a result of these findings, Occupational Health and HR have developed a collaborative approach to supporting absence and wellbeing. Measures already put in place, include:

- Mindfulness training – to bring calm and order to their thinking and life. 176 people have completed this course in the 4 months since it has been created.
- Tai Chi – classes every Tuesday morning before a working day, thought to improve one's mood and energy levels, as well as lower levels of depression, stress and anxiety.
- Health MOT's – a short health assessment, using non-invasive techniques covering physical and mental health, with proactive outcomes and areas of improvement.
- Financial wellbeing seminars – money worries are often cited as a common contributor to stress, so this seminar was established to help staff take control of their finances
- Flu clinics – in the last year almost 1300 staff have taken up the offer of a free "flu jab". Flu has only recently been introduced as a specific reason when reporting sickness absence in SAP, so the effects of this will take some time to be visible for analysis.
- Physiotherapy and counselling – Occupational Health provide a physiotherapy and counselling service. In the last year 156 members of staff were referred for confidential counselling and 47 for physiotherapy. The feedback from both the client and the manager has been very positive.
- Men's and Women's Health Week - an open discussion focussing on potential health risks specific to both genders. This included interactive sessions with specialists and talks from employees sharing personal experiences of things like cancer, weight loss and dealing with depression and anxiety.
- General workplace health surveillance – a programme for staff working in higher-risk environments which covers audiometry testing, hand arm vibration monitoring (HAVs), Hep B, and respiratory testing.

The HR Advisory team are also running workshops for managers and supervisors to help them manage sickness absence more effectively. This has had a very successful take-up across all areas of the organisation so far. Bespoke absence management courses have also been held with Strategic Procurement, Waste and Leisure service areas, focusing on helping supervisors and managers to have robust conversations around absence cases at an early stage. As these workshops have been run quite recently, we will monitor the impact and report on this in future quarters.

QUARTERLY WORKFORCE Measures

Quarter ended: 30 June 2018

Staffing Levels				
Measure	July – Sept 17	Oct – Dec 17	Jan – March 18	Apr – June 18
Headcount	4602	4615	4630	4605
FTE	3489	3473	3476	3458
Agency worker use (equivalent number of FTE's used during quarter)	105.4	100.1	103.1	109.8
Ratio of managers to employees	1:10.4	1:10.2	1:10.2	1:10.2
FTE of managers	431	440	440	439.88
Number of redundancies made during quarter	19	17	10	22
Ratio of starters to leavers (FTE)	1:1.1	1:0.8	1:1	1:0.8

Sickness Absence				
Measure	July – Sept 17	Oct – Dec 17	Jan – March 18	Apr – June 18	Apr – June 17
Working days lost per FTE	2.1 days	2.1 days	2.4 days	2.1 days	2.2 days
% of total absences over 20 days	49.4%	42.3%	43.8%	56.9%	53.5%

Health and Safety RIDDOR related injuries				
Measure	July – Sept 17	Oct – Dec 17	Jan – March 18	Apr - June 18
No. of workplace incidents/injuries reported	2	3	6	tbc

New Disciplinary, Grievance and Absence Cases				
Measure	July – Sept 17	Oct – Dec 17	Jan – March 18	Apr - June 18
Disciplinary cases	14	16	18	16
Grievance cases	3	2	8	8
Absence cases	183	153	133	159

Voluntary Staff Turnover					
Measure	July – Sept 17	Oct – Dec 17	Jan - March 18	Apr - June 18	Apr – June 17
% staff turnover	3.3% (119 leavers)	2.0% (91 leavers)	2.5% (117 leavers)	2.5% (111 leavers)	2.6% (122 leavers)
% <1 year turnover rate	5.9%	3.4%	5.6%	4.3%	4.3%
% Under 25's voluntary turnover	10.5%	4.0%	5.0%	3.0%	5.1%
Average leavers' length of service	7.2 years	7.8 years	7.5 years	8.3 years	8.1 years

Employee costs

Measure Relating to Quarter	July – Sept 17	Oct – Dec 17	Jan – March 18	Apr – June 18	Apr – June 17
Total paid in salaries to employees (non casual)	£25.25m	£25.19m	£25.05m	£26.09m	£25.23m
Total paid in salary to casual employees	£0.55m	£0.56m	£0.48m	£0.52m	£0.48m
Total salary pay	£25.80m	£25.75m	£25.53m	£26.61m	£25.71m
Total paid to agency workers	£1.10m	£1.11m	£1.26m	£1.55m	£1.06m
Median employee basic salary	£20,661	£20,661	£20,661	£21,074	£20,661

Why this is important: Clear budgetary constraints mean that keeping track of this information is vital. Whilst we are seeing a reduction in contracted employees we may see some services using alternative resourcing options on a more regular basis such as agency workers, consultants or casuals. This information will highlight whether this is happening or not.

Additional financial information

Measure *(If the figure is negative a saving has been achieved)*	July – Sept 17	Oct – Dec 17	Jan – March 18	Apr - June 18
Cost of sick pay	£0.65m	£0.68m	£0.77m	£0.75m
FTE change due to employee hour changes	-8.2	-7.3	-9.3	-8.2
Cost/saving of employee hour changes	-£210,079	-£200,654	-£227,267	-£234,562

Why this is important: Sick pay amounted to £2,889,362 across Wiltshire Council during the 2017-18 financial year and therefore this is a substantial area of spend that should be minimised whenever possible. FTE changes indicate where services may be looking to employees to work more hours than they previously have done to cover gaps where a reduction in the headcount of employees has been made. It could also be an indication that services are adopting a more positive approach to flexible working.

Employee Diversity

Measure	July – Sept 17	Oct – Dec 17	Jan – March 18	Apr – June 18	Apr – June 17
% < 25	6.0%	6.5%	6.5%	6.3%	6.5%
% 55 and over	24.9%	25%	25.7%	26.1%	24.9%
% Female	70.9%	70.6%	70.8%	71.0%	70.2%
% Part-time	44.2%	44.9%	45.4%	46.0%	44.1%
% Temporary contracts	5.7%	5.5%	5.7%	5.9%	5.3%
% Black or Minority Ethnic	2.1%	2.1%	2.2%	2.2%	2.0%
% Disabled	6.0%*	5.8%*	5.7%*	4.0%	5.9%*

*These figures have been amended as a result of the collation of multiple data sources.