

Quarterly Workforce Report

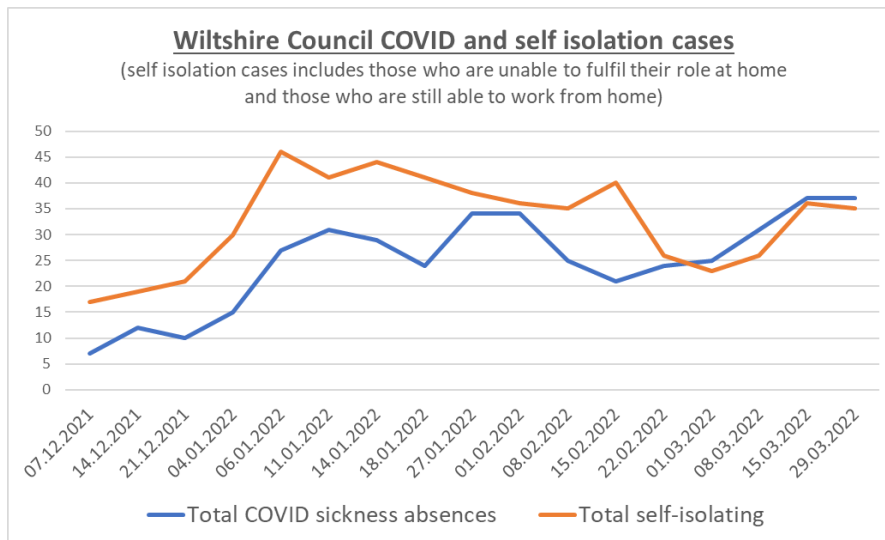
January – March 2022



Observations and Exceptions

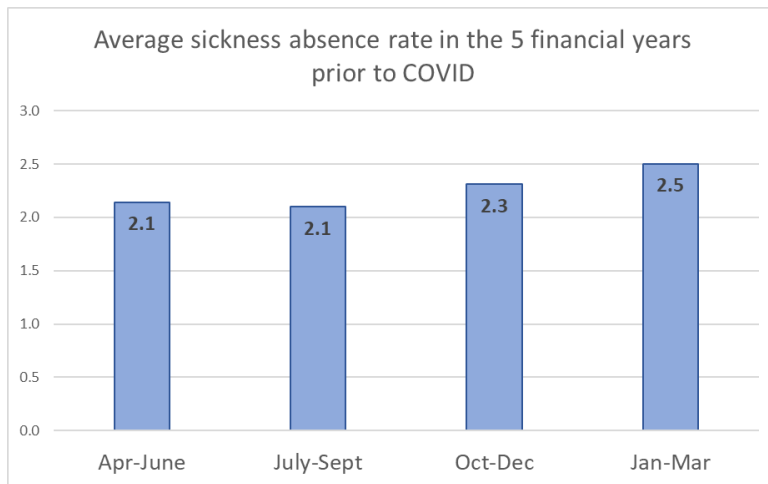
During this quarter the 'living with COVID-19' guidance was introduced, which detailed the government's plan for removing the remaining legal restrictions. Wiltshire Council buildings were also fully re-opened to all staff, however operating in line with our new ways of working. Utilising the new desk booking app integrated in Microsoft Teams, staff are able to book a desk in their allocated area with additional functionality to view which colleagues are in on the same day and on which desks, to enable interaction and collaboration and support wellbeing.

The impact of the Omicron variant was outlined in the previous October – December report with cases steadily increasing towards the end of the quarter; resulting in all adults being offered a booster jab to help mitigate the risks. The spread of Omicron, and this increasing trend, continued into the January – March 22 quarter, with cases peaking in early January and experiencing another increasing trend in March, as demonstrated by the graph below. This trend broadly followed the national trend during the same period.



SICKNESS ABSENCE

The January – March quarter has historically, prior to COVID, reported the highest sickness absence. This is due to the influence that the seasons have on sickness absence, consistently reporting higher absence in the colder months (the October – December and the January – March quarters), influenced by increased cold/flu absences, than in the warmer months. The graph below details the average sickness absence rate reported per quarter in the five financial years prior to COVID and demonstrates this seasonal trend.



However the January – March 2022 quarter experienced a significant reduction in absences attributed to cold/flu (-34%), which goes against this typical seasonal trend. It may be that with remote working now a considerable part of the new ways of working for most, the seasons may no longer influence sickness absence as significantly as they have in the past and this seasonal trend will no longer be something

to benchmark against. This will be something to monitor in the coming financial years to establish if there is no longer a seasonal trend to sickness absence due to new ways of working and therefore reduced transmissibility, or whether the seasonal trend has changed.

