

**REPORT TO PEOPLE SELECT
COMMITTEE**

22 MAY 2017

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF HR, LEGAL &
COMMUNICATIONS**

ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT 2016/17

SUMMARY

This report provides detailed information on the Council's Attendance Management data, policies and procedures, employee support and engagement. A presentation referencing the details of this report will also be made to members at the second meeting of the scrutiny review of sickness absence on 22 May 2017.

The Attendance Management and Leave Policies have previously been circulated. Additional leaflets and hand outs for example on employee support, and a copy of the presentation will be made available at the meeting.

ABSENCE MANAGEMENT DATA 2016/17

1. The Council's sickness absence level for 2016/17 is 8.8 days per FTE based on 21,977 working days lost. This equates to approximately 100 full time employees having a year off work.
2. A comparison of the corporate 2016/17 sickness absence information against 2015/16, 2014/15 and 2013/14 is detailed below:

	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14
Average FTE	2,504.8	2,567.6	2,588	2,647
Days Lost	21,977.6	21,319.2	20,255.5	22,157.7
Occurrences	2,706	2,574	2,641	2,520
Annual Corporate Target Days Lost Per FTE	7.6	7.6	7.8	7.3
Annual Actual Days Lost Per FTE	8.8	8.3	7.8	8.4

Sickness absence has increased in the last two years.

3. Indicative figures have been provided by the Tees-Valley Local Authorities (subject to confirmation) which are outlined below:

Local Authority	Days lost per FTE
Stockton on Tees Borough Council	8.8
Middlesbrough Council	9.25
Darlington Borough Council	9.7
Hartlepool Borough Council	10.6
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council	*7.4

** Redcar & Cleveland remove all pregnancy related sickness absence, absence for bereavement leave under 20 working days and anyone on a temporary/fixed term contract with under 1 year service..*

A national survey carried out by the CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel Development) in 2016 reported the average number of days lost to sickness absence per employee by sector was as follows:

Sector	Days Lost
Manufacturing & Production	5.9
Private Sector Services	5.4
Public Sector	9.8
<i>Local Government</i>	10.5
Non-profit sector	7.8
TOTAL	7.5

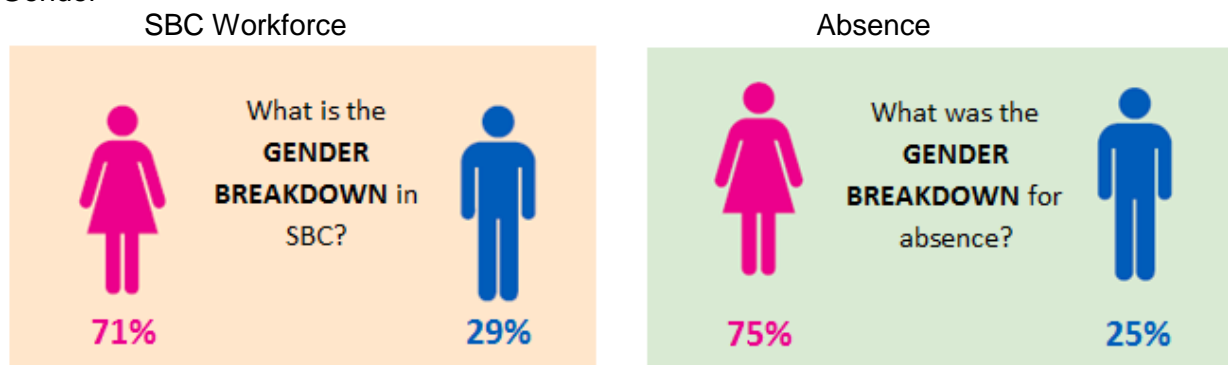
In addition, a recent Workforce Survey 2015/16 report published by the LGA reported that on average across Single Tier Councils 9.4 days were lost per FTE due to sickness absence. In 2014/15 the average reported across Single Tier Councils was 9.0 days per FTE. This suggests that sickness absence is increasing within Local Government as a whole.

4. Workforce Profile Info v's Absence Information

As at 31 March 2017 the Council employed 3,183 employees. 1,699 employees have had at least one occasion of sickness absence within 2016/17, which equates to approximately 52% of the workforce.

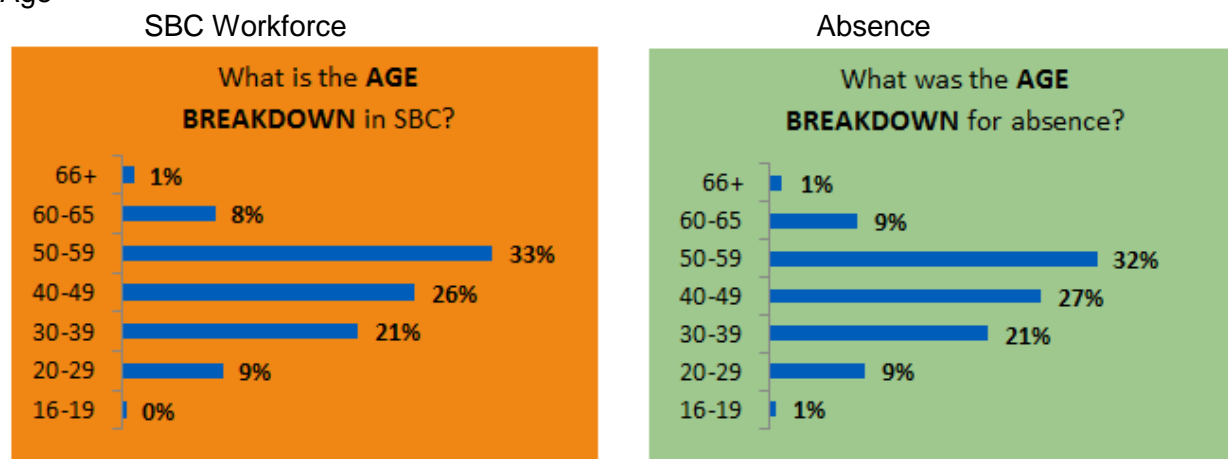
We have compared sickness absence against our workforce profile to see if there are any significant differences that need to be considered when managing sickness absence

