



**Report to: Personnel and General Purposes Sub-Committee, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2019**

**Report of: Head of People Services**

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**Subject: HEALTH AND ATTENDANCE PERFORMANCE – 2018/19**

**1. Recommendation**

**1.1 That the Sub-Committee note the health and attendance performance for the year 2018/19 and actions being taken to reduce sickness absence; and**

**1.2 That the Sub-Committee note the voluntary leavers rate for the year 2018/19.**

**2. Background**

2.1 Over the last two years our sickness performance has progressively improved from low point of 12.63 days per full time equivalent employee (FTE) in 2016/17, we achieved 11.4 days per FTE in 2017/18 and 9.9 days per FTE in 2018/19. This represents a 21% improvement over two years.

2.2 Our voluntary leavers rate in 1018/19 was 8.8%. This represents a 46% improvement over the last two years.

**3. Health and attendance in more detail**

3.1 Although we are continuing to see an improvement we still have some way to go in terms of our target of 7.5 days per FTE. To set our results in context, the latest national figures for 2018 from CIPD/Expert HR are 5.6 days for all sectors combined and 9.8 days for the public sector. Data is being compiled for West Midlands Councils in 2018/19 but is not yet available. In this context our target might be seen as stretching, but we continue to believe it is achievable. We have richer analysis of our data this thanks to the First Care attendance management system adopted last year and new figure available is that 48% of the workforce had no sickness absence at all last year.

3.2 The amount of doctor certified (and therefore longer term) absences has continued to decline as a proportion of the total days at 35%. So whilst we need to manage longer term sickness properly, we might expect our current efforts to improve levels of employee engagement to deliver improvements in the volume of short term absences.

3.3 Another new analysis available from First Care is an age break down of sickness rates. Employees over 60 had the highest rates of absence at 13.69 days followed by 50-59 year olds at 12.41 and then the under 20s at 11.5. It seems that once we have got the habit of coming to work regularly we do it pretty well until in middle age genuine chronic illnesses begin to impact on our health.

Our workforce is an aging one so we will be focussing on health initiatives going forward that can help our employees to recognise and manage effectively health conditions associated with aging such as hypertension, arthritis and heart conditions.

### **Illness Types**

- 3.4 The highest single reason for absences that we can track back from our internal records remains musculo-skeletal problems at 17.4% of the total although it is down from 22.9% last year. Mental ill health absence has risen to 16.9% from 14.3% last year. New data from First Care shows that cancer was our single biggest reason for absence last year. These often involve lengthy absences from a small number of people which can have disproportionate impact on overall figures in a relatively small organisation such as ours. There seems little we can do to impact on this as an employer other than to manage such cases empathetically and professionally.

### **Service areas**

- 3.5 In most areas of the Council sickness rates have reduced significantly. The one startling exception is Environmental Services. Where the average number of days lost to sickness almost doubled to 27.2 per FTE. This is in part due to restructures moving some non-manual posts from the service to other parts of the Council, but the fact remains that we have an aging largely male manual workforce doing jobs that are physically demanding and increasingly hard to cope with. There are no easy answers to this situation, but we will be focussing on job redesign, part time working and flexible retirement in the next couple of years to deliver improvements.
- 3.6 More data can be found in **Appendix 1**.

## **4. Voluntary Leavers**

- 4.1 Our voluntary leavers rate for 2018/19 was 8.8% compared with 13.5% in the previous year. This is below our target of 10% and is a very welcome result as we were concerned that our high rates in recent years may have been indicative of worker dissatisfaction. This bodes well for the 2019 Best Companies Employee Engagement survey.
- 4.2 Whilst we wanted to reduce our turnover rate we have no particular wish to see it fall further. Any organisation needs new blood to help it grow and improve and people seeking rapid progression by moving from authority to authority is fine local government tradition that on balance helps all councils. We will of course continue to monitor the figures, but no particular action is required at this time.

