

Quarterly Workforce Report

January – March 2021



Observations and Exceptions

Whilst COVID-19 cases peaked in January 2021 following the temporary relaxation of national restrictions around Christmas, the imposition of a third national lockdown saw cases reduce steadily throughout the January – March quarter. February saw the Prime Minister set out his intended roadmap out of lockdown, with the 21st June earmarked as the earliest date when all restrictions on social contact could be lifted. Whilst an end is in sight, the COVID-19 situation has continued to impact the council's workforce and the way in which we deliver services throughout this quarter.

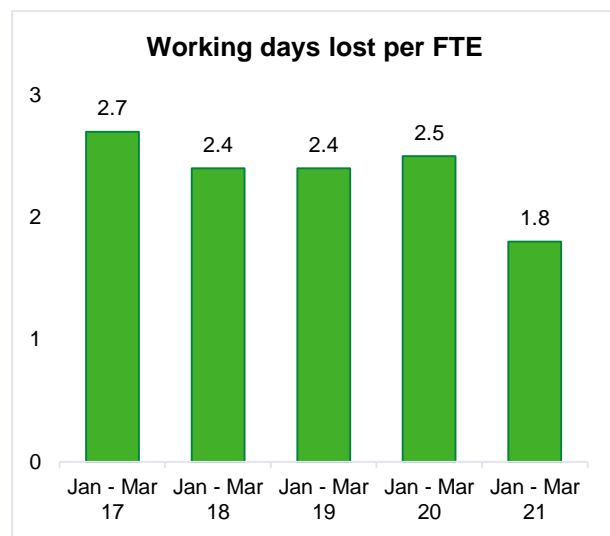
The pandemic reinforced the need for a more agile and adaptable council workforce, and work through our Organisational Recovery programme continues to address this. Redeployment of staff has continued, with employees providing support with lateral flow testing, contact tracing, and the distribution of business grants to support Wiltshire's businesses. Staff have also enabled the council to prepare for and successfully deliver one of the biggest elections in the UK. Many employees have been redeployed to provide support to the Wellbeing Hub, which has proactively contacted around 35,000 vulnerable residents over the last year. Whilst the majority of staff continued to work from home this quarter in line with government guidance, a return to workplaces is being planned; the Workplaces and Workspaces workstream within the Organisation Recovery programme has been running a series of pilots from 17th May onwards, trialling new meeting technology, collaboration spaces and a desk booking app.

The COVID-19 virus has had a more significant impact on sickness absence during this quarter, contributing 79 absences totalling 789 working days, a 264% increase in days lost from COVID-19 in quarter 3, which saw 36 COVID-related sickness absences totalling 217 working days. COVID-related sickness absence represents 12% of the total days lost from January - March, making COVID-19 the second most common absence reason behind stress and mental health this quarter. This increase is aligned with the rise in cases seen nationally in the same period, however it should be noted that the 71 members of staff who were absent due to COVID-19 during this quarter represent less than 1.7% of our workforce. Restrictions remain in place regarding workplace access, and social distancing measures are imposed for those who require essential access or are piloting workspaces.

The council has continued to monitor the effect of COVID-19 on team capacity, and during this quarter around 3.5% of the workforce were impacted to the point that they were unable to perform the duties of their role, i.e. they were either unwell with the virus, or were self-isolating and unable to work. This figure has risen from 2.4% in quarter 3 in line with the national trend. It can be expected that the impact of COVID-19 on team capacity will now begin to reduce, in keeping with a reduction in cases seen nationally towards the end of this quarter, as well as government guidance that clinically extremely vulnerable individuals no longer need to shield from 31st March. In fact, recent reports in May have shown that just 0.4% of the workforce are currently unable to perform the duties of their role due to the impact of COVID-19.

There has been a decrease in days lost due to stress and mental health this quarter, indicating that our continued efforts to improve wellbeing and promote resilience have been effective, especially during a third lockdown which anecdotally seems to have had the greatest impact on staff mental health. This quarter saw the introduction of the Flourish at Home wellbeing challenge, which received great engagement from the workforce, with staff from every directorate getting involved in improving their physical and mental health. In spite of the decrease in stress and mental health related absence, monitoring the impact of the pandemic on staff mental health and wellbeing remains vital, and a further council-wide Wellbeing Survey has recently been launched. Work on the dedicated Wellbeing and Engagement workstream within the Organisational Recovery programme will continue, with both the Wellbeing and the Engagement internal strategies under review, and a Mental Health Advocates pilot due to run later this year.