Gender



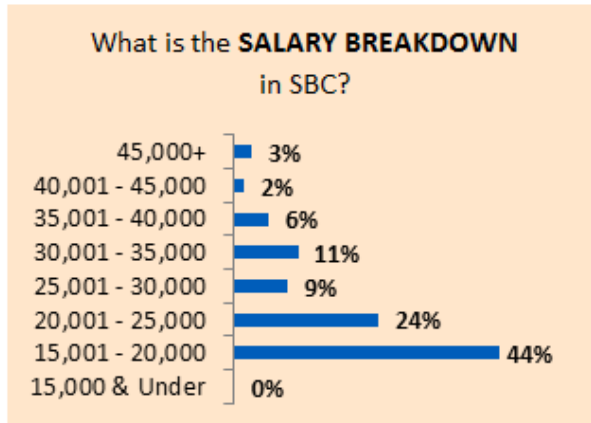
The Gender split of our workforce is 71% Female 29% Male. Sickness absence information shows however that absence is slightly higher among female workers than males when compared to our workforce profile.

Age

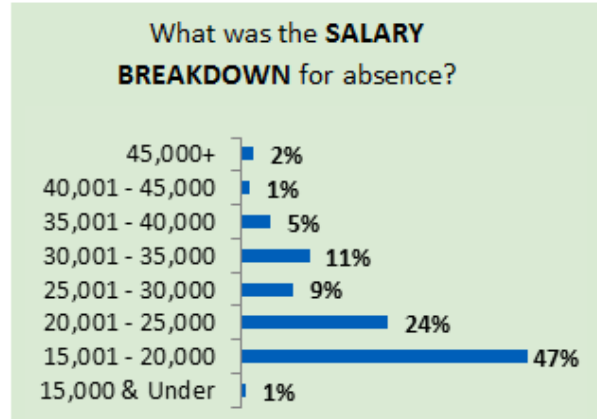


The Age profile of our workforce is consistent with sickness absence amongst the same age groups.

Grade / Salary Range
SBC Workforce

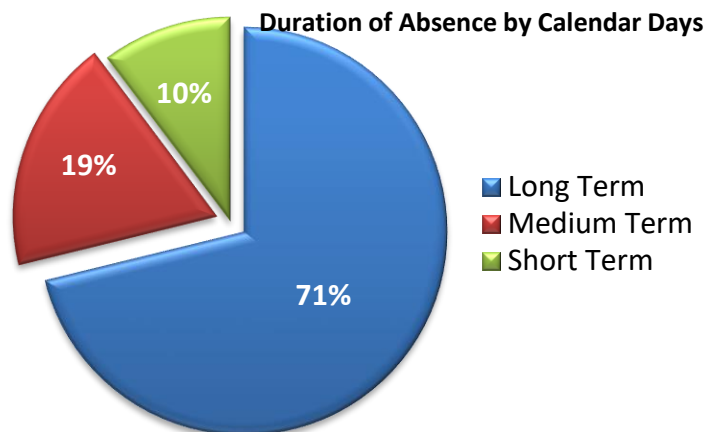


Absence

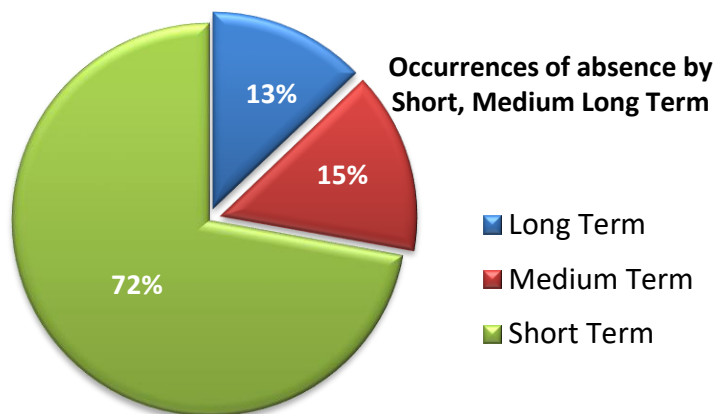


Again the percentage of employees who are absent from work is fairly consistent with the workforce profile by grade within the Council.

- Of the 21,977 working days of absence, 71% were connected to occurrences of absence where the duration was Long Term – 29 calendar days or more. 19% were linked to Medium term absence, occurrences where the duration of absence was between 8-28 calendar days. 10% were linked to Short term absence, occurrences where the duration of absence was up to 7 calendar days.



- The majority of 2,706 occurrences were of short term duration (0-7 calendar days) – 72%.



7. When considering the Long Term absence, there were 348 occurrences within 2016/17, some of which were still ongoing as at 31 March 2017. The average number of working days lost due to Long Term absence was 42 working days.

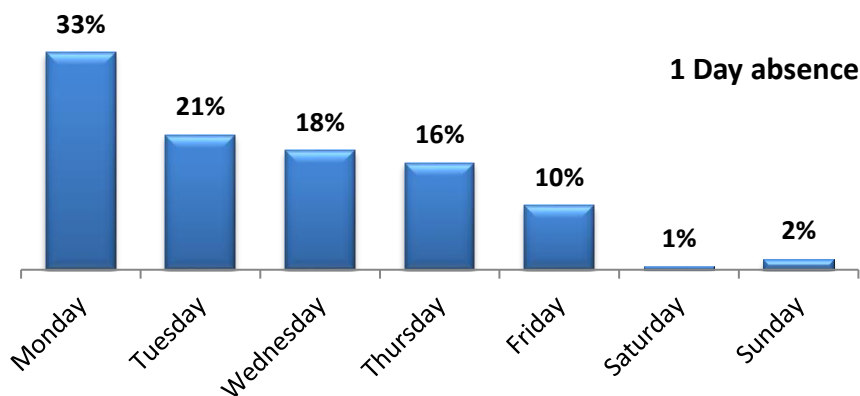
The reasons for Long Term absence were as follows:

Occurrences	Reason
126	Stress/Depression/Mental Health
101	Back/Neck/Muscular Skeletal
34	Operations/Hospital Treatment
30	Infections/Stomach/Chest
20	Heart/Bloodpressure/Circulatio
16	Neurological
9	Genito-urinary/Gynaecological
5	Eye/Ear/Nose/Mouth/Dental
5	Pregnancy Related
2	Sickness Other