In addition to a significant reduction in cold/flu this quarter, stress related absence also experienced a significant reduction, reducing by around 620 absence days (-21%), the largest reduction in total days lost of any reason. Non-work related and work related stress both experienced significant reductions of 326 days and 115 days respectively. The biggest reductions in stress related absence were from both Adults and Children’s Social Care, Finance, ICT and Procurement & Commissioning. Almost half (43%) of the total reduction in stress related absence corporately was from Adult Social Care (in particular from the Wholelife Pathway directorate). Sickness absence has been a key area of focus at the Adult Social Care senior management team meetings (SMT’s), with particular areas of focus highlighted to management and, in response, an action plan to reduce sickness absence has been reintroduced. Despite this significant reduction in stress related absence corporately, it still remains the biggest contributor to sickness absence at the council, contributing 27% of all sickness absence days. Services should continue to reflect on how best to support their staff by using information from the September 2021 wellbeing survey to identify and target specific areas of concern and ensuring managers regularly check in on their staff. We will continue to monitor this and enable the HR Business Partners to engage in constructive discussion with services about mitigating action.

As mentioned earlier in this report, cases of the Omicron variant continued to increase during the January – March 22 quarter, in line with a national trend. This resulted in absences related to COVID-19 increasing by 87% during the quarter and contributing the second highest number of absence days corporately (21% of all absence days lost). However despite this, COVID-19 never affected more than 1.7% of the workforce at any one time in the quarter. During the same period, the ONS reported estimates of a high of 7.6% of the population testing positive for COVID-19 (an average of 5.3% during the period), meaning the council rates were significantly lower than national rates during the period and suggests the continued efforts to safeguard council staff have made an impact.

EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

We can see from the graphs and metrics below that employee turnover has increased this quarter, with: voluntary turnover, leavers under the age of 25 and leavers within a year of service all increasing. Almost 1 in 5 voluntary leavers (18%) this quarter were from Leisure, who also contributed the largest number of leavers under 25 (71% of all leavers under 25 were from Leisure) and leavers within a year of service (19%). The majority of leavers from Leisure left without giving a reason. Voluntary turnover

is typically higher in Leisure due to the nature of the work and the demographics of the workforce, and with the insourcing of 'Places Leisure' last quarter this will naturally influence and increase the rate.

The biggest increase in voluntary leavers compared to last quarter was predominantly in social care (both children's and adults). Families and Children's Services experienced the biggest increase from the October – December 21 quarter (+9 voluntary leavers). This increase was primarily from Support and Safeguarding South, Children in Care North and the Emerald Team, in some cases losing experienced social workers to other authorities or for work outside of local government. The Ageing and Living Well directorate had the second biggest increase in voluntary leavers (+8) compared to the previous quarter. This increase was primarily from the North and the South Locality Hospital Team's within the Ageing Well service, who also witnessed social workers leave for both another authority and for work outside of local government. A recent benchmarking exercise has highlighted that Wiltshire Council are a median payer for social workers, this is in line with our pay policy approach. This means that some local authorities are offering higher salaries to social workers and are therefore likely to attract more interest, however some are also offering lower salaries than Wiltshire Council. There are known recruitment and retention issues, particularly for experienced social workers, and this is a national challenge. The HR business partners are currently working with the services to explore possible recruitment and retention strategies.

FINANCE AND COSTS





Over this quarter, employee costs (both permanent and casual) have increased, despite a reduction in headcount. This is due to the national pay award of 1.75% (and 2.75% for those on spinal point 1 of grade B) across all NJC (grades B – O) and HAY grades and backdated to April 2021. The council are likely to experience a slight reduction in salary costs next quarter (April – June 22) as the costs in this quarter are inflated by the additional cost to backdate to April 2021. The pay award has also impacted casual costs. However casual costs are also driven by demand, which also appears to have influenced casual costs this quarter, particularly in Leisure. Casuals are used effectively in this service to cover lost capacity through things like sickness, self isolation, leavers and annual leave and has likely led to this slight increase.

Significantly, agency costs have reduced, predominantly due to making a senior role covered through agency in Finance, permanent.

