

# Staffing Committee

**Dorset County Council**



Date of Meeting	12 September 2018
Officer	Service Director for Organisational Development
Subject of Report	<b>Management of Attendance 2018/19 – Quarter 1 (April to June 2018)</b>
Executive Summary	<p>Sickness absence rates are currently 8.24 days; lower than the local authority average of 10.5 days (CIPD 2016 Absence Management Survey). Current absence rates are 0.2 days pa lower than in June 2017.</p> <p>There has also been a reduction in Musculoskeletal related absence from June 2017 to June 2018; by 12% in terms of days lost and 21% in terms of cost.</p> <p>This quarter has seen a slight reduction in sickness absence rates overall in DCC, with variations amongst Directorates. Children's Services reports a decrease in sickness absence (8.35 days pa Q4 to 7.28 days pa Q1). Adults and Community Services report increased sickness absence (6.84 days Q4 to 7.51 days Q1). Likewise, Economy and Environment report an increase in sickness absence this quarter (8.83 days Q4 to 9.09 days Q1).</p> <p>As a result of members feedback, a recommendation is made to revise all sickness targets. The proposed sickness absence targets provide a more consistent and realistic measure, informed by the type of work undertaken by the employee.</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 2018/19 – Quarter 1 – April - June 2018

	<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"> <li>1) To adopt new sickness absence targets based on role (see paragraph 7.4)</li> <li>2) To keep the current DCC sickness target of 7.63 days per annum (see paragraph 7.7)</li> </ol>
Reason for Recommendation	To provide a focus for the effective management of attendance within the Council.
Appendices	Appendix: DCC Management Dashboard as 1.7.18
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 2018/19 – Quarter 1 – April - June 2018

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report considers Quarter 1 sickness data (April to June 2018), and refers 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)
June 2017	8.44
September 2017	8.53
December 2017	7.95
March 2018	8.25
June 2018	8.24

- 2.1 Sickness absence for Q1 (April to June 2018) remains steady at 8.24 days, which is 0.20 days lower than June 2017. N.B: Since writing this report, sickness has fallen further to 8.01 days p.a. in July 2018

### 3. Ill-health retirements and dismissals

- 3.1 For the twelve month period ending Q1 2018/19, the Council dismissed 14 employees due to medical incapability plus 2 ill health retirements. This compares with 13 medical incapability dismissals and 4 ill health retirements for the previous twelve month period ending Q4 2017/18. For each individual directorate:

- Adult and Community Services dismissed 2 employees due to medical incapability, no ill-health retirements.
- Children's Services dismissed 3 employees due to medical incapability, no ill-health retirements.
- Economy and Environment dismissed 0 employees due to medical incapability, 1 ill-health retirement.
- Chief Executives dismissed 2 employees due to medical incapability, no ill-health retirement.
- Dorset Waste Partnership (DWP) dismissed 7 employees due to medical incapability, 1 ill-health retirement.

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### 4. Table 2: Reasons for sickness absence: (Q1: April 2018 to June 2018). All DCC (excl. Tricuro and Schools).

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

Sickness Reasons	Pro Rata Days Lost Q1 18/19	Sickness Cost Q1 18/19 £	% Days Lost Q1 by Absence Type	% Days Lost - Previous quarter
ANXIETY/DEPRESSION	1,098	104,406	17.0%	14.5%
CANCERS/TUMOURS	618	56,817	9.6%	6.1%
CARDIOVASCULAR	153	17,718	2.4%	1.6%
CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDRO	4	509	0.1%	0.7%
DIGESTIVE SYSTEM	708	60,989	11.0%	9.5%
EAR,NOSE, THROAT AND	488	42,145	7.6%	14.3%
ENDOCRINE/GLANDULAR	84	5,440	1.3%	0.8%
FROZEN SHOULDER	3	200	0.0%	0.2%
INFECTIOUS DISEASES	38	3,038	0.6%	0.9%
MISCELLANEOUS	22	1,513	0.3%	0.5%
NECK/BACK PROBLEMS	245	19,977	3.8%	5.3%
NERVOUS SYSTEM	184	15,577	2.9%	2.5%
OTHER MENTAL HEALTH	83	5,515	1.3%	0.3%
OTHER MUSCLOSKELETAL	900	66,935	13.9%	12.2%
REPRODUCTIVE AND URI	232	19,783	3.6%	2.9%
RESPIRATORY	365	32,147	5.6%	16.5%
RHEUMATISM/ARTHRITIS	5	288	0.1%	0.5%
RSI/UPPER LIMB DISOR	14	926	0.2%	0.3%
SKIN RELATED	35	2,466	0.5%	0.4%
STRAINS/SPRAINS	118	7,924	1.8%	1.4%
STRESS	1,061	114,965	16.4%	8.6%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>6,460</b>	<b>579,278</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

- 4.1 When comparing Winter Q1 sickness with Spring Q2 sickness, a number of trends have occurred.
- 4.2 Respiratory and Ear Nose, Throat sickness has halved when comparing the Winter (Q4) to Spring (Q1) period.
- 4.3 Mental health related absence has risen from 23.4% of all sickness absence in Q4 to 34.7% of all sickness absence in Q1.