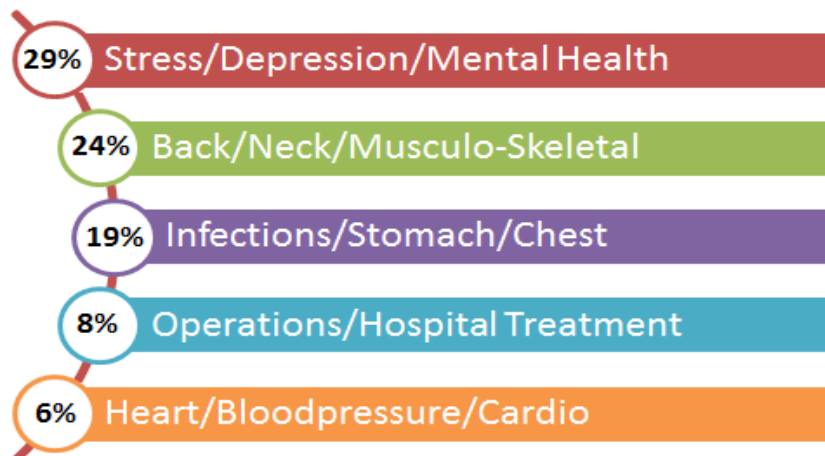
85 Employees were absent on long term sickness and went into half pay during 2016/17. 22 of these employees returned within a week of going into half pay.

8. When considering the Short Term absences, there were 1,953 occurrences (72%). The average days lost per occurrence due to short term absence was 2 working days.

The majority of short term absence where the employee is only absent for 1 day occurs on a Monday (33%).



9. Reasons for Sickness Absence



Mental Wellbeing

Absence due to “stress/depression/mental health/fatigue” continues to be the highest reason for absence across the Council, with a total of 6,311 days lost over 273 occurrences (some still ongoing as at 31 March 2017). This still accounts for approximately 29% of sickness absence.

We have carried out further analysis of these absences:

	Occurrences	Total Days Lost per FTE	Average Days per Occurrence
Work Related Stress	29	1199.1	41.3
Long Term	17	1107.5	65.1
Medium Term	9	81.0	9.0
Short Term	3	10.6	3.5
Anxiety	44	1104.4	25.1
Long Term	24	949.3	39.6
Medium Term	12	139.5	11.6
Short Term	8	15.7	2.0
Depression	47	1098.4	23.4
Long Term	24	929.3	38.7
Medium Term	12	134.5	11.2
Short Term	11	34.6	3.1
Stress - Other	30	706.8	23.6
Long Term	16	588.8	36.8
Medium Term	11	111.1	10.1
Short Term	3	6.9	2.3
Bereavement	48	683.6	14.2
Long Term	16	472.7	29.5
Medium Term	21	172.9	8.2
Short Term	11	38.1	3.5
Personal Stress	23	557.7	24.2
Long Term	10	455.6	45.6
Medium Term	6	83.8	14.0
Short Term	7	18.2	2.6
Family Illness	25	521.5	20.9
Long Term	13	457.6	35.2
Medium Term	5	44.7	8.9
Short Term	7	19.3	2.8
Sickness Related	12	222.7	18.6
Long Term	5	150.6	30.1
Medium Term	5	69.6	13.9
Short Term	2	2.5	1.3
Mental Health	6	199.5	33.2
Long Term	4	185.5	46.4
Medium Term	1	11.0	11.0
Short Term	1	3.0	3.0
Fatigue	9	18.3	2.0
Short Term	9	18.3	2.0

When looking at individual occurrences due to bereavement or family illness, it is evident that further work is required with managers and employees around the flexibility available within the new Leave Policy, as an alternative to sickness absence (see Employee Support below).

Physical Wellbeing

Back/Neck/Musculo-Skeletal remains the second highest reason for sickness absence with a total of 5,327 days lost over 397 occurrences, which accounts for approximately 24% of sickness absence.

Consideration has been given to the duration of sickness due to Back/Neck/Musculo-Skeletal absence within each directorate, as shown in the table below:

	Occurrences	Days Lost by FTE	Average
Administration, Democratic & Electoral Services	9	78.0	8.7
Long Term	1	37.0	37.0
Medium Term	2	24.0	12.0
Short Term	6	17.0	2.8
Adults & Health	86	1,572.5	18.3
Long Term	24	1,205.4	50.2
Medium Term	23	268.6	11.7
Short Term	39	98.5	2.5
Children's Services	56	577.2	10.3
Long Term	13	370.5	28.5
Medium Term	11	131.2	11.9
Short Term	32	75.5	2.4
Community Services	151	1,823.9	12.1
Long Term	36	1,362.1	37.8
Medium Term	38	315.7	8.3
Short Term	77	146.1	1.9
Culture, Leisure & Events	39	567.6	14.6
Long Term	10	441.5	44.1
Medium Term	10	85.9	8.6
Short Term	19	40.2	2.1
Economic Growth & Development	16	211.7	13.2
Long Term	6	170.9	28.5
Medium Term	3	30.0	10.0
Short Term	7	10.7	1.5
Finance & Business Services	12	190.4	15.9
Long Term	5	167.1	33.4
Medium Term	2	14.7	7.3
Short Term	5	8.7	1.7
HR, Legal & Communications	3	11.5	3.8
Medium Term	1	8.5	8.5
Short Term	2	3.0	1.5
Xentrall Shared Services	25	294.2	11.8
Long Term	6	185.3	30.9
Medium Term	9	81.4	9.0
Short Term	10	27.6	2.8
Grand Total	397	5,327.0	13.4

Unsurprisingly the information shows that the number of occurrences due to physical wellbeing is highest in service areas where the workforce is predominately manual – Community Services and Adult Services. This may be due to a lack of alternative duties available to support attendance at work, lack of flexibility around working hours due to rota's and cover requirements, or the physical demands of the roles.

The LGA report also highlights that the highest reason for sickness absence within Local Government is due to mental wellbeing (Stress/Depression/Anxiety), with physical wellbeing

(muscular skeletal illness) the second highest reason for sickness absence. The Tees-Valley authorities also report the same trend.