**Ward(s):** All wards  
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**Background Papers:** None

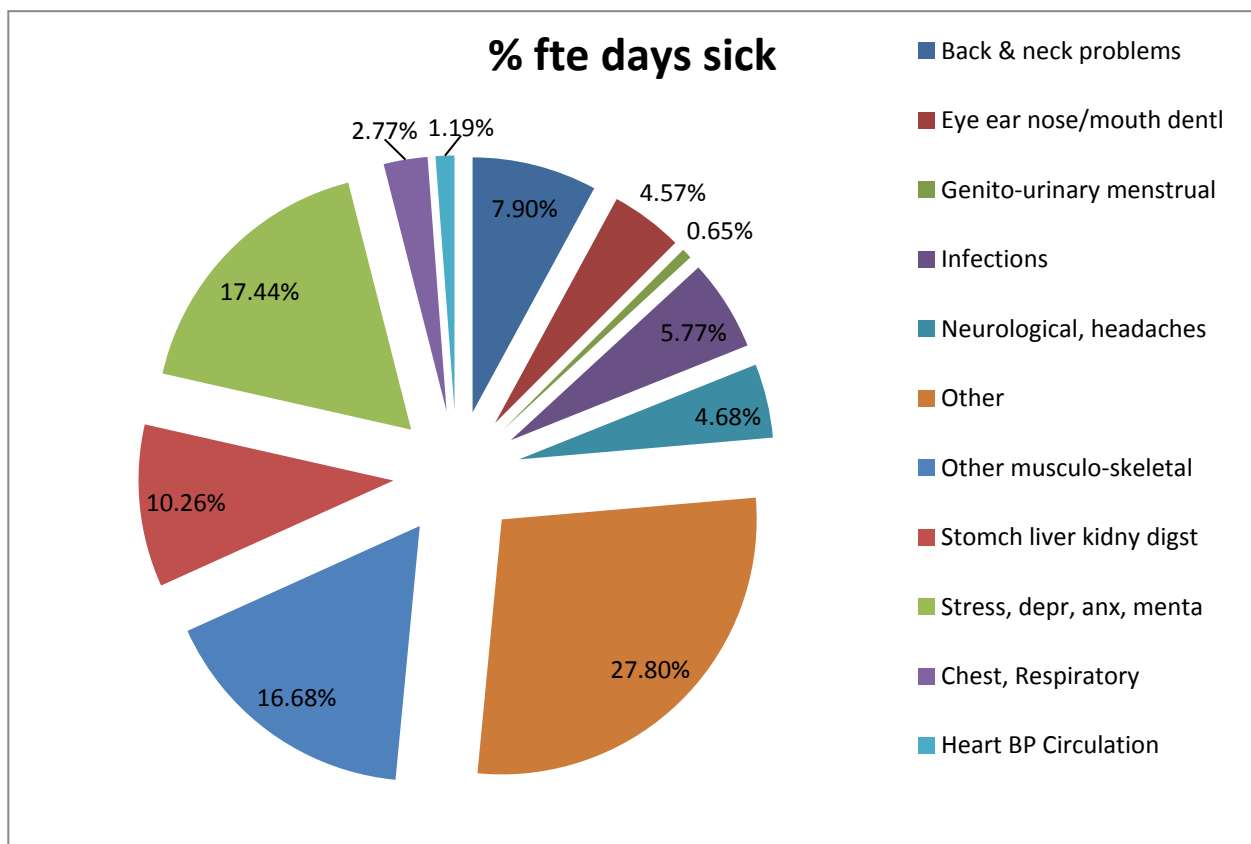
## **Appendix 1**

### **Sickness analysis Q4 2018/19**

- Total sickness by category
- Sickness by Service Area showing self cert & Dr certified days and average sick by FTE
- Long term & Short term sickness breakdown
- Quarterly sickness trend