Overall sickness absence trends remained unchanged between the current and previous quarter, amounting to 1.8 working days lost per FTE. This figure is remarkably low in comparison to that of the same quarter in previous years, likely as a result of the continued national COVID-19 restrictions and third lockdown imposed in early January, resulting in a high proportion of staff working from home, and therefore reduced opportunities for the transmission of illnesses. This reduction in working days lost per FTE in comparison to the trend is significant as, historically, the council has experienced a seasonal increase in sickness absence during the winter months.



The council introduced recruitment controls in July 2020 in support of our intention to emerge from the pandemic leaner and stronger, and to create and encourage an internal flow of staff. As a result, both permanent and casual employee salary costs have continued to reduce in this quarter. Agency costs have seen a slight increase from last quarter, predominantly in the Digital & Information and Finance & Procurement directorates, due to the need for specialist workers in these areas that could not be resourced through internal recruitment. Agency costs have also increased in the Adult Care Operations and Learning Disabilities & Mental Health directorates, areas that have been and remain critical to resource, particularly during this difficult and unprecedented time. It should be noted that, in spite of the slight increase, the figure of £736k remains significantly lower than the £1.5m agency costs of quarter 1, April – June 2020.

During this quarter the council published workforce data on diversity and the gender pay gap as part of our public sector equality duty. These reports were presented before publication to the Staffing Policy Committee on 11th March 2021. The inclusion and diversity employment monitoring report indicates that our workforce is becoming more representative of the Wiltshire population, with the proportion of BME, disabled, and LGBT+ staff increasing, as well as the proportion of staff indicating that they have unpaid caring responsibilities. The percentage of staff disclosing their protected characteristics has also risen. The gender pay gap report delineates that the council's mean and median gender pay gap figures are significantly lower than those of both the national public sector and the national economy as a whole, and we remain committed to reducing the gap even further. Work on our internal inclusion strategy is ongoing; the existing EDI Steering Group has been reorganised, and a reverse mentoring pilot is due to be launched in the coming months. The council

remains dedicated to improving equality and diversity within the organisation and promoting inclusion for all staff, and we will continue to monitor this.

The vaccine rollout in the UK continues to be a success, with the government having hit its target of offering the first vaccination dose to all individuals over the age of 50 and all those in high-risk categories before 15th April. Evidence shows that vaccines are reducing hospitalisations and deaths, and the Prime Minister remains confident that the aim of offering all adults in the UK the first dose by July 2021 will be accomplished. Our own council roadmap to emerge from the pandemic leaner and stronger continues, ensuring we are prepared to move into the new normal which is hopefully on the horizon.

