

Quarterly Workforce Report

July – September 2021



Observations and Exceptions

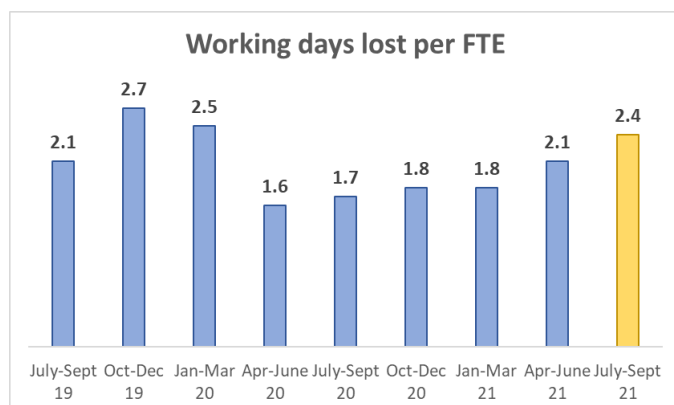
During this quarter the UK government lifted all government restrictions on social contact. The council, however, continues to operate with restrictions inside of council-owned buildings to safeguard staff and Wiltshire residents, with workplace access restrictions and social distancing measures remaining in place.

The pandemic has reinforced the need for a more agile and adaptable workforce, and work through our Organisational Recovery programme continues to address this. The Agile workstream have introduced the Agile Workforce Pool which allows staff to undertake temporary placements in critical service areas. This provides staff with the opportunity to build their career, develop skills and expand their knowledge of the council and allows the council to meet short term demand. Currently there are 71 employees signed up to the Agile Workforce Pool.

SICKNESS ABSENCE

COVID-related sickness absence experienced a significant increase this quarter, contributing 75 absences totalling 544 working days. This represents a 175% increase in working days lost (and the largest increase of all absence reasons) compared to the previous quarter (April - June), which saw 18 COVID-related sickness absences totalling 198 working days. However, despite this increase, COVID-related sickness absence still represents only around 7% of the total days lost in the July – September quarter, making COVID-19 the fifth most common reason for absence (previously 11th most common in April - June). This increase is aligned with rising cases experienced nationally during the same period, largely due to the increased transmissibility of the Delta variant and justifies the council's decision to maintain restrictions in all office buildings to safeguard staff and Wiltshire residents. While the council experienced a significant increase in cases during the quarter, this never affected more than 1.2% of the workforce at any one time in the quarter. This is a rate below national figures, with the ONS reporting a high of around 1.6% of the UK population during the quarter. COVID absence figures continue to be reported on a weekly basis and reviewed by the corporate leadership team.

Previously we have reported that sickness absence levels have been significantly lower than usual due to the pandemic; however this quarter the council have reported a sickness absence rate of 2.4 days lost per FTE (an increase from 2.1 last quarter). This has continued an increasing trend over the last 5 quarters. This is particularly significant as during these warmer quarters (quarters 1 and 2) the council would normally experience a lower



sickness absence rate in comparison to the colder months (quarters 3 and 4) due to the seasonal influence of cold/flu and other infections. However, we can see from the graph above the current trend goes against this normal trend. The sickness absence graph in the long-term trends section below (page 7) indicates that the sickness absence rate this quarter is also higher than a normal rate we would experience in this quarter. We can see from this graph that the current rate is above a typical rate we would normally record in a July – September quarter based on the average sickness absence rate in a July – September quarter over the last 4 years (and including pre-COVID ‘normal’ levels).

As mentioned previously, COVID-related absence represented the most significant contribution to the increase in sickness absence (days lost) this quarter due to the increased transmissibility of the Delta variant, the relaxation of all social restrictions and increasing cases seen nationally. In addition ‘muscular/skeletal’ and ‘cold/flu and other infections’ have also experienced significant increases (52% and 72% respectively from April – June 2021). With the majority of our staff working from home, both absence reasons had experienced a significant reduction during the COVID-19 pandemic; however, with current rates similar to pre-COVID, this increase is likely a return to a more ‘normal’ level with social restrictions eased. Stress-related absence has continued to increase this quarter, however the increase was less significant (+7%) to last quarter. The increase in stress-related absence was largely due to a significant increase in non-work related stress, with other stress-related reasons (depression/anxiety, neurological and work-related stress absences) all experiencing reductions compared to the previous quarter (April – June 2021). The increase in non-work related stress appears predominantly in social care (both adults and childrens) and Joint Commissioning. Work is currently underway to deliver an action plan to reduce sickness absence in general across social care, with a particular focus on reducing stress related absence in these areas.

