

Staffing Committee

Dorset County Council



Date of Meeting	9 April 2018
Officer	Head of Organisational Development
Subject of Report	Management of Attendance 2017/18 – Quarter 3 (October to December 2017)
Executive Summary	<p>Sickness absence across DCC has reduced from 8.53 days per fte to 7.95 days per fte during the quarter. To place these figures in context, the 2016 Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD) Absence Management survey reports an average of 10.5 sickness absence days per annum for local government workers.</p> <p>During this period, DCC has seen sizeable reductions in sickness absence in Organisational Development, Adults & Community and Dorset Waste Partnership. Long term sickness has reduced by approximately a third. This includes stress and other mental health and musculoskeletal absence levels reducing, which normally account for the greatest levels of sickness.</p> <p>It should be noted the quarterly absence results are subject to fluctuations, but the size of this quarter's reduction is encouraging. Throughout 2017, DCC's overall attendance levels consistently compared well to average levels of attendance reported by local authorities and other public sector employers, regardless of minor local fluctuations.</p>
Impact Assessment:	<p>Equalities Impact Assessment:</p> <p>No separate EqIA has been conducted / is required although the Council's policy on the management of attendance is itself subject to EqIA considerations.</p>

Management of Attendance 2017/18 – Quarter 3 – October to December 2017

	<p>Use of Evidence:</p> <p>The report is wholly evidence-based. Sickness targets have been established on a common basis applicable to all categories and groups of staff.</p>
	<p>Budget:</p> <p>There are no direct cost implications arising from this report.</p>
	<p>Risk Assessment:</p> <p>No specific decision is requested in the relation to this report. The associated risk is low.</p>
	<p>Other Implications:</p> <p>Not applicable.</p>
Recommendation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Staffing Committee notes the sustained better than average performance of DCC in managing sickness absence levels in comparison with other local authorities 2. Staffing Committee is invited to note the conduct of an Internal Audit of Sickness Management, it will be informed of any findings of concern that the audit may identify, in particular concerning parts of the organisation not conducting return to work interviews to a satisfactory extent.
Reason for Recommendation	To provide a focus for the effective management of attendance within the Council
Appendices	Appendix: DCC Management Dashboard as 1.1.18
Background Papers	None
Officer Contact	<p>Name: Paul Loach, HR Business Partner</p> <p>Tel: 01305 225189</p> <p>Email: paul.loach@dorsetcc.gov.uk</p>

Management of Attendance 2017/18 – Quarter 3 – October to December 2017

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report considers Quarter 3 sickness data (October to December 2017), and makes reference to the Council's quarterly and annual sickness data trends.

2. DCC sickness absence: a yearly perspective

Table 1: Sickness absence in DCC for the last 12 months.

Date	DCC (excluding schools) Average days lost per full time equivalent (FTE)
December 2016	9.55 *
March 2017	8.35
June 2017	8.44
September 2017	8.53
December 2017	7.95

Note: where indicated *, the data report parameters included sickness data from leavers. The new sickness reports excluded leaver's sickness absence from March 2017.

3. Long Term v Short Term sickness absence within DCC

Table 2: Long v Short Term Sickness – Q3 2017/18

Directorate	Short Term Days Q3	Long Term Days Q3
Adult & Community Services	709	417
Children's Services	954	880
Dorset Waste Partnership	413	775
Environment & Economy	996	853
CEX: Finance & Procurement	169	96
CEX: Organisational Development	115	115
CEX: Programme Office	21	0
Public Health	22	0
Grand Total	3,398	3,136

- 3.1 Long term absence has reduced by almost a third from last quarter and is now less than short term absence. The largest reductions have occurred in Economy and Environment and Dorset Waste Partnership. The reason for this is mainly due to the return to work of a number of employees who were absent due to long term medical conditions.