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### 5. Mental Health-related sickness

**Table 3: Mental health related sickness July 2016 - June 2017**

Directorate	Days Lost		Cost £		Total Days Lost	Total Cost £
	Non work related	Work related	Non work related	Work related		
Adult & Community Services	1,217	159	99,171	13,263	1,376	112,434
Chief Executive	11	0	683	0	11	683
Chief Executive 1	15	2	1,188	148	17	1,336
Children's Services	1,607	578	177,184	76,918	2,185	254,101
Dorset Waste Partnership	843	41	61,046	3,072	884	64,118
Environment & Economy	1,277	76	114,366	6,496	1,353	120,862
Finance & Procurement	287	48	28,244	3,231	335	31,475
Organisational Development	164	166	21,141	24,066	330	45,207
Public Health	94	0	21,643	0	94	21,643
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5,515</b>	<b>1,069</b>	<b>524,666</b>	<b>127,194</b>	<b>6,584</b>	<b>651,860</b>

5.1 Employees can record their mental health related sickness as either work related or non-work related.

5.2 In terms of days lost, 14% of days lost (16/17) due to mental health were work related.

**Table 4: Mental health related sickness July 2017 - June 2018**

Directorate	Days Lost (pro-rata)		Cost of sickness £		Total Days Lost	Total Cost £
	Non work related	Work related	Non work related	Work related		
Adult & Community Services	1,204	161	120,632	13,204	1,364	133,837
Children's Services	1,571	821	167,642	98,710	2,392	266,351
Dorset Waste Partnership	584	134	39,436	9,493	718	48,929
Environment & Economy	2,146	411	188,124	43,967	2,557	232,091
Finance & Procurement	106	70	7,209	4,881	176	12,090
Organisational Development	174	103	19,561	14,585	277	34,147
Public Health	63		5,766		63	5,766
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>5,846</b>	<b>1,700</b>	<b>548,370</b>	<b>184,840</b>	<b>7,547</b>	<b>733,210</b>

5.3 in 17/18, 24% of days lost due to mental health were work related. When comparing this year with last, there were increase in work related mental health absence in Environment and Economy and Children's Services.

5.4 Further work will be undertaken to understand the reasons for increases in work related mental health absence.

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### 6. Musculoskeletal absence: a comparison of 16/17 with 17/18 data

Table 5: Musculoskeletal related sickness July 2016 - June 2017

<b>DCC Musculoskeletal Absence: July 2016 - June 2017</b>		
<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Pro Rata Days Lost</b>	<b>Sickness Cost £</b>
Adult & Community Services	830	79,781
Chief Executive	22	1,426
Chief Executive 1	16	1,299
Children's Services	1,627	174,198
Dorset Waste Partnership	2,229	148,053
Environment & Economy	1,987	127,638
Finance & Procurement	60	4,223
Organisational Development	224	22,029
Public Health	80	18,640
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>7,074</b>	<b>577,286</b>

6.1 Musculoskeletal related absence accounts for over a quarter of all absences in DCC in 16/17.

6.2 Musculoskeletal absence includes neck, back, repetitive strain injury and strains and sprains.

Table 6: Musculoskeletal related sickness July 2017 - June 2018

<b>DCC Musculoskeletal Absence: July 2017 - June 2018</b>		
<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Pro Rata Days Lost</b>	<b>Sickness Cost £</b>
Adult & Community Services	807	62,133
Children's Services	1,303	120,732
Dorset Waste Partnership	2,363	157,841
Environment & Economy	1,628	113,487
Finance & Procurement	104	8,046
Organisational Development	46	4,167
Public Health	52	10,184
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>6,304</b>	<b>476,590</b>

6.3 When comparing musculoskeletal absence rates in 2016/17 to 2017/18, a marked reduction is noted. The number of days lost due to musculoskeletal absence has reduced by 12% and sickness cost has reduced by 21%

6.4 DCC continues to provide extensive moving and handling training, health and safety risk assessments and Occupational Health assessments in order to prevent and reduce absences.

### 7. Sickness Targets

7.1 At the last Staffing Committee meeting, a recommendation was made to simplify the sickness targets. It was acknowledged that the present sickness targets needed revision, as teams of similar workers had significantly different sickness targets.

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- 7.2 Staffing Committee are asked to consider replacing sickness targets for services, with individual job-based sickness targets.
- 7.3 According to the Office National Statistics data, there are historic differences in sickness absence rates between work of a manual and non-manual nature. Work of a manual nature has around a 25% higher sickness absence rate, than non-manual work.
- 7.4 If these ratios are applied to the current overall DCC sickness target of 7.63 days; we can devise three resulting targets:-

Duties	Examples of Roles	Target days absence pa (FTE)
Office based roles	Finance, HR, Communications, Legal, ICT	6.0
Outside working / high physical impact roles	Roadworkers, DWP Loaders, Passenger Assistants, Tree Surgeons	9.5
Hybrid (mix of manual and non-manual duties) roles	Site Agents, Engineers, Facilities	7.63

- 7.5 If approved, Directors and managers will apply the relevant sickness target to each employee depending on the type of duties they undertake. For example, an employee who works in HR+OD would be expected to have no more than 6 days per annum sickness in an average year. For most years the absence will be lower; however, if an employee is recuperating from an operation the rate may be higher for that year.
- 7.6 As each directorate contains a different proportion of office-based roles and outside workers, it is not problematic to create accurate targets at Directorate level. It is however entirely possible to derive a sickness target for the whole organisation (DCC).
- 7.7 Staffing Committee are asked to consider keeping the current organisational sickness absence target of 7.63 days pa. The average DCC sickness rate for the last four quarters is 8.25 days; however the current stretch target of 7.63 days is a reasonable ambition.