SEASONAL DEMAND AND INFLUENCE

During this quarter we tend to see seasonal demand impact some services. In particular, with leisure centres fully open, demand on our centres usually peaks in the summer months during the school holidays; and this has affected several measures within this report. Casual employee costs increased by around £100k compared to quarter 1 with the majority of this increase (68%) from Leisure and likely to help meet this increase in demand. In addition, we can see from the graphs below an increase in leavers under the age of 25, 45% of which were in Leisure. With children returning to schools towards the end of this quarter and therefore demand on the service reducing, the need for that volume of staff is no longer required resulting in seasonal workers leaving.

Seasonal demand and seasonal influence has also led to an overall increase in voluntary turnover. We can see from the long term trends below (page 7) a consistent increasing trend in the July – September quarter. This has been influenced by an increase in staff leaving Leisure as demand on the service has reduced as mentioned above, however in addition previous data suggests that there is a cyclical nature of schools staff leaving (and starting) at the beginning of September aligned to the academic year. Alongside an increase in leavers in Leisure this quarter (14% of the overall increase), the council has experienced an increase in voluntary leavers from Inclusion and SEND (29% of the overall increase), Passenger Transport (16% of the overall increase) and Schools Effectiveness (12% of the overall increase) which would appear to follow this trend as the roles are largely schools based or schools related.

EMPLOYEE WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT

During this quarter, the council also published the results of a third Wellbeing and Engagement Survey since the start of the pandemic. The results of this survey showed improvements in how satisfied staff were with their physical workspace when working from home, supported by the continued roll out of

ICT equipment to create a more appropriate and comfortable workstation at home. This response has experienced a continued improvement across the three Wellbeing and Engagement Surveys conducted so far. The results have also shown an improvement in positive response towards empowerment, work-life balance, morale, and productivity in comparison to the previous survey in October 2020. The council have however experienced reductions in response rate, employee engagement index score and net promoter score (NPS¹), a consistent reducing trend across the three surveys. It should be noted that despite experiencing a reducing trend, the scores are still very positive with an engagement index score of 84 (where 100 would mean everyone at the council is fully engaged) and an NPS of 18, where a score above 0 is considered good and means more staff are promoting the council as a good place to work than detracting.

In addition, the results highlighted a continuation of challenges and concerns identified in previous surveys, particularly in relation to social isolation, communication, workload, and future uncertainty. Directorate and service-specific results have been provided for managers and action planning is underway by services to understand and improve any areas of concern and reinforce areas that are positive.

¹ NPS score shows the net difference between whether staff would recommend (promoters) or deter others (detractors) from working for Wiltshire Council. The scale for this runs from -100 (all detractors) to +100 (all promoters), therefore any score greater than 0 means there are more promoters than detractors.