Management of Attendance 2017/18 – Quarter 3 – October to December 2017

4. Ill health retirements and dismissals

4.1 For the twelve month period ending Q3 2017/18, the Council dismissed 19 employees due to medical incapability plus 5 ill health retirements. This compares with 15 medical incapability dismissals and 4 ill health retirements for the previous twelve month period ending Q2 2017/18. For each individual directorate:-

- Adult and Community Services dismissed 2 employees due to medical incapability, 2 ill health retirements.
- Children’s Services dismissed 6 employees due to medical incapability, no health retirements.
- Economy and Environment dismissed 4 employees due to medical incapability, 1 ill health retirement.
- Chief Executives dismissed 2 employees due to medical incapability, 1 ill health retirement.
- Dorset Waste Partnership (DWP) dismissed 5 employees due to medical incapability, 1 ill health retirement.

5. Table 3: Reasons for sickness absence: (Q3: October 2017 to December 2017). All DCC (excl. Tricuro and Schools).

This report is used to track sickness absence trends and instigate preventative interventions.

Reason	Sickness Cost	Pro Rata Days Lost
ANXIETY/DEPRESSION	71,759	872
CANCERS/TUMOURS	31,768	346
CARDIOVASCULAR	4,361	74
CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME	2,708	41
DIGESTIVE SYSTEM	59,028	741
EAR,NOSE, THROAT	70,429	779
ENDOCRINE/GLANDULAR	4,380	35
FROZEN SHOULDER	202	3
INFECTIOUS DISEASES	4,550	49
MISCELLANEOUS	17,802	175
NECK/BACK PROBLEMS	29,363	427
NERVOUS SYSTEM	9,923	136
Not assigned	5,706	31
OTHER MENTAL HEALTH	6,000	76
OTHER MUSCLOSKELETAL	70,446	895
REPRODUCTIVE AND URINARY	19,873	176
RESPIRATORY	61,299	701
RHEUMATISM/ARTHRITIS	12,096	96
RSI/UPPER LIMB DISORDER	1,933	36
SKIN RELATED	6,092	80
STRAINS/SPRAINS	5,672	70
STRESS	71,292	769
SUBSTANCE ABUSE	341	5
TENNIS ELBOW	1,667	13
Grand Total	568,690	6,623

Management of Attendance 2017/18 – Quarter 3 – October to December 2017

6. Areas of Focus

6.1 DCC's top two reasons for sickness are mental health and musculoskeletal. These provide the areas for more detailed focus in the report:-

6.1.1 Mental Health related sickness

Table 4: Q3 Mental Health related sickness by Directorate

Row Labels	Q3 working days lost	Q3 - Sickness cost
⊕ Adult & Community Services	327	25,254
⊕ Children's Services	814	61,984
⊕ Dorset Waste Partnership	179	11,751
⊕ Environment & Economy	651	46,195
⊕ Finance & Procurement	5	346
⊕ Organisational Development	24	3,213
⊕ Public Health	2	307
Grand Total	2,002	149,051

Table 5: Children's Services: Highest mental health related sickness by role Q3

Role	Q3 Working Days Lost	Q3 Sickness Cost
Residential Childcare Worker	161	9,582
Admin Assistant	106	5,869
Social Worker	102	10,327

Table 6: Environment and Economy: Highest mental health related sickness by role Q3

Role	Q3 Working Days Lost	Q3 Sickness Cost
Community Highways Officer	111	11,780
Grounds Worker	105	6,759
Passenger Assistant	94	1,255

6.1.2 Action being taken across all Directorates to reduce mental health absences

- * Regular monitoring of absence cases at Directorate leadership teams and by local managers
- * Regular employee supervision enabling employees to discuss any concerns
- * Return to work interviews, where signposting to mental health advice can take place
- * Mental health resilience training for managers
- * Advice, support on information for employees on Sharepoint (intranet)
- * Mental Health Champions – helping reduce the stigma of mental health absence
- * Wellbeing service who signpost to support, advice and/or counselling
- * Occupational health referrals
- * Stress risk assessments

Management of Attendance 2017/18 – Quarter 3 – October to December 2017

6.1.3 Causes of anxiety and stress

Our HR & Wellbeing services signpost employees to a range of organisations and support groups on a range of issues including:

Personal: illness or injury, pregnancy and becoming a parent, bereavement, long-term health problems

Friends and family: getting married or civil partnered, going through a break-up or getting divorced, difficult relationships with parents, siblings, friends or children, being a carer for a friend or relative who needs lots of support.