ABSENCE BY SERVICE AREA

10. An overview of sickness absence by service area is outlined below, along with the number and percentage of employees who have had at least one occasion of sickness absence within 2016/17:

Service Area Name	Average FTE	Occurrences	Days Lost	Days Lost Per FTE	No of Staff Absent	% Staff Absence
Administration, Democratic & Electoral Services	64.7	51	507.3	7.8	38	51%
Adults & Health	445.6	659	6,303.9	14.1	352	65%
- <i>Adults Service</i>	393.3	601	5,375.7	13.7	319	65%
- <i>Public Health</i>	48.4	53	907.2	18.7	32	60%
Children's Services	526.9	465	4,577.8	8.7	311	49%
- <i>Safeguarding & Looked After Children</i>	200.6	181	1,986.6	9.9	118	51%
- <i>Early Help, Partnership & Planning</i>	212.0	193	1,911.2	9.0	133	50%
- <i>Schools & SEN</i>	105.2	85	667.6	6.3	56	44%
Community Services	600.9	699	5,015.7	8.3	467	48%
Culture, Leisure & Events	203.0	232	1,743.6	8.6	133	52%
Economic Growth & Development	213.1	204	1,117.9	5.2	131	51%
Finance & Business Services		198	1,325.5	6.0	139	55%
HR, Legal & Communications	68.6	39	388.8	5.7	28	36%
Transformation Team	14.7	9	107.7	7.3	6	38%
Xentrall Shared Services	147.7	150	889.4	6.0	94	59%
TOTAL	2,504.8	2,706	21,977.6	8.8	1,699	52%

Adults and Health continues to experience a high level of sickness absence at 14.1 days lost per FTE, and overall the sickness within this area accounts for 28.5% of days lost due to sickness absence within the Council. In addition sickness absence within Children's Services (8.7 days per FTE), Culture Leisure & Events (8.6 days per FTE) and Community Services (8.3 days per FTE) all remain above the corporate target level and are a cause for concern. Further work will be undertaken to establish whether any additional support can be offered to help reduce sickness absence, including looking at employee wellbeing services, the alternatives available within the Council's Leave Policy and through Smarter Working.

ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTING & PROCEDURES

11. The Council's Attendance Management Policy outlines the procedures employee's follow when reporting their sickness absence, and the procedures to be followed by a manager.

- Day 1 - Employee Telephones Line Manager.
Agrees frequency of contact during absence.
Manager enters sickness absence into HROnline
- Day 8 – Fit note required from GP outlining reasons and duration of sickness absence
- Day 28 (4 weeks/1month) - Manager organises Attendance Review Meeting with Employee. Discuss reason for absence, appropriate support available, ability to return to work
- 3 months – HR contacts Manager to see if support required (if manager not requested support beforehand).

12. Employee Sick Pay is paid in accordance with the national scheme as detailed in our contracts of employment for the following periods of an employee's full and half pay

Length of Service	Full Pay	Half Pay
During 1 st Year	1 month (after 4 months service)	2 months
During 2 nd Year	2 months	2 months
During 3 rd Year	4 months	4 months
During 4 th & 5 th year	5 months	5 month
Over 5 years	6 months	6 months

13. When there are concerns regarding an employee's overall attendance record or when an employee is absent from work Long term (over 4 weeks), Attendance review meetings should be arranged by the manager. The Council's triggers for attendance management are as follows:

- Two absences of any duration within a 3 month period
- Seven working days in a rolling year
- Long term absence of 4 weeks or more
- Absence that cause concern.

14. Directors and Assistant Directors receive their own 2016/17 Sickness Absence Overview report for their Service areas to assist in managing sickness absence against the above triggers. See Appendix 1 for an example based on the corporate information. They are also be provided with:

- A list of all Employees who have had sickness absence between 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017, or who were still absent as at 31 March 2017.
- A colour coded sickness absence report between 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017 showing employees with attendance levels that may be a cause for concern where absence levels have reached or exceeded the corporate triggers.

15. During 2016/17 (1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017), the following outcomes have occurred for Attendance Management cases which HR have actively been involved in.

Action	No of Employee's
Dismissal with Notice	22
Settlement to End Employment	2
Resignation	11
Final Written Warning	1
First Written Warning	13
Management Guidance	2
Redeployment	1
Return to work with Support / Monitoring	189

It should be noted that HR are only actively involved in a relatively small proportion of sickness absence cases as management of sickness is devolved to each service area. HR contact managers when an employee has been absent from work for 3 months or more to see if HR support is required (if support not already being provided).

16. Attendance Management briefing sessions have taken place within the following Services during 2016/17:

- Learning & Skills
- Customer Services
- Schools & SEN
- Economic Growth & Development
- Revenues & Benefits
- Reablement Services

HR are able to provide these sessions to individual teams as requested. Consideration will be given to further training around Attendance Management following the scrutiny review and changes to the Attendance Management Policy.

EMPLOYEE SUPPORT

17. The Employee Wellbeing & Retention work stream of the Council's Shaping a Brighter Future Programme has reviewed the Council's employee support and made contributions and recommendations in respect of:

- The 2016 procurement of Counselling Services & Physiotherapy Services,
- The introduction the Mindfulness Programme
- Improved communication of Employee Benefits

18. The Employee Health & Wellbeing Action Plan 2016/2017 (Appendix 2) has been drawn up to address the main areas of concern, to reduce sickness absence and to improve the overall Health & Wellbeing of employees.

The plan will also form the basis of the Council's submission to the Better Health at Work Continuing Excellence Award (see para 23)

19. **Occupational Health** – With effect from 1 April 2015, the Council's Occupational Health Service has been provided by an in-house Occupational Health Advisor, Michelle King, with support from an external Occupational Health Physician Dr L Fawcett from BHSF Occupational Health Ltd. By moving to an in-house Occupational Health Service which understands the pressures and priorities of the Council, its services and employees, we hope to proactively address health issues within the workforce, improve attendance at work and build capacity and resilience.

The Occupational Health Team provides support and advice on the health and wellbeing of employees through, pre-employment medicals, medical referrals and health surveillance in the workplace.