WORKFORCE DEMOGRAPHICS



Current quarter	4463
Apr-June 21	4461
Jan-Mar 21	4470
Oct-Dec 20	4482



Current quarter	3495.2
Apr-June 21	3468.5
Jan-Mar 21	3467.5
Oct-Dec 20	3453.8

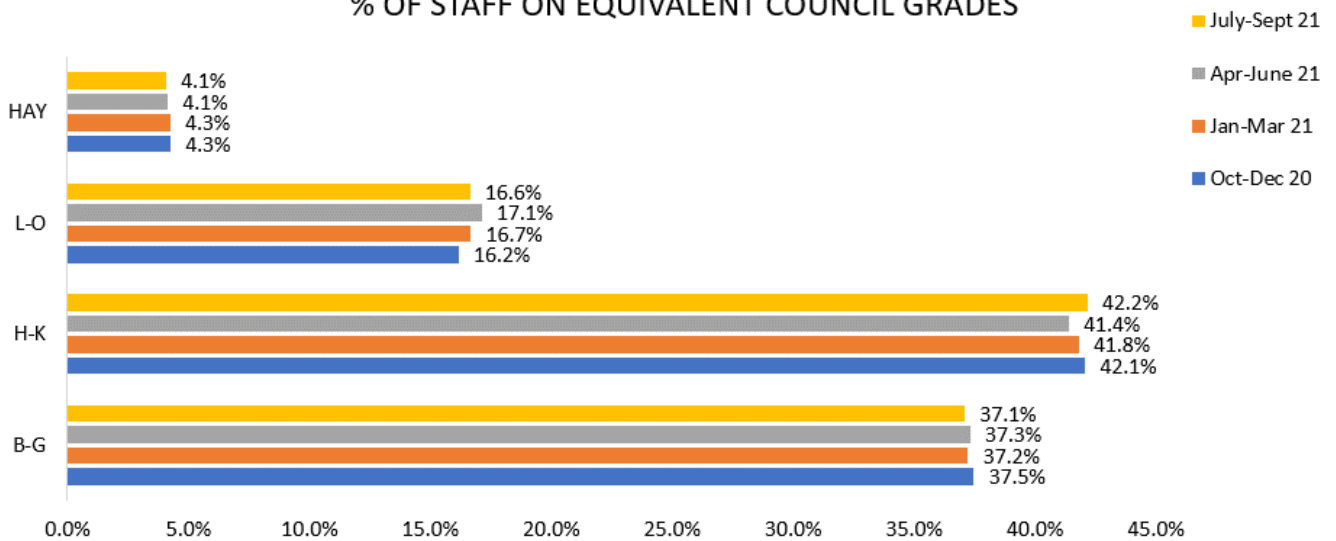


Current quarter	7.9%
Apr-June 21	8.2%
Jan-Mar 21	8.4%
Oct-Dec 20	8.0%

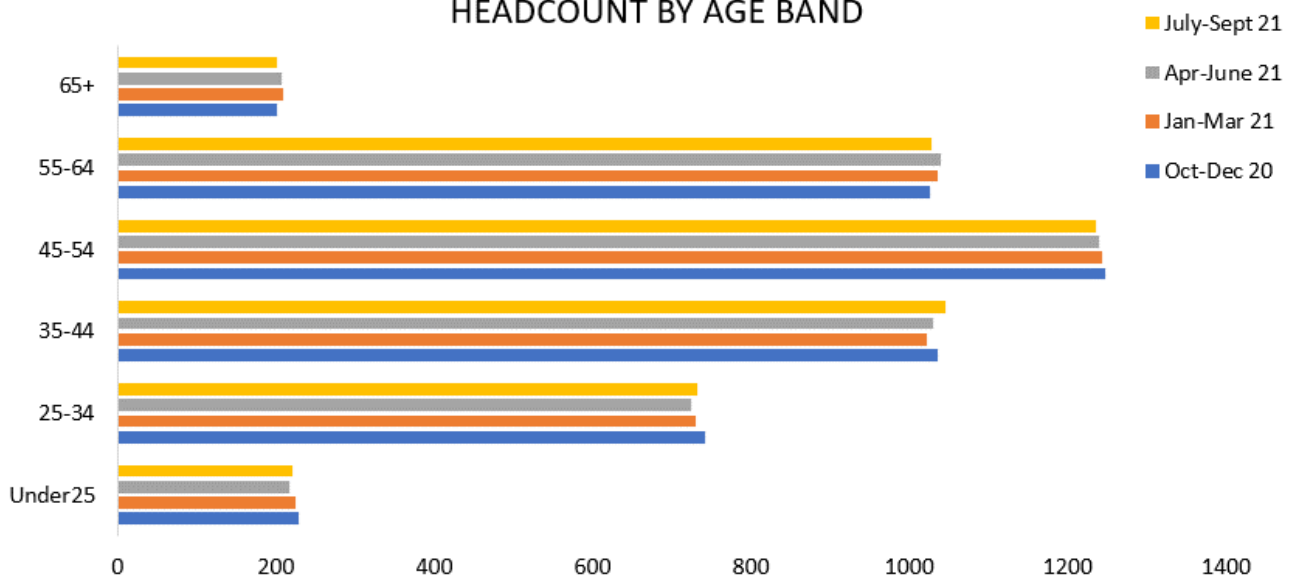


Current quarter	3.3%
Apr-June 21	3.1%
Jan-Mar 21	3.2%
Oct-Dec 20	3.1%

% OF STAFF ON EQUIVALENT COUNCIL GRADES