Employment and study: losing a job, long-term unemployment, retiring, exams and deadlines, difficult issues at work, starting a new job.

Housing: housing problems such as poor living conditions, lack of security or homelessness, moving house, problems with neighbours.

Money: worries about money or benefits, poverty, debt.

6.2 Musculoskeletal

Table 7: Musculoskeletal sickness by Directorate Q3

Directorate	Q3 Working Days Lost	Q3 Sickness Cost
Adult & Community Services	349	26,739
Children's Services	344	28,617
Dorset Waste Partnership	596	39,951
Environment & Economy	619	26,767
Finance & Procurement	9	967
Organisational Development	5	475
Programme	1	86
Grand Total	1,922	123,601

Table 8: DWP: Highest Musculoskeletal sickness by role – Q3

DWP Role	Q3 Working Days Lost	Q3 Sickness Cost
Loader	404	25,833
Recycling Loader	73	4,618
Driver	40	2,830

Table 9: Economy & Environment: Highest musculoskeletal related sickness by role – Q3

Economy & Environment Role	Q3 Working Days Lost	Q3 Sickness Cost
Passenger Assistant	175	2,189
Driver	73	1,501
School Crossing Patrol	66	198

6.3 Action being taken to reduce musculoskeletal absence:

- 6.3.1 In the Economy service, changes are planned for roles which require high degrees of physical dexterity, e.g. Passenger Assistants. Health and Safety will assess the physical ability of the employee to undertake the role during induction training. If the assessment shows a problem with dexterity, the employee can be referred to Occupational Health and if no reasonable adjustments can be made employment may be terminated.
- 6.3.2 Moving and handling training is compulsory for appropriate roles. In DWP, the shifts are organised in a way which promotes health and safety. There are no “task and finish” shifts which can encourage Loaders to move multiples bins at once to finish the shift early, leading to a risk of strain and injury.

7. Return to work (RTW) interviews

- 7.1 DCC has an average 78% return to work interview completion rate. Research studies consistently show that the RTW interview is the single most important activity a manager can undertake to manage and reduce sickness absence.
- 7.2 Barriers to higher RTW completion rates include employees working early or late shifts, working outside or away from their immediate manager. Barriers to return to work interviews need to be overcome on a team by team basis. 78% completion is regarded as reasonably good in such a large, complex and varied organisation such as DCC, but continued efforts will be made to achieve a higher level.

Service	RTW %	Typical roles with low RTW completion rates
Economy	51%	Passenger Assistants, School Crossing Patrols
Environment	58%	Grounds Workers, Arborists (Tree Surgeons)
Children’s Care and Protection	63%	Social Workers, Community Resource Worker, Residential Childcare Worker
Highways	72%	Minor Works Chargehand, Skilled Roadworkers

8. Comment / Observation

- 8.1 An independent audit of DCC’s sickness absence practice is underway which will provide further opportunities to improve existing practice. A particular focus of the audit will be return to work interviews and the management of long term sickness. Teams that consistently show low RTW completion rates will be a priority concern for the audit, and recommendations for improved performance will be made.

Management of Attendance 2017/18 – Quarter 3 – October to December 2017

- 8.2 Prevention initiatives to reduce mental health and musculoskeletal absence will continue over the coming year. The involvement of members as mental health champions will help reduce the stigma of mental health in the workforce and community. Health and Safety will continue to work with managers and employees to reduce musculoskeletal absence.
- 8.3 This quarter's reduction in absence is encouraging, but historically we know rates fluctuate due to a number of factors, including seasonal sickness. Historically, Quarter 4 data can often be pushed up by winter colds and flu absence, for example. The council's aim continues to be that of promoting wellbeing and achieving a sustained reduction in absence on a long term basis.