20. **Insight – Counselling Service** - The new Insight Wellbeing at Work Programme began on 1 April 2016. It provides the following services to Employees:

- Access to Insight's Wellbeing Portal
- 24 hour telephone counselling helpline
- Courses of sessional telephone or Face to Face counselling (up to 6 sessions)
- Legal and Financial advice (excluding advice on employment law)
- Management advisory service.

The table below provides a summary of programme activity for cases during 2016/17:

Total Number accessing the programme	117
Attendance Status at point of initial contact	
At Work	90
Absent from work	27

Analysis of Support Provided	
Ad-hoc Counselling Support from Helpline	24
Legal / Financial Advice	3
Management Advisory Service	1
Support Call Referral	2
Telephone Counsellor Referral	21
Face to Face Counsellor Referral	57
Email Enquiry	9
Primary Presenting Issues	
Personal Issues	88
Work Related Issues	19
Legal and Financial Issues	3
Requesting information about service	7

Although stress/depression/mental health/fatigue is one of the highest reasons for sickness absence, the majority of employees accessing Insight Services are at work and not absent.

Trigger related emails are sent to a manager when they submit a Day 1 notification form for absence related to stress/depression/mental health/fatigue. This email encourages the manager to notify their absent employee of the services provided by Insight and also provides an example letter to send out to the employee (if appropriate). It is proposed that further follow-up of this prompt is undertaken.

3.7% of Council employees accessed the Insight Counselling Service in 2016/17. This is a higher percentage than predicted by Insight who based their pricing on a predicted 2.4%. Insight have indicated that if the contract is extended for a year in 2018/19 the price would be likely to increase from the current rate due to the high uptake. Depending upon this, the Council may need to consider a further procurement exercise for 2018/19. A review of the success of the current contract will be undertaken in the coming year.

21. Body2Fit – Physiotherapy Services – Body2Fit have been contracted to provide Physiotherapy services to Council employees since 2008. They were rewarded the current 2 year contract in 2016, which has the option to extend for a further year up until 31 March 2019.

They provide following services to Employees:

- Up to 5 Physiotherapy sessions
- Workplace assessment, and
- An initial Podiatry assessment.
- Discounts on addition treatments and Holistic Therapies

The table shows the number of referrals received and whether or not the employee was absent at the time of initial referral.

	No. of Referrals	No. absent work
Physiotherapy	147	19
Workplace Assessment	95	N/A
Podiatry	14	1

Again it would appear that physiotherapy is being accessed in the main by employees who are at work (a proactive measure), and not as a supportive tool to aid recovery for those who are absent from work with Back/Neck/Musculo-Skeletal despite the fact that this is the second highest reason for sickness absence.

We have recently introduced a trigger related email which is sent to managers when they submit a Day 1 reporting form for absence relating to Back/Neck/Musculo-Skeletal to promote the services available through Body2Fit.

22. **Mindfulness Programme** – A recommendation from the Shaping Two courses of Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) took place during 2016/17 with 29 Employees taking part in a nine week course facilitated by Dr Paul Bernard (Consultant Psychiatrist, TEWV NHS Foundation Trust).

A feedback form was completed by participants during the final session of the course. Participants were asked to rate various aspects of the course on a scale of 0 -10. Mean ratings are shown in the table below.

Question	Mean
How important has this course been to you?	9.0
How helpful has this course been to you?	9.3
Rate the quality of teaching	9.8
How helpful was the day of mindfulness?	9.0
Agreement with statement: "Mindfulness courses should be made widely available for SBC employees."	9.6

The Council has committed to a further 10 courses which will take place between 2017 - 2019. Two introductory half day taster sessions took place on 7 March 2017 which were positively received by participants. A further two full programmes (9 week course) began in April 2017 with a total of 26 participants and a further taster session is scheduled to take place on 20 July 2017 – to be promoted in KYIT during Mental Health awareness week.

Further dates are to be arranged for the end of 2017, 2018 and early 2019.

23. **Better Health at Work** - The Council achieved the Better Health at Work Gold award in 2016, and it has been agreed to continue towards the Continuing Excellence accreditation.

The Better Health at Work Steering Group have arranged some focus groups with Employees to take place in June 2017, to discuss Mental Health Wellbeing and Physical Health Wellbeing. The information obtained from these session will be feed into the scrutiny review and amendments to the Attendance Management Policy and Employee Support services where appropriate.

The Better Health at Work advocates continue to disseminate information amongst their colleagues and arrange and support events linked to National campaigns, such as Mental Health Awareness Week (Week commencing 8 May 2017).

24. **Leave Policy** - The new policy came into effect on 1 July 2016 and managers are being encouraged to consider this as a supportive tool for Employees where appropriate to assist in reducing sickness absence.

The Council provides a generous annual leave entitlement of 26 / 31 days depending on Local Government Service in addition to the 8 Bank Holidays a year.

Employees can also purchase additional annual leave of up to 10 days a year, with the cost spread of a 12 month period. Employee's can purchase this to support time of work for personal circumstances or just additional holiday.

In certain areas of the Council, employees also have the benefit of the Flexitime Scheme, where hours of work are not set, and employees can accrue flexi-time which can be taken as a Flexi-day or to shorten the working day to support emergencies or to use when employees

are not feeling 100%. They can also go into a deficit of up to 10 hours, with the flexibility to work hours back at a later date.

The leave policy also gives guidance around paid/unpaid time off work to support Bereavement Leave, Carers leave and emergency leave to support dependents.

There has been a total of 1,205 days sickness absence due to Bereavement and Family Illness. If all of this absence was removed from the corporate sickness absence figures, it would bring the Council's average days lost per FTE down to 8.3.

It has been seen in para 9 above that Employees report sickness absence due to Stress linked to a close family bereavement and or family illness. The Leave policy provides managers with the flexibility to grant paid leave of absence where appropriate to support employees through difficult times, and to also consider other support options around working hours, patterns to support employees through difficult times.

It is believed that the Short Term and Medium Term sickness due to Bereavement and Family Illness could have been covered in the majority of cases through paid leave of absence or other leave / flexible working arrangements available through the Leave Policy. Further work will be carried out in 2017/18 to create awareness amongst managers and employees of the options with regards to this matter.