HEADCOUNT BY AGE BAND



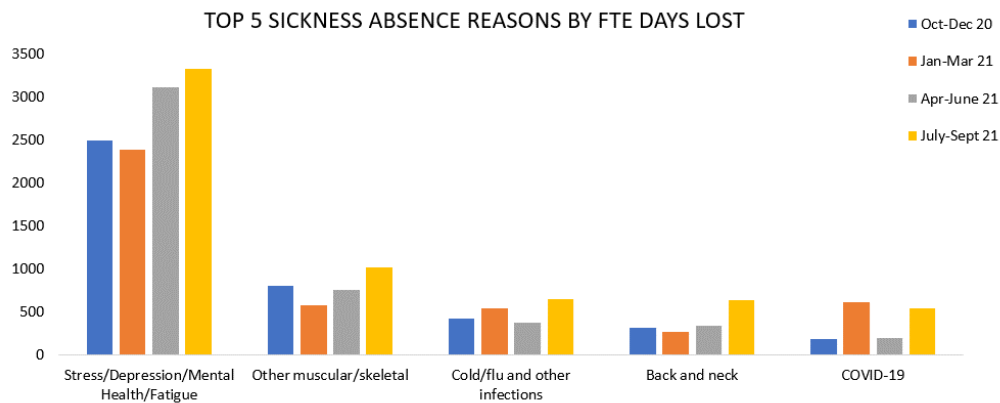
SICKNESS ABSENCE

Working days lost per FTE for directorate

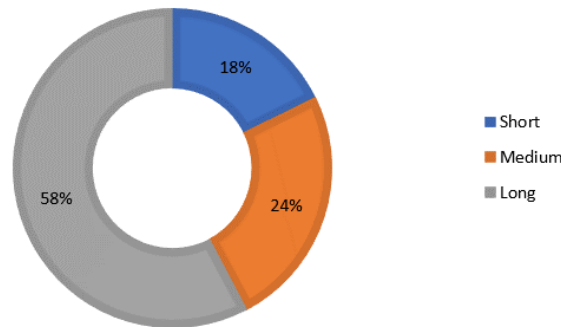
July-Sept 21

2.4

↑ an increase from last quarter (2.1)



SICKNESS ABSENCE BREAKDOWN JULY - SEPT 2021



Long term absence: 20 working days or more in the quarter
 Medium term absence: more than 5 days (less than 20)
 Short term absence: 5 days or less