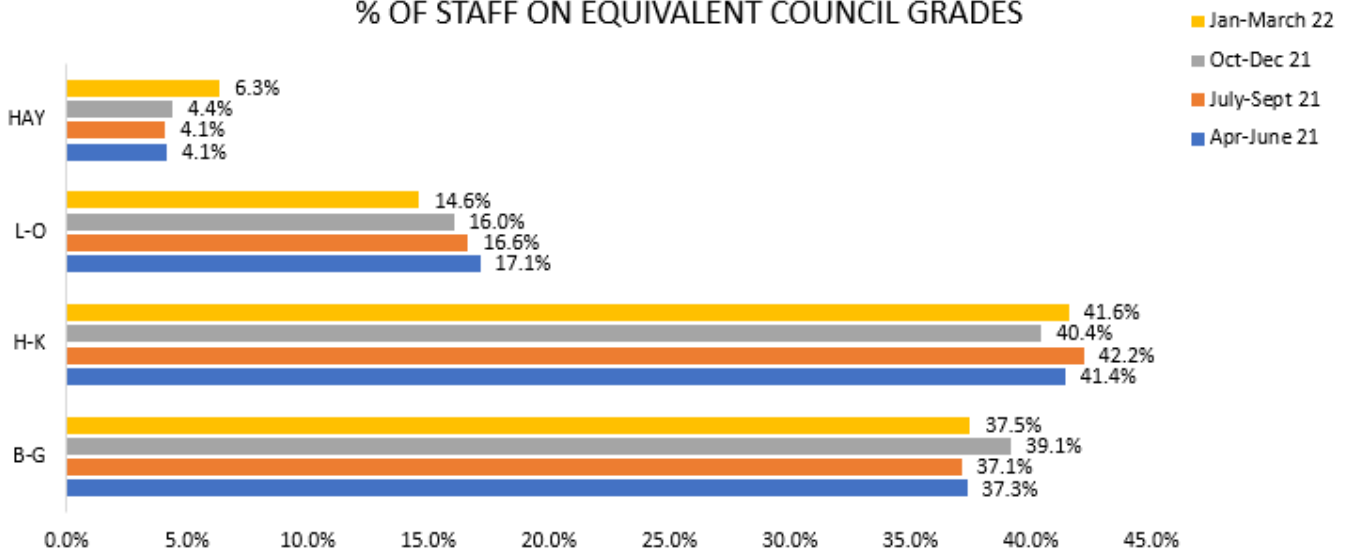
ADVISORY CASES

Disciplinary cases have increased corporately by 9 this quarter, predominantly due to 6 new cases in Families and Children's Services, this is split across the directorate and not from one discernible team. This will be something to monitor in the next quarter to ascertain whether there are any underlying trends or reasons.