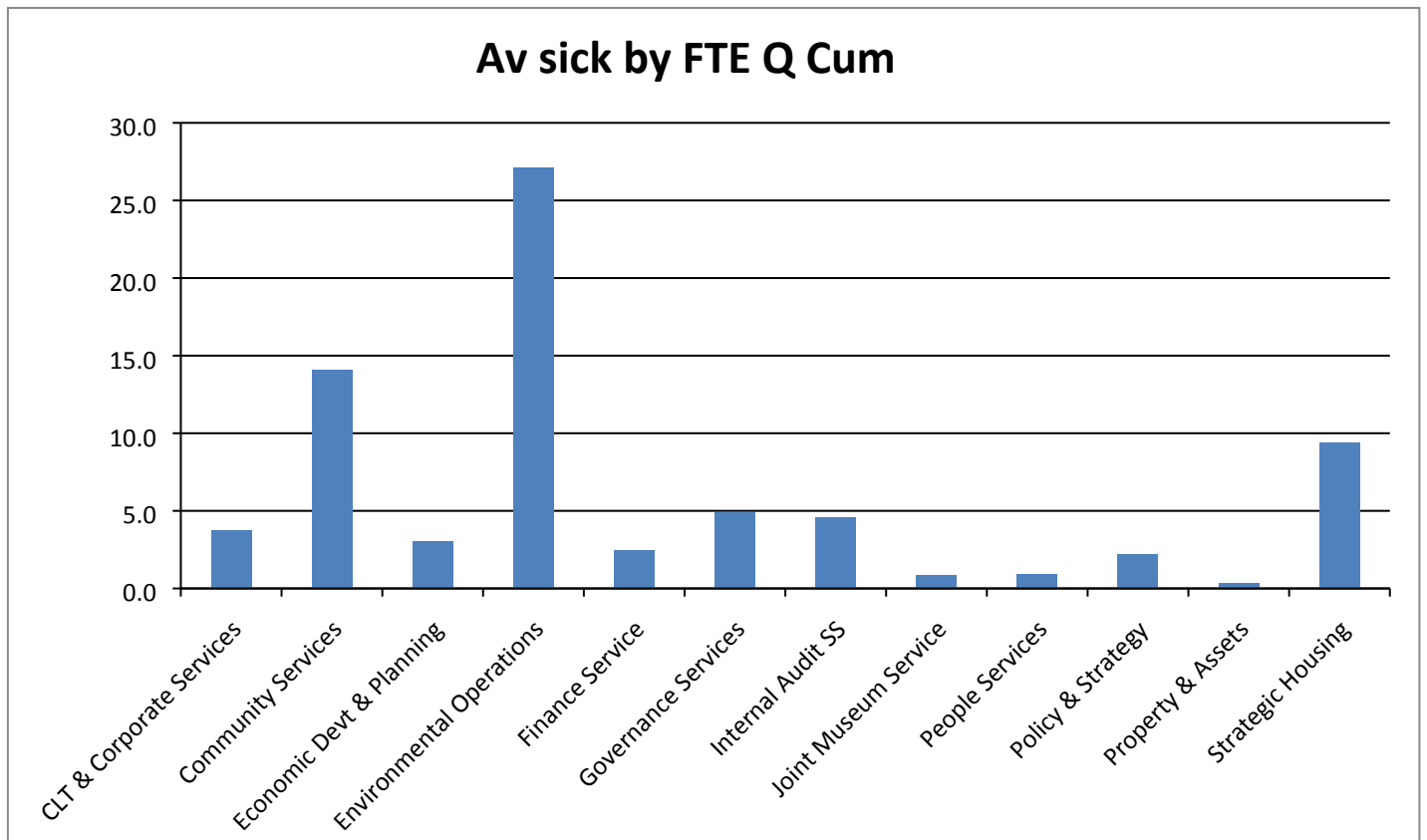
### Qtr 4 Sickness 2018/19 - Total Sickness by Category

	Sum of fte days sick	Sum of SC fte days	Sum of DR fte days	% fte days sick
Back & neck problems	208.60	64.86	143.74	6.81%
Eye ear nose/mouth dentl	120.70	47.71	72.99	5.61%
Genito-urinary menstrual	17.29	9.79	7.50	0.76%
Infections	152.34	121.49	30.86	3.64%
Neurological, headaches	123.65	62.14	61.51	6.09%
Other	734.43	303.98	430.45	26.20%
Other musculo-skeletal	440.68	59.31	381.36	17.38%
Stomch liver kidney digst	271.03	180.53	90.50	11.44%
Stress, depr, anx, menta	460.70	116.57	344.13	16.88%
Chest, Respiratory	73.29	41.28	32.01	3.65%
Heart BP Circulation	31.33	30.12	1.22	1.54%
Pregnancy related	8.05	8.05	0.00	1.54%
Grand Total	2642.09	1045.83	1596.26	100.00%



**Sickness by Service Area showing self cert & Dr certified days and average sick by FTE – Q4 - 18/19**

	Sum of DR fte days	Sum of SC fte days	Sum of fte days sick	FTE average Qtr 4	Av sick by FTE Q Cum
CLT & Corporate Services	19.0	10.2	29.2	7.8	3.7
Community Services	311.6	168.1	479.8	34.0	14.1
Economic Devt & Planning	55.8	30.5	86.3	28.1	3.1
Environmental Operations	1002.9	511.3	1514.3	55.8	27.2
Finance Service	15.0	12.0	27.0	10.8	2.5
Governance Services	37.6	23.8	61.4	12.6	4.9
Internal Audit SS	22.0	37.0	59.0	12.8	4.6
Joint Museum Service	1.2	49.7	50.9	57.8	0.9
People Services	0.0	7.0	7.0	7.4	0.9
Policy & Strategy	0.0	34.4	34.4	15.6	2.2
Property & Assets	0.0	1.0	1.0	2.9	0.3
Strategic Housing	131.1	160.8	291.9	31.1	9.4
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1596.3</b>	<b>1045.8</b>	<b>2642.1</b>	<b>276.6</b>	<b>9.6</b>