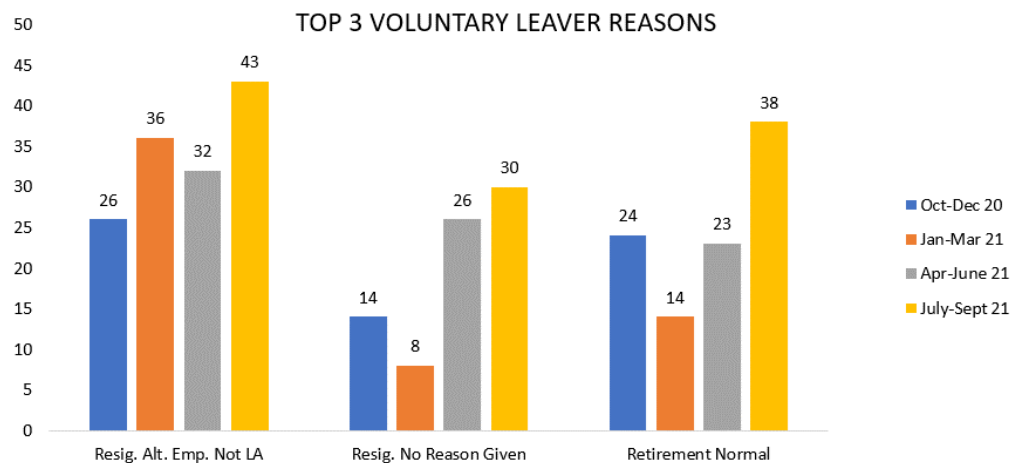
TURNOVER

Leavers under 25 years old

Current quarter	29
Apr-June 21	15
Jan-Mar 21	7
Oct-Dec 20	8

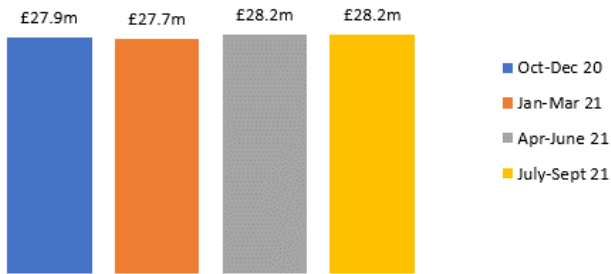
Leavers with less than 1 years' service

Current quarter	20
Apr-June 21	15
Jan-Mar 21	13
Oct-Dec 20	13

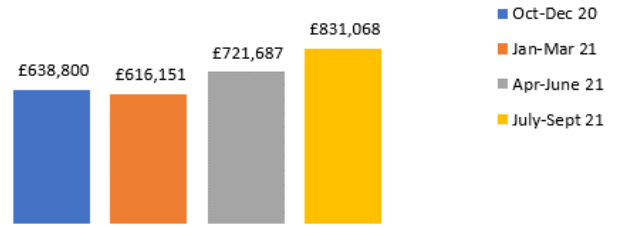


EMPLOYEE COSTS

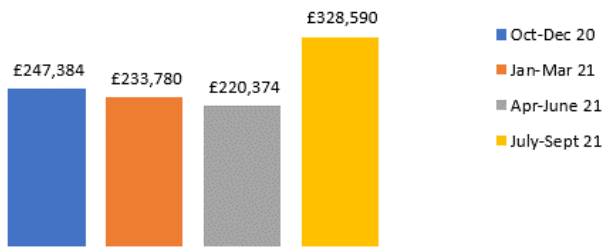
PERMANENT EMPLOYEE SALARY COSTS



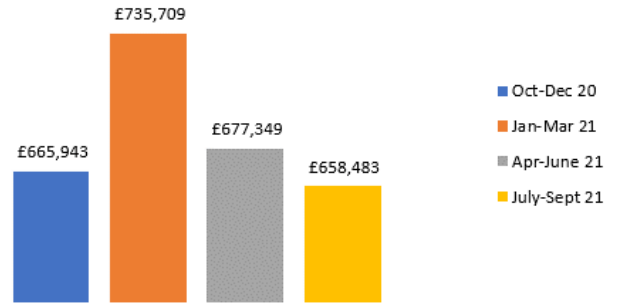
SICKNESS ABSENCE COSTS



CASUAL EMPLOYEE SALARY COSTS



AGENCY COSTS



ADVISORY CASES

Disciplinary

	New cases this quarter	Variance from previous quarter
Current Quarter	18	6
Apr-June 21	12	-6
Jan-Mar 21	18	7
Oct-Dec 20	11	1

Absence & Health

	New cases this quarter	Variance from previous quarter
Current Quarter	150	10
Apr-June 21	140	11
Jan-Mar 21	129	-24
Oct-Dec 20	153	21

Grievance

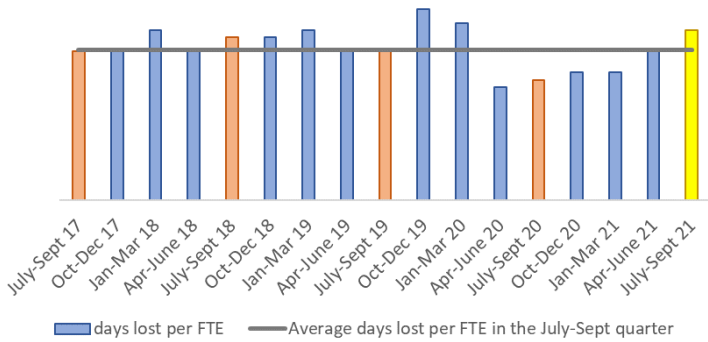
	New cases this quarter	Variance from previous quarter
Current Quarter	5	2
Apr-June 21	3	-5
Jan-Mar 21	8	4
Oct-Dec 20	4	-4