WORKFORCE DEMOGRAPHICS



Current quarter	4470
Oct-Dec	4482
Jul-Sept	4610
Apr-June	4680



Current quarter	3467.5
Oct-Dec	3453.8
Jul-Sept	3496.3
Apr-June	3545.7

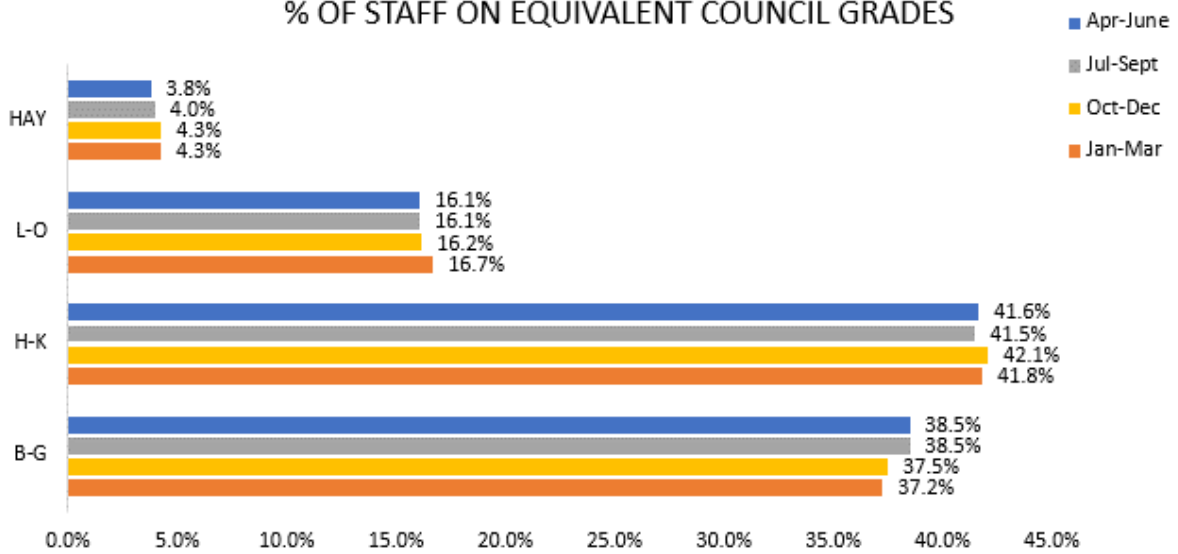


Current quarter	8.4%
Oct-Dec	8.0%
Jul-Sept	8.0%
Apr-June	8.1%

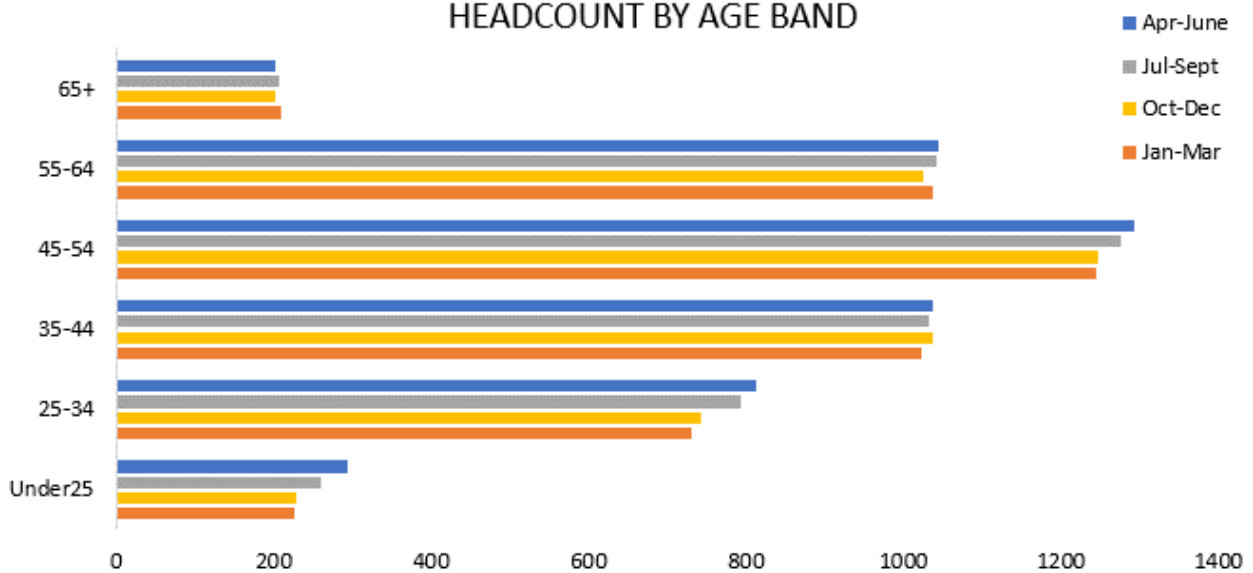


Current quarter	3.2%
Oct-Dec	3.1%
Jul-Sept	3.0%
Apr-June	3.0%

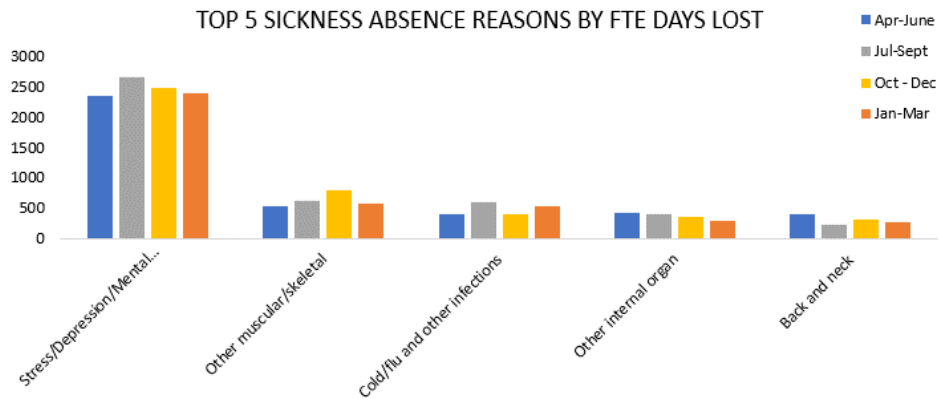
% OF STAFF ON EQUIVALENT COUNCIL GRADES



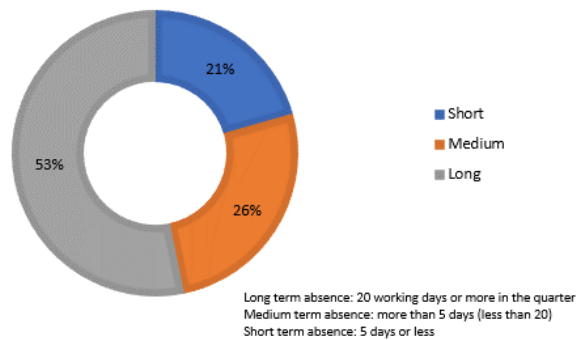
HEADCOUNT BY AGE BAND



SICKNESS ABSENCE



SICKNESS ABSENCE BREAKDOWN JAN - MAR 2021



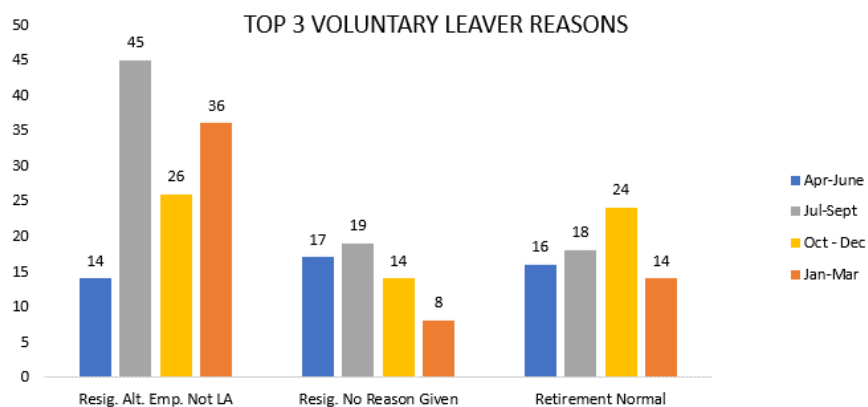
TURNOVER

Leavers under 25 years old

Current quarter	7
Oct - Dec	8
Jul-Sept	18
Apr-June	13

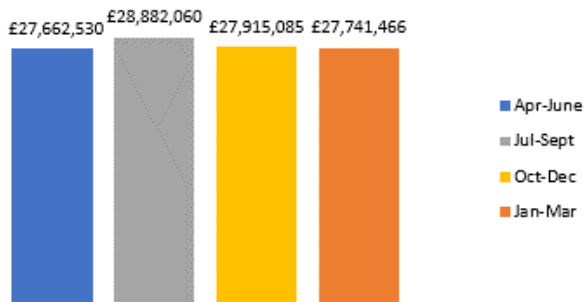
Leavers with less than 1 years' service

Current quarter	13
Oct - Dec	13
Jul-Sept	14