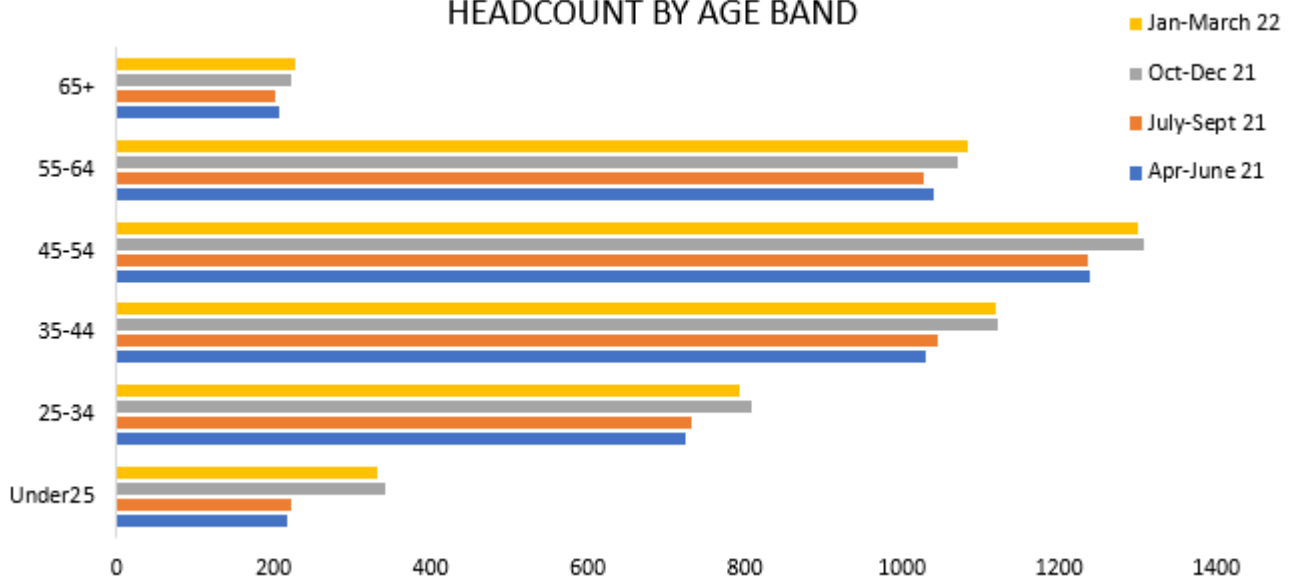
WORKFORCE DEMOGRAPHICS

 Headcount	Current quarter	4854	 FTE	Current quarter	3675.1	 Disability	Current quarter	8.8%	 Ethnicity (BME)	Current quarter	4.0%
	Oct-Dec 21	4869		Oct-Dec 21	3688.4		Oct-Dec 21	7.0%		Oct-Dec 21	3.2%
	July-Sept 21	4463		July-Sept 21	3495.2		July-Sept 21	7.9%		July-Sept 21	3.3%
	Apr-June 21	4461		Apr-June 21	3468.5		Apr-June 21	8.2%		Apr-June 21	3.1%

% OF STAFF ON EQUIVALENT COUNCIL GRADES



HEADCOUNT BY AGE BAND



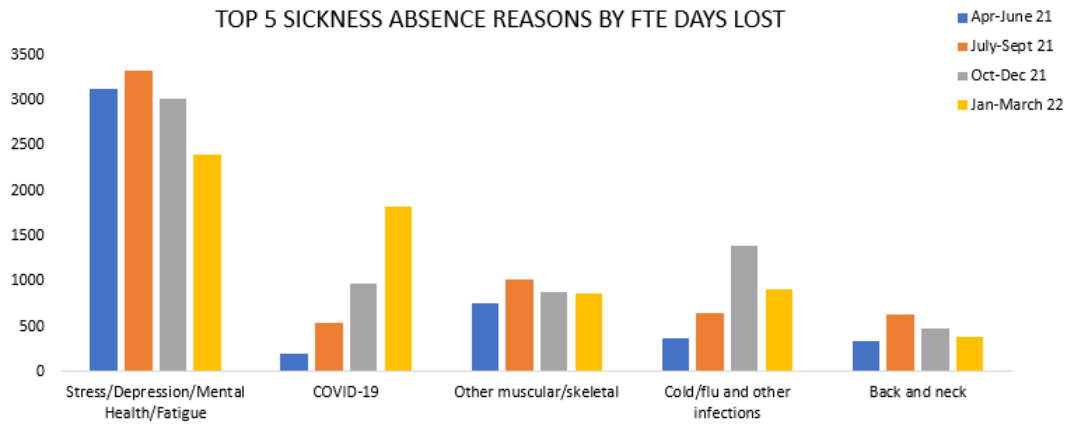
SICKNESS ABSENCE

Working days lost per FTE for directorate

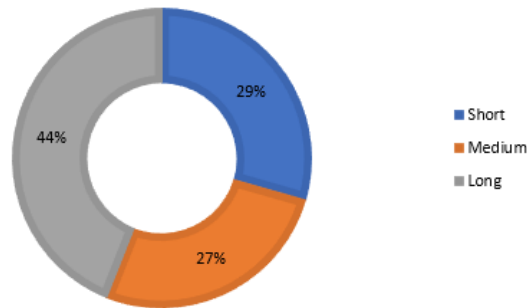
Jan-March 22

2.4

↓ an decrease from last quarter (2.6)