Improving Work Performance

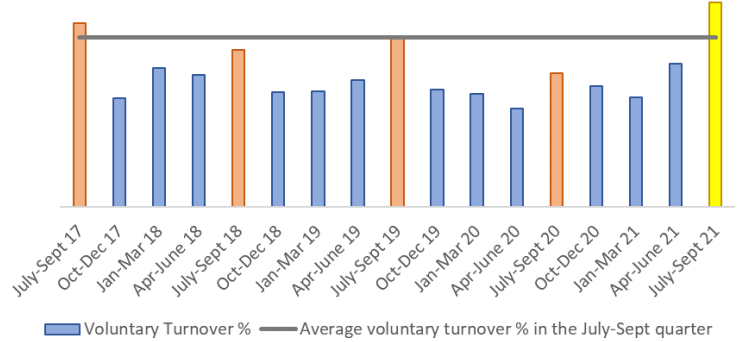
	New cases this quarter	Variance from previous quarter
Current Quarter	6	1
Apr-June 21	5	0
Jan-Mar 21	5	4
Oct-Dec 20	1	-3

LONG TERM TRENDS

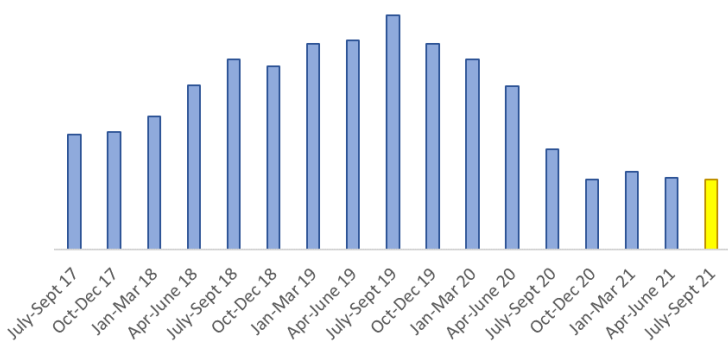
Days lost per FTE over the last 4 years



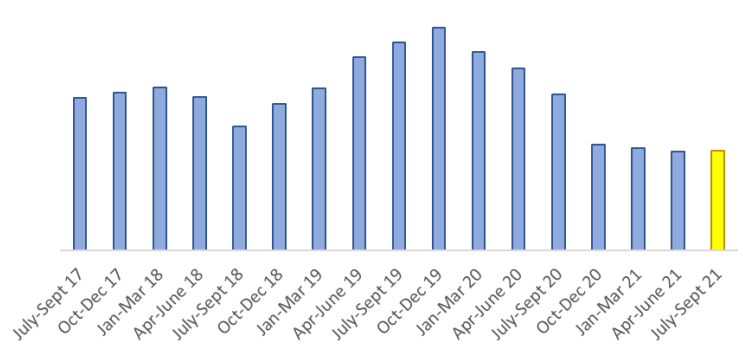
Voluntary Turnover % over the last 4 years



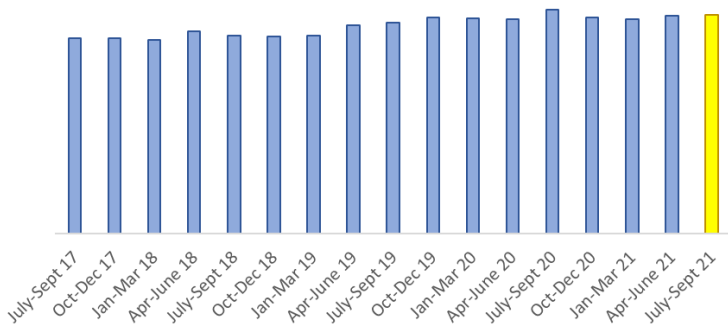
Agency spend over the last 4 years



Headcount change over the last 4 years



Permanent staffing cost change over the last 4 years



Disciplinary and Grievance cases per 1000 employees over last 4 years