Paid leave can also be given for Medical Procedures and cancer screening, for the period of hospital admission/testing and reasonable recover period. Longer periods of recovery would fall within the scope of sickness absence (i.e. hysterectomy, Bowel operation).

25. Other Benefits

- Tees Active Ltd – Discount Membership and fitness classes for SBC Employees
- Cycle2Work Scheme – Salary Sacrifice scheme, enabling employees to purchase a bike, saving money on tax, NI and pension contributions.
- Childcare Vouchers – Salary Sacrifice scheme to purchase childcare vouchers for nurseries, child-minders, out-of-school care and holiday schemes for children up to age 15.
- Eye Tests - Free eye test including Digital Retinal Photography, upon purchase of complete glasses over £50
- Cineworld – Discounted cinema tickets

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

26. **Employee Communication** – An Employee Benefit Booklet was developed in 2016, and shared with employees at the Setting the Standards June 2016 Roadshows, with new Employees at Corporate Induction training, and via KYIT and the Intranet. This details the employee support available to employees and how to access the services.

27. The Council's **Intranet** pages provides our Employee's with a range of communication around matters concerning the Council including Shaping a Brighter Future, Employee Support, HR Policies & Procedures and the Council's weekly news bulleting Keeping You In Touch (KYIT).

28. We have introduced a Communications article for employees, which will be placed in KYIT on a quarterly basis to show levels of sickness absence within the Council. The Infographic at Appendix 3 is an example, showing sickness absence for the whole Council. Individual Service Area articles will also be developed, which will be shared with Director's giving them the option to cascade to their own staff.

29. **HIVE** - Hive gives employees the opportunity to let the Council know what they think on a range of current issues, through weekly anonymous micro-surveys. By using Hive an employee can share feedback, provide ideas and voice concerns, safe in the knowledge that the comments are completely anonymous. We provide employees with the results of the surveys each week.

On 13th January 2017 we asked employee's what their most valued employee benefit was. Flexi-time was seen as the most valued employee benefit with other employee support featuring predominately including featured prominently including:

- Access to Occupational Health / Physiotherapy
- Generous annual leave entitlement
- Pension
- Childcare vouchers
- Cycle to work scheme

In addition to the micro survey, employee's can send their colleagues a virtual pat on the back by sending them a 'Hive Five'.

30. **Employee Survey 2016** – The Employee Survey 2016 was undertaken between 3rd October and 7th November 2016. The Council achieve a total response rate of 66% which is comparable with a 67% response rate in 2014. Overall the results are extremely positive in themselves and especially when the context of the amount of change and reduction in resources is taken into account.

In relation to Health & Wellbeing, we have highlighted a few key results to share with members around how our employee's feel about work



31. **Ask Neil / Bright Ideas Scheme** – Employees have the opportunity to ask Neil questions about anything related to the Council and also to submit their own Bright Ideas which we respond to and place on the intranet for all to see.

In January 2016 one staff member submitted a question to “Ask Neil” around absence management. This related to annual leave entitlement and also rewarding staff who achieve 100% attendance with an extra day/half day. They stated:

Annual leave for full time employees is 26 days per annum, rising to 31 days after 5 years' service"...could staff not have an extra days holiday each year of continuous service until they reach 5 years? Also, staff who are not off sick at all in the year could be given an extra day/half day as a thank you for holding the fort when others are off sick and as an incentive to not be off sick for minor sniffles etc.

We responded with:

"All of our current leave arrangements were negotiated and agreed with the trade unions as part of our single status agreement, so any changes would need similar negotiation and agreement .

I'm always keen to explore all suggestions and ideas so have asked our wellbeing and retention work stream of the Shaping a Brighter Future programme to consider your ideas alongside some others that have been suggested and that they keep you informed of progress.

Of course the most important thank you is that we continually and sincerely keep saying it to staff who do such a sterling job.!

32. **SBF Workforce Culture** - Members are reminded that in 2016 the SBF Culture Work Stream developed and rolled out a statement of the Council's culture :



We are an organisation where we all make a positive contribution at work for the whole council. Where we never lose sight of the fact we are here to serve the people of the borough.

This is a place where...

- We are valued, trusted and supported
- We are heard
- We take responsibility for our own development
- We work hard
- We are not afraid to try something new
- We belong

Attendance Management and employee support are areas which very much need to be reflect and support the Council's culture. We will be reviewing the Council's Attendance Management Policy in 2017 and will ensure that the SBF Culture Workstream are involved in this work to ensure the Culture is reflected.

FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

33. Sickness absence can be very costly in particular in service areas where backfilling is necessary either by additional temporary employees, casual workers or agency workers, and can impact on service delivery.
34. The cost of the Council's occupational health provision including counselling and physiotherapy services is approximately £95,000 per annum.

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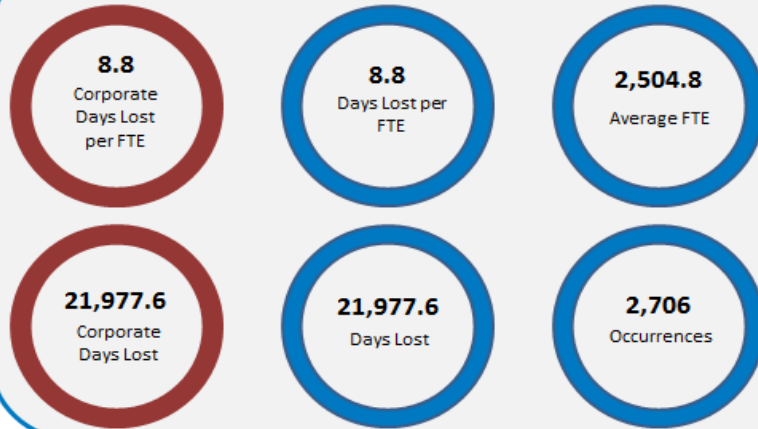