**Long term & Short term sickness breakdown**

**Q 1 to 4**

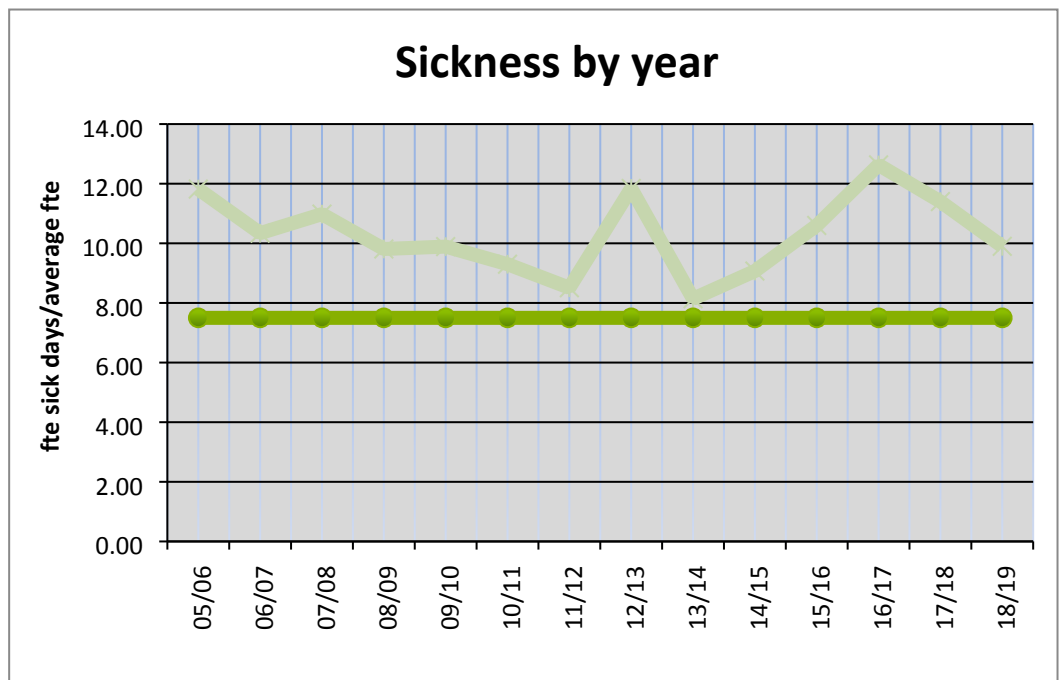
	<b>Sum of DR fte days</b>	<b>Sum of SC fte days</b>	<b>Sum of fte days sick</b>
<b>L</b>			
Strategic Housing	97.0	88.5	185.5
Internal Audit SS	22.0	0.0	22.0
Community Services	193.1	21.3	214.4
Governance Services	23.1	0.0	23.1
Environmental Operations	482.9	44.2	527.1
<b>L Total</b>	<b>818.1</b>	<b>154.0</b>	<b>972.1</b>
<b>S</b>			
Finance Service	15.0	12.0	27.0
Strategic Housing	34.1	72.3	106.4
Economic Devt & Planning	55.8	30.5	86.3
Internal Audit SS	0.0	37.0	37.0
CLT & Corporate Services	19.0	10.2	29.2
Community Services	118.5	146.9	265.4
Governance Services	14.5	23.8	38.3
Joint Museum Service	1.2	49.7	50.9
People Services	0.0	7.0	7.0
Policy & Strategy	0.0	34.4	34.4
Environmental Operations	520.0	467.1	987.2
Property & Assets	0.0	1.0	1.0
<b>S Total</b>	<b>778.1</b>	<b>891.8</b>	<b>1670.0</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1596.3</b>	<b>1045.8</b>	<b>2642.1</b>

<b>Long &gt; 27 days in calendar month</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>3.5</b>
<b>Short &lt; 27 days in calendar month</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>6.0</b>
	<b>100%</b>	<b>9.6</b>

### Sickness Trend data

Year	1st Q	2nd Q	3rd Q	4th Q	Total to date	Tgt
05/06	3.14	3.40	2.36	2.92	11.82	7.50
06/07	2.34	2.64	2.40	2.97	10.34	7.50
07/08	2.10	2.93	3.19	2.76	10.98	7.50
08/09	2.08	2.34	2.68	2.70	9.81	7.50
09/10	2.74	2.01	2.55	2.59	9.89	7.50
10/11	2.03	2.12	2.28	2.88	9.30	7.50
11/12	1.53	1.88	2.75	2.35	8.51	7.50
12/13	2.13	3.14	3.11	3.46	11.84	7.50
13/14	2.60	1.96	2.00	1.58	8.14	7.50
14/15	1.74	2.72	2.31	2.30	9.07	7.50
15/16	1.81	2.20	2.75	3.84	10.60	7.50
16/17	3.30	3.70	3.63	2.00	12.63	7.50
17/18	1.70	2.60	3.40	3.70	11.40	7.50
18/19	2.60	1.90	2.90	2.50	9.90	7.50
Av	2.27	2.54	2.74	2.75		

### Sickness by year



### Sickness Trend data

# Sickness by Quarter

