

Carlisle City Council

Report to People Panel

Report details

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|-----------------------------|---|
| Meeting Date: | 24 th November 2022 |
| Portfolio: | Finance, Governance and Resources |
| Key Decision: | No |
| Policy and Budget Framework | Yes |
| Public / Private | Public |
| Title: | SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORT QUARTER 2 2022/23 |
| Report of: | The Deputy Chief Executive |
| Report Number: | CS 35/22 |

Purpose / Summary:

This report sets out the authority's sickness absence levels for the period 1st April 2022 to 30th September 2022 and outlines other sickness absence information.

Recommendations:

Scrutinise and comment on the information on sickness absence provided in the report.

Tracking

| | |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Executive: | Not applicable |
| Scrutiny: BTSP | 24 th November 2022 |
| Council: | Not applicable |

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The new Improving Attendance Policy has now been in place for a year. The policy is intended to support managers and employees with improving attendance at work. It was anticipated that the benefits of the revised policy would start to be realised during this financial year.

1.2 Current sickness statistics are shown below, with the number of days lost per FTE equating to 4.9 in the first half of 2022/23 (same period of 2021/22 was 5.9).

2. 2022/23 SICKNESS ABSENCE

2.1 The tables below show the 4.9 days lost per FTE split between long and short-term sickness (long term sickness is defined as any absence more than 4 consecutive working weeks):

| 2022/23 | Days Lost | Days Lost per FTE |
|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Long-term | 1,437 (72%) | 3.5 (72%) |
| Short-term | 551 (28%) | 1.4 (28%) |
| Total | 1,988 | 4.9 |

2.2 The table below provides absence levels split by directorates for the first half of 2022/23.

| Directorate | Days lost | Days Lost per FTE | Proportion Long-term |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-------------------|----------------------|
| All Directorates | 1,988 | 4.9 | 72% |
| Community Services | 1,302 | 7.7 | 78% |
| Corporate Support | 68 | 2.2 | 0% |
| Economic Development | 24 | 0.6 | 0% |
| Finance & Resources | 170 | 2.7 | 68% |
| Governance & Regulatory Services | 424 | 3.7 | 72% |

2.3 So far in 2022/23, there has been a 17% decrease in overall days lost per employee when compared to the same period in the previous year. 39 employees have been absent long-term (those cases where the absence is 4 working weeks or more) throughout the year - five less than the same period of the previous year. 12 long-term cases remained open as of 20th October 2022 (same as at the end of Quarter 1). There are ten different reasons for the absences included in those 39 cases.

3. TRENDS

3.1 There continues to be a clear correlation between long term sickness absence and the overall performance of the council in relation to absence. Overall performance improvement in this area is likely to be achieved through proactive management of long-term sickness absence through regular supportive discussion and early engagement with our occupational health provider, as set out in the new Improving Attendance Policy.