Apr-June	14

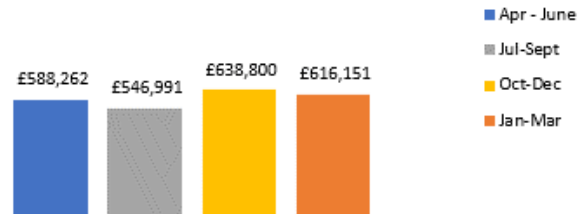


EMPLOYEE COSTS

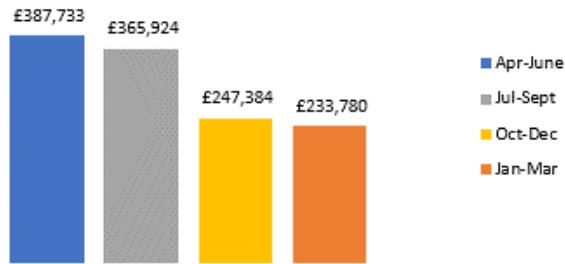
PERMANENT EMPLOYEE SALARY COSTS



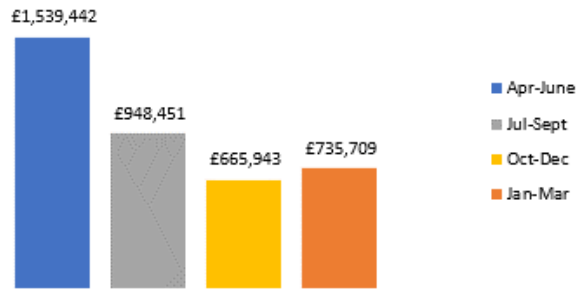
SICKNESS ABSENCE COSTS



CASUAL EMPLOYEE SALARY COSTS



AGENCY COSTS



ADVISORY CASES

Disciplinary

	New cases this quarter	Variance from previous quarter
Current Quarter	18	7
Oct - Dec	11	1
Jul - Sept	10	-2
Apr - June	12	2

Absence & Health

	New cases this quarter	Variance from previous quarter
Current Quarter	129	-24
Oct - Dec	153	21
Jul - Sept	132	38
Apr - June	94	-75

Grievance

	New cases this quarter	Variance from previous quarter
Current Quarter	8	4
Oct - Dec	4	-4
Jul - Sept	8	6
Apr - June	2	-4

Improving Work Performance

	New cases this quarter	Variance from previous quarter
Current Quarter	5	4
Oct - Dec	1	-3
Jul - Sept	4	2
Apr - June	2	-6