## 8. Planned communications with managers on sickness absence

- 8.1 Further communications are planned to remind managers of a number of sickness absence related matters, via internal newsletters and briefings.
- 8.2 Managers will be reminded to use the new sickness management reporting software.
- 8.3 Managers will receive also further guidance on how to correctly record Return to work interviews in DES.

## 9. Comment / Observation

- 9.1 During a time of transition within the authority, sickness rates remain stable and significantly below the average for local authority workers. There continues to be an emphasis by managers on maintaining employee wellbeing which is appropriate and beneficial to both the employee and organisation.

**Jonathan Mair**  
**Service Director for Organisational Development**  
August 2018

### High Level DCC Dashboard as at 1.7.18

Services	Manager	RTW Interviews	RTW Interviews %	Sickness Days Lost	Headcount FTE	% of Working Days Lost 1.7.18 *	Sickness Days Lost Per FTE 1.7.18	Sickness Days Lost per FTE 1.4.18	Direction of Travel
Dorset County Council	Mrs Deborah Ward	4,992	79%	25,512	3,186.0	3.5%	8.01	8.25	↓
Adult & Community Services	<Vacant Position>	1,060	87%	4,652	619.3	3.3%	7.51	6.84	↑
Adult Care	Mr Martin Elliott	583	88%	2,577	373.5	3.0%	6.90	7.6	↓
Commissioning, Partnership & Quality	Mr Paul Leivers	401	89%	1,334	198.9	2.9%	6.70	5.95	↑
Learning Disability/Mental Health	Mr Harry Capron	76	72%	741	46.8	6.9%	15.84	n/a	
Children's Services	<Vacant Position>	1,279	82%	5,840	802.7	3.2%	7.28	8.35	↓
Care and Protection	Mrs Vanessa Glenn	591	83%	2,815	351.8	3.5%	8.00	9.7	↓
Commissioning & Partnerships	Miss Claire Shiels	369	82%	1,469	225.8	2.9%	6.50	7.47	↓
Schools & Learning Service	Mr Andrew Reid	319	81%	1,555	223.4	3.1%	6.96	7.04	↓
Dorset Waste Partnership	Ms Karyn Punchard	645	91%	3,726	402.8	4.1%	9.25	11.2	↓
DWP Finance and Commercial	Mr Paul Ackrill	19	90%	108	12.8	3.7%	8.44	3.99	↑
DWP Operations	Mr Michael Moon	568	91%	3,420	353.1	4.3%	9.69	12.02	↓
DWP Strategy	Mrs Gemma Clinton	57	97%	177	34.9	2.2%	5.07	5.89	↓
Environment & Economy	Mr Michael Harries	1,286	64%	8,756	963.3	4.0%	9.09	8.83	↑
Corporate Development	Mrs Karen Andrews	77	99%	235	51.0	2.0%	4.60	2.37	↑
Dorset Highways	Mr Andrew Martin	387	62%	2,789	270.5	4.5%	10.31	9.73	↑
Economy&Environment	Mr Matthew Piles	487	53%	4,259	436.9	4.3%	9.75	10.18	↓
ICT and Customer Services	Mr Richard Pascoe	335	90%	1,473	202.9	3.2%	7.26	5.91	↓
Finance & Procurement	Mr Richard Bates	369	87%	1,332	187.2	3.1%	7.12	6.41	↑
Estate & Assets	Mr Peter Scarlett	70	85%	178	32.6	2.4%	5.44	3.79	↑
Financial Services	Mr William McManus	200	83%	965	114.4	3.7%	8.44	7.85	↑
Organisational Development	Mr Jonathan Mair	312	95%	971	149.8	2.8%	6.48	6.28	↑
Democratic Services	Mr Lee Gallagher	10	77%	72	10.5	3.0%	6.91	3.66	↑
Governance & Assurance Services	Mr Mark Taylor	23	100%	56	9.0	2.8%	6.31	6.92	↓
HR Operations	Mr Christopher	168	98%	305	64.5	2.1%	4.72	5.18	↓
HR Specialist Services	Mr Carl Wilcox / Mrs Sheralyn Towner	41	93%	163	29.2	2.5%	5.59	6.96	↓
Legal Services	Miss Grace Evans	70	92%	374	34.7	4.7%	10.78	8.91	↑
Public Health	Doctor David Phillips	38	75%	233	53.8	1.9%	4.33	4.59	↓

\* % of Working Days Lost: 365 days - 137 non working days (104 weekends, 25 days leave, 8 days public holidays) = 228 working days