Sickness Absence Overview Q4

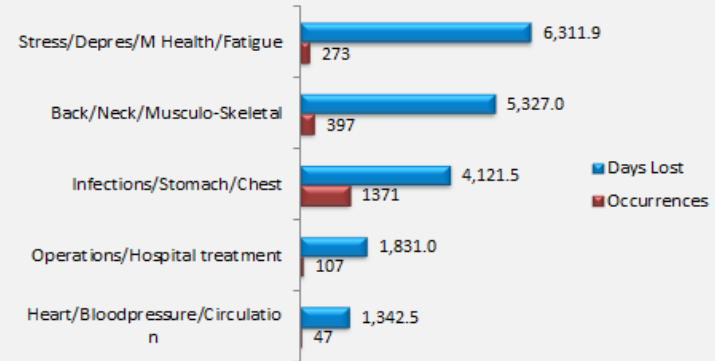
Service Area Name:

Corporate

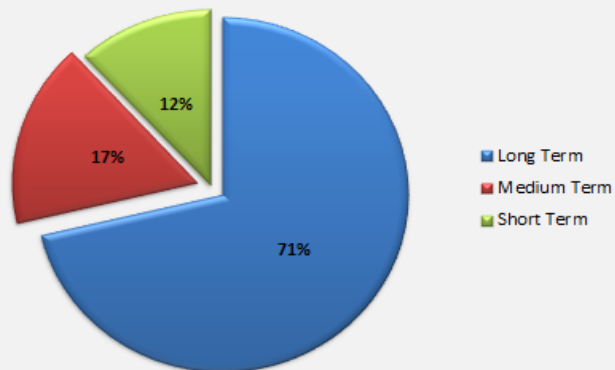
Sickness Overview



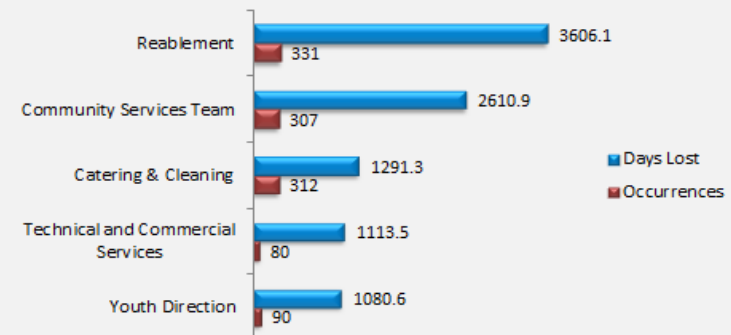
Main Reasons for Sickness in Service Area



Length of Sickness by Calender Days Lost



Teams with Highest Days Lost



Aims:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve employee health and reduce sickness absence across the Council To promote working relationships and environments that support the SBC Culture statement, encourage wellbeing and build resilience To focus on preventing and managing Mental Wellbeing and Physical Wellbeing absences To reduce long term absence from work. 			
Action	By When	Responsible	Progress
1. Absence Data and Analysis			
<p>a) To provide quarterly Sickness Absence information to SMT.</p> <p>HR will continue to provide the interactive dashboards to Directors on a quarterly basis, along with a report identifying Employees who meet the Council’s triggers for attendance management in a rolling 12 month period.</p> <p>HR are also able to provide ad hoc information to Directors and Managers around sickness absence when required.</p>	Ongoing	HR	Reports are being produced quarterly for the Directors/Assistant Directors
<p>b) To provide quarterly information regarding Occupational Health referrals and information provided from the Counselling and Physiotherapy service on usage.</p> <p>HR will cross reference this information against sickness absence to identify trends and areas of concern. This will support targeted interventions and promote support services</p>	Following Q1 2017/18 (July 2017)	HR	Information is being included in the CMT reports. Initial information suggests that Physiotherapy and Counselling Services are primarily being accessed by employees who are at work, and not absent.
<p>c) To proactively provide advice and assistance to help reduce sickness absence across the Council</p> <p>HR will identify on a quarterly basis all absences that meet the Council’s triggers for attendance management</p>	Quarterly Ongoing	HR	HR contact managers on a quarterly basis to discuss Long term sickness cases or employee’s with sickness absence that maybe a cause for concern/excess corporate triggers.

Appendix 2 – Employee Health & Wellbeing Action Plan 2017/18

<p>in a rolling 12 month period and discuss cases with Managers.</p> <p>HR will identify on a quarterly basis all absences that are open after a 3 month period that have not had Advisory involvement. Contact will be made with managers to provide HR support.</p> <p>Identify trends in sickness absence within services and look at interventions / target support to manage any concerns.</p>	Ongoing		
<p>d) To continue to benchmark the absence rates against our neighbouring authorities and national information</p>	End of 2017/18	HR	2016/17 Absence figures have been benchmarked against the 4 neighbouring authorities.
<p>e) To communicate sickness absence information with the wider workforce through KYIT, highlighting levels of absence across the Council and the Employee support available</p>	Following Q1 2017/18 (July 2017)		Draft communication document to be shared with SMT in July 2017
2. Policy Review / Awareness			
<p>a) The Attendance Management Policy will be reviewed in line with the new Culture Statement and to give managers more autonomy in managing sickness absence.</p>	Draft by September 2017	HR	A scrutiny review of sickness absence will take place in 2017/18. In addition the Attendance Management Policy is to be reviewed with input from the SBF Culture Work Stream
<p>b) A review of the following HR policies will take place in 2017/18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disciplinary • Grievance / Tackling Bulling & harassment • Equal Opportunities • Performance Management 	Ongoing	HR	
<p>c) Promote further awareness of the options available</p>	July 2017	HR	