SICKNESS ABSENCE BREAKDOWN JAN - MARCH 2022



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

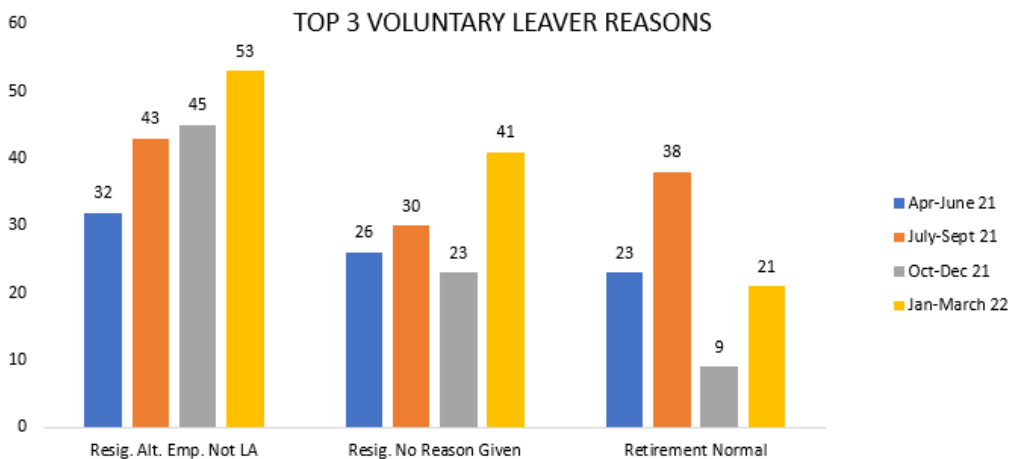
TURNOVER

Leavers under 25 years old

Quarter	Count
Current quarter	24
Oct-Dec 21	14
July-Sept 21	29
Apr-June 21	15

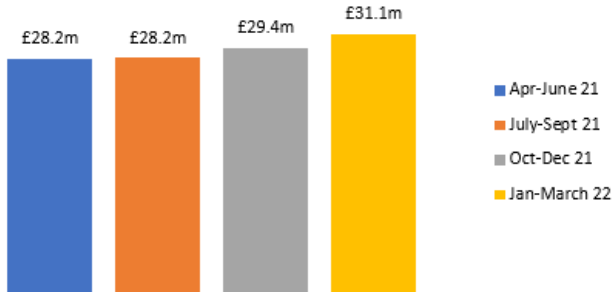
Leavers with less than 1 years' service

Quarter	Count
Current quarter	37
Oct-Dec 21	16
July-Sept 21	20
Apr-June 21	15

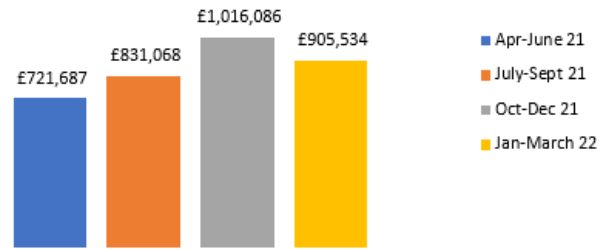


EMPLOYEE COSTS

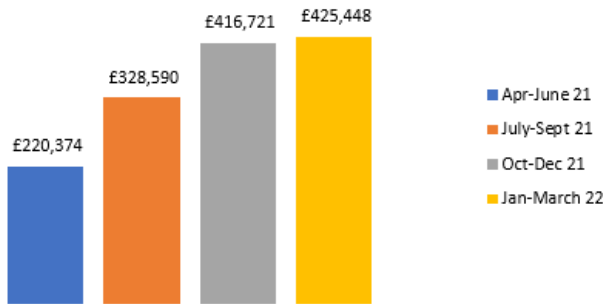
PERMANENT EMPLOYEE SALARY COSTS



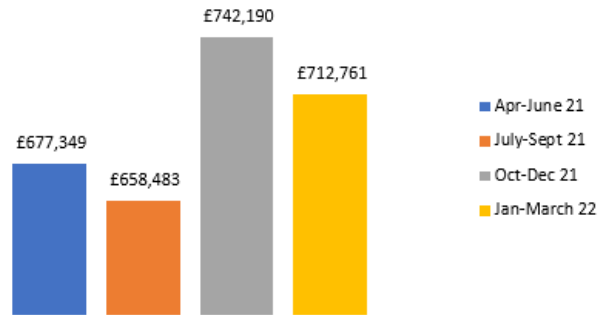
SICKNESS ABSENCE COSTS



CASUAL EMPLOYEE SALARY COSTS



AGENCY COSTS



ADVISORY CASES

Disciplinary

	New cases this quarter	Variance from previous quarter
Current quarter	22	9
Oct-Dec 21	13	-5
July-Sept 21	18	6
Apr-June 21	12	-6

Absence & Health

	New cases this quarter	Variance from previous quarter
Current quarter	163	5
Oct-Dec 21	158	8
July-Sept 21	150	10
Apr-June 21	140	11