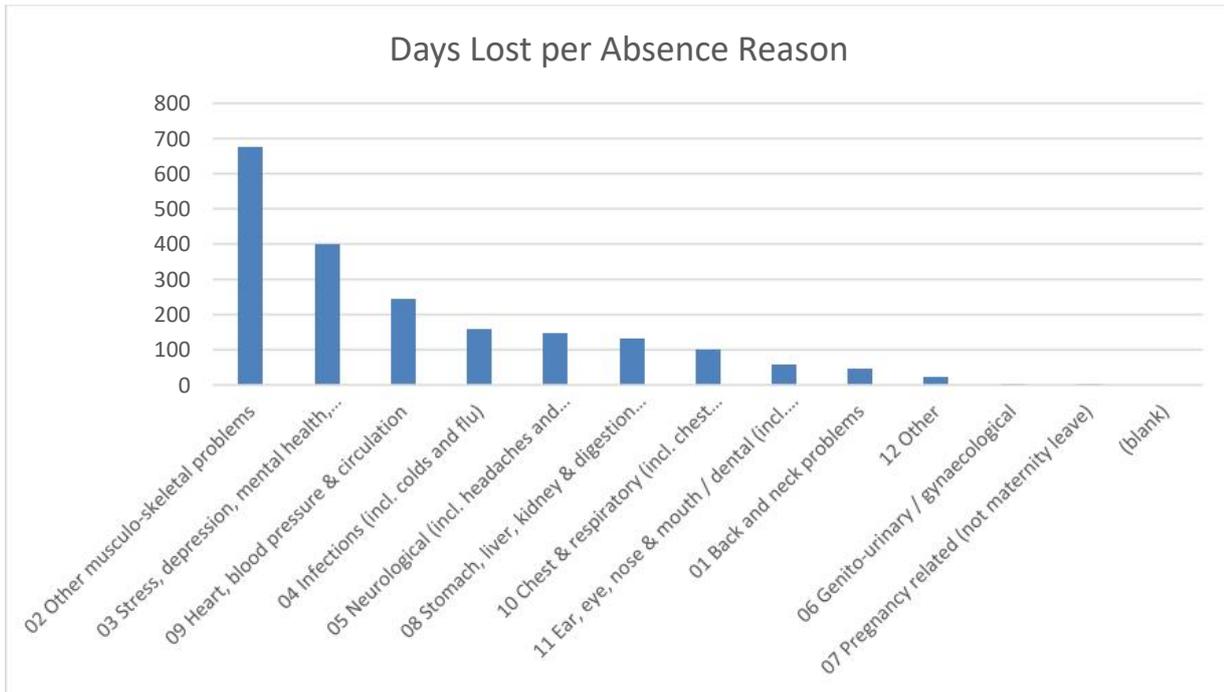
3.2 Over the course of the last quarter the HR Advisers have again been working closely with managers to oversee absences and the number of employees absent continues to steadily decline. This has resulted in a decrease in number of days lost compared to last year's Quarter 2.

3.3 Based on current trends it is anticipated that the Council will continue to see a definite and clear improvement in the absence rates for this financial year.

4. SICKNESS ABSENCE REASONS

4.1 The reasons for sickness absence in 2022/23 are shown in the chart below. The chart shows the hours lost by category of sickness absence. In the quarter, 'Other musculo-skeletal problems' represents the absence reason with the greatest days lost (674 FTE days). The level of absence categorised as stress, depression and mental health continues to reduce.

When absence is identified as being work related muscular skeletal this is picked up through an incident reporting process and referrals to Occupational Health. In these instances, and in non-work-related injuries, managers can still refer staff to a council supported physio to gain early access to advice and treatment.



5. RETURN TO WORK INTERVIEWS (RTW)

5.1 Carrying out a return to work interview continues to be one of the most effective ways to manage attendance and reduce absence.

5.2 Up to the end of September 2022, 88% of return to work interviews have been conducted (2021/22: 97%). The number of working days between the employees returning to work and interviews being conducted and the proportion completed within five working days has also been included in the table below:

| Directorate | Proportion of RTWs conducted | Average time taken to complete RTW (working days) | Proportion of RTWs completed within 5 working days |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|---|--|
| Community Services | 80% | 11.4 | 58% |
| Corporate Support | 96% | 11.6 | 43% |
| Economic Development | 100% | 6.8 | 63% |
| Finance & Resources | 93% | 4.9 | 72% |
| Governance & Regulatory Services | 96% | 4.3 | 83% |
| All Directorates | 88% | 8.4 | 65% |

6. PROPOSALS

None

7. RISKS

None

8. CONSULTATION

The report was reviewed by the Senior Management Team in November 2022.

9. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel are asked to scrutinise and comment on the sickness absence information with a view to driving continuous improvement.

10. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES

Monitoring sickness absence to help ensure the staff resources available to deliver the Carlisle Plan are maximised.

Contact Officers: Gary Oliver, Bibian McRoy

**Appendices
attached to report:**

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government Act 1972 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- None

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL - This report raises no explicit legal issues.

FINANCE – This report raises no explicit financial issues

EQUALITY – This report raises no explicit equality issues

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE – This report raises no explicit issues relating to Information Governance.

PROPERTY SERVICES - This report raises no explicit issues relating to Property Services