Appendix 2 – Employee Health & Wellbeing Action Plan 2017/18

within the Leave Policy to support Employees			
3. Training & Support			
<p>a) To provide Attendance Management workshops for Managers.</p> <p>To become part of a mandatory Managers Induction process.</p> <p>Re-enforce managers’ responsibility in identifying and addressing sickness absence, recording absence on HR Online, carrying out all Return to Work interviews, and addressing concerns in line with Council’s policy.</p>	Ongoing	HR	<p>Attendance Management briefing sessions have taken place in 2016/17 within the following Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning & Skills • Customer Services • Schools & SEN • Economic Growth & Development • Reablement Services • Revenues & Benefits
<p>b) To create a “Managers Toolkit” (accessible online) with easy to use guides and example letters for managers to use to support the new Attendance Management Process.</p> <p>Linking in with updated HR Policy</p>	2018	HR	Attendance Management Policy to be updated in 2017/18.
<p>c) Continue to review the Employee Support available to employees who are subject to Service Review</p> <p>Ensuring our Employees are supported before, during and following a service review to help build resilience and support organisational change</p>	Ongoing	HR	<p>Discussions have taken with National Careers Service and Job Centre Plus, and a programme of Redundancy Support Briefing sessions have been planned as well as any bespoke sessions (i.e. interview skills) as required.</p> <p>Dealing with Change course has also been revised and dates are available during 2017.</p>
<p>d) To explore the option of a Mental Health Awareness training course (e.g. Mental Health First Aid) as part of the Employee Development offer to employees.</p>	September 2017	HR	Consideration is still being given to this, in addition to the Mindfulness Programme which the Council has committed to.
4. Initiatives & Support			
<p>a) Continue to promote the Employee Health & Wellbeing Support Services available to employees</p>		HR	

Appendix 2 – Employee Health & Wellbeing Action Plan 2017/18

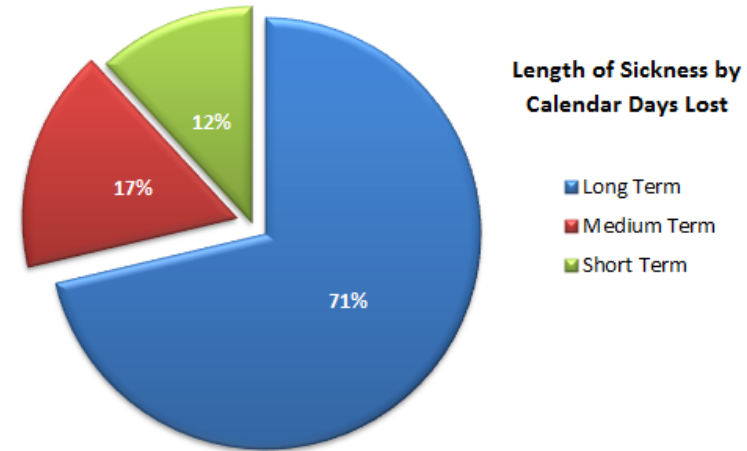
Trigger related emails sent out to manager when absence is reported due to poor Mental Wellbeing and Physical Wellbeing	May 2017		
b) To organise and take part in promotional and proactive events to improve Employee Health & Wellbeing.	Ongoing	HR/Public Health/Health Advocates	
<p>c) To continue to work towards the Continuing Excellent Better Health at Work accreditation and continue to assist in the roll out of health promotion programmes (e.g. flu vaccinations to employees) where funding is available</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in a minimum of five local, regional or national health campaigns / events throughout the year • Promote Health topics to the wider community and to families of the workforce 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	HR /Public Health/Health Advocates	<p>The Council achieved the Gold award accreditation in December 2016.</p> <p>Mental Health Awareness week – 8th May 2017</p>
<p>d) To consider initiatives to reduce sickness absence due to infections.</p> <p>Sickness absence due to infections increase each year in Q3 & Q4. Provide information / guidance to help reduce the spread of infections within the workplace to service areas</p>	September 2017	HR	

Employee Absence 2016/17

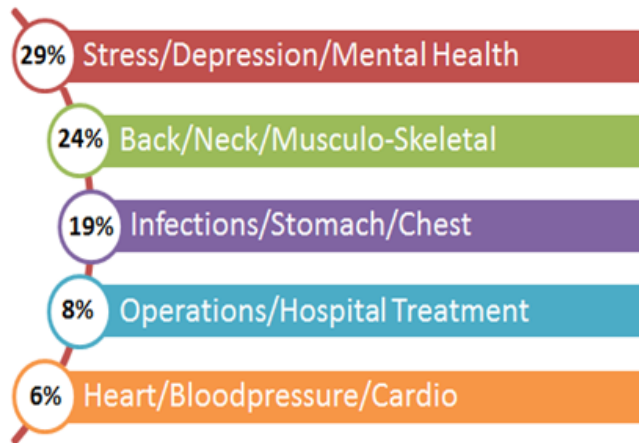
21,977.6 Working Days Lost

8.8 Working Days Lost per Full Time Equivalent

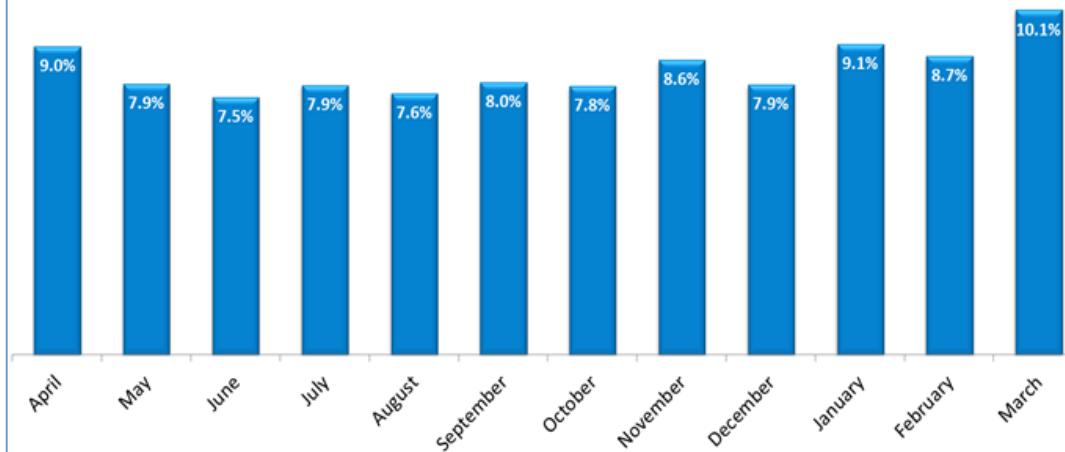
52% Of Employees have been absent at least once



Top Reasons for Absence



% of Days Lost by Month



For information about services to help with your health and wellbeing please visit <https://intranet.stockton.gov.uk/employee-support/>