Jonathan Mair
Head of Organisational Development

April 2018

High Level DCC Dashboard as of 1.1.18

Directorate	Manager	RTW Interviews	RTW Interviews %	Sickness Days Lost	Headcount FTE	Sickness Days Lost Per FTE 1.1.2018	Sickness Days Lost Per FTE 1.10.2017	Direction of Travel	Sickness Days Lost Target
Dorset County Council	Mrs Deborah Ward	4627	78%	25,229.78	3,172.97	7.95	8.53	↓	7.16
Adult & Community Services	<Vacant Position>	1051	84%	4,301.59	653.88	6.58	7.91	↓	7.11
Adult Care	Mr Harry Capron	575	82%	2,783.10	388.62	7.16	8.46	↓	7.75
Early Help & Community Services	Mr Paul Leivers	430	85%	1,416.79	233.63	6.06	7.15	↓	5.5
Safeguarding and Quality	Mrs Sally Wernick	46	94%	101.70	31.63	3.22	6.87	↓	7.11
Children's Services	Mr Nicholas Jarman	1198	74%	7,120.81	831.05	8.57	8.97	↓	6.75
Care and Protection	Mrs Vanessa Glenn	473	63%	3,760.20	363.92	10.33	11.13	↓	7.5
Design & Development	Mr Patrick Myers	368	80%	1,794.56	251.68	7.13	7.61	↓	6
Prevention & Partnerships	<Vacant Position> / Mr Jay Mercer	357	85%	1,566.05	214.84	7.29	6.69	↑	6.5
Dorset Waste Partnership	Ms Karyn Punchedard	580	90%	4,073.54	397.37	10.25	11.47	↓	9.74
Finance and Commercial	Mr Paul Ackrill	17	100%	102.00	11.62	8.78	10.45	↓	9.74
Operations	Mr Michael Moon	507	89%	3,774.74	348.09	10.84	12.11	↓	9.74
Strategy	Mrs Gemma Clinton	56	98%	196.80	35.65	5.52	6.13	↓	9.74
Environment & Economy	Mr Michael Harries	1123	67%	7,722.46	907.68	8.51	8.29	↑	7.65
Dorset Highways	Mr Andrew Martin	369	72%	2,471.71	274.30	9.01	8.32	↑	7
Economy	Mr Matthew Piles	299	51%	3,323.56	253.77	13.10	13.36	↓	7
Environment	Mr Peter Moore	155	58%	777.25	179.80	4.32	4.21	↑	7
ICT and Customer Services	Mr Richard Pascoe	295	93%	1,084.94	196.27	5.53	5.00	↑	4.25
Finance & Procurement	Mr Richard Bates	272	85%	880.34	164.50	5.35	5.38	↓	7
Accountancy-	Mr Andrew Smith	103	92%	288.19	53.85	5.35	6.65	↓	7
Estate & Assets	Mr Peter Scarlett	49	84%	121.55	33.65	3.61	3.67	↓	7
Financial Services	Mr William Mcmanus	117	80%	467.60	71.36	6.55	5.80	↑	7
Organisational Development	Mr Jonathan Mair	316	95%	865.71	145.45	5.95	8.08	↓	5
Democratic Services	Mr Lee Gallagher	16	100%	56.00	9.47	5.91	7.18	↓	5
Governance & Assurance Services	Mr Mark Taylor	17	100%	36.30	7.95	4.57	22.62	↓	4.5
HR Operations	Mr Christopher Matthews	177	96%	382.47	63.96	5.98	6.42	↓	5
HR Specialist Services	Alison Crockett / Sherlayn Towner	56	97%	199.55	32.71	6.10	7.62	↓	5.75
Legal Services	Miss Grace Evans	49	89%	189.39	29.41	6.44	8.18	↓	5
Programme	Mr Darran Gunter	51	96%	82.92	34.17	2.43	2.65	↓	7.16
Corporate Development	Mrs Karen Andrews	51	96%	82.92	33.63	2.47	2.69	↓	7.16
Public Health	Doctor David Phillips	34	74%	178.02	36.13	4.93	6.66	↓	4.5