Grievance

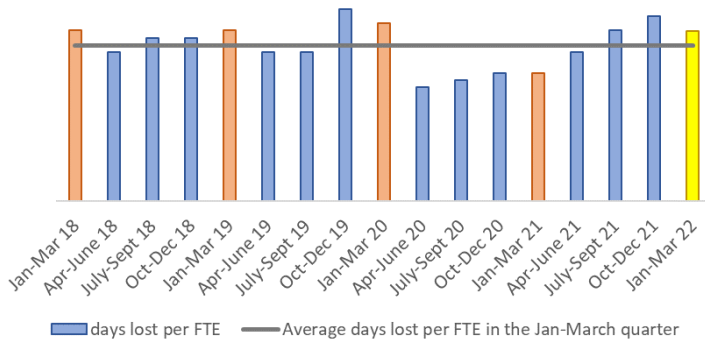
	New cases this quarter	Variance from previous quarter
Current quarter	3	-2
Oct-Dec 21	5	0
July-Sept 21	5	2
Apr-June 21	3	-5

Improving Work Performance

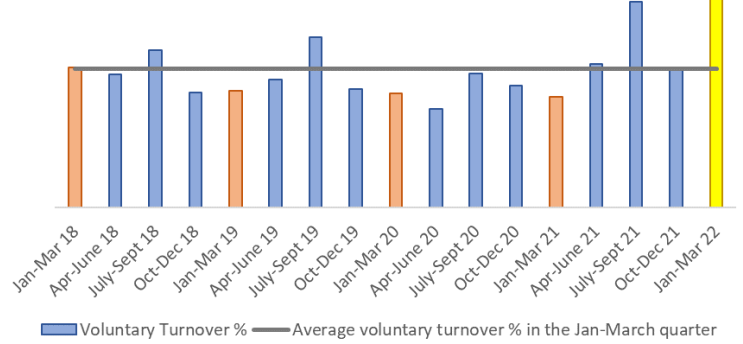
	New cases this quarter	Variance from previous quarter
Current quarter	5	1
Oct-Dec 21	4	-2
July-Sept 21	6	1
Apr-June 21	5	0

LONG TERM TRENDS

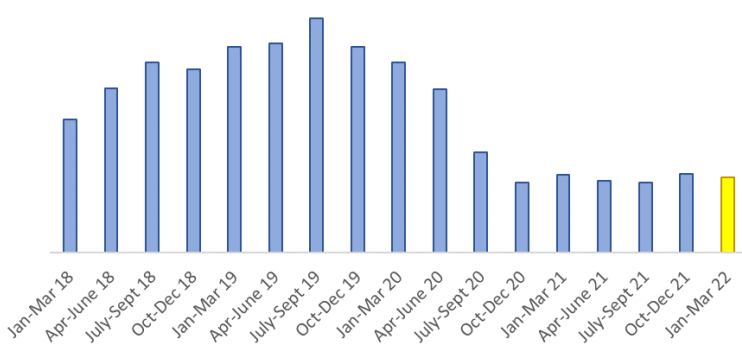
Days lost per FTE over the last 4 years



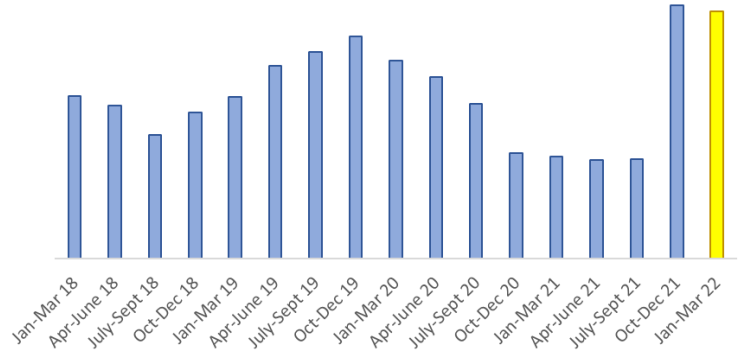
Voluntary Turnover % over the last 4 years



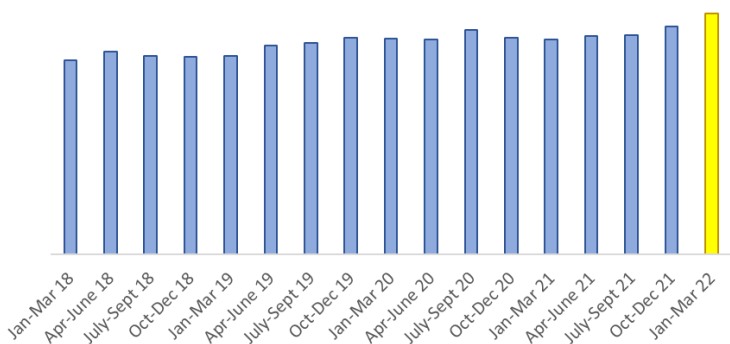
Agency spend over the last 4 years



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

