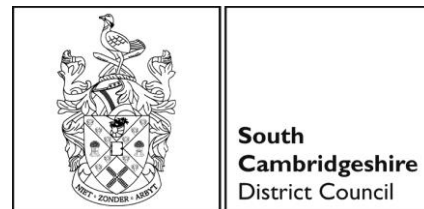


South Cambridgeshire Hall
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Wednesday 01 November 2023

To: Chair – Councillor Sally Ann Hart
Vice-Chair – Councillor Anna Bradnam
Members of the Employment and Staffing Committee – Councillors
Sunita Hansraj, Mark Howell, William Jackson-Wood, Richard Stobart and
John Williams

Quorum: 3

Substitutes: Councillors Heather Williams, Sue Ellington, Graham Cone, Bunty Waters,
Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya, Peter Fane, Ariel Cahn,
Dr. Aidan Van de Weyer, Peter Sandford and Bridget Smith

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Employment and Staffing Committee**, which will be held in at South Cambridgeshire Hall on **Thursday, 9 November 2023 at 10.00 a.m.**

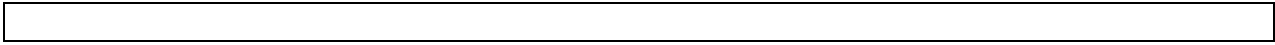
Members are respectfully reminded that when substituting on committees, subcommittees, and outside or joint bodies, Democratic Services must be advised of the substitution ***in advance of*** the meeting. It is not possible to accept a substitute once the meeting has started. Council Standing Order 4.3 refers.

Yours faithfully
Liz Watts
Chief Executive

Requests for a large print agenda must be received at least 48 hours before the meeting.

Agenda		Pages
1. Apologies for Absence To receive Apologies for Absence from Committee members.		
2. Declarations of Interest		
3. Minutes of Previous Meeting		5 - 6
4. 4 Day Week Review		7 - 16
5. Resolution Policy & Toolkit		17 - 30

6.	Fertility Treatment Policy & Manager Toolkit	31 - 46
7.	HR Recruitment, Retention and Absence Data Aug-Sept 2023	47 - 54



Guidance For Visitors to South Cambridgeshire Hall

Notes to help those people visiting the South Cambridgeshire District Council offices

While we try to make sure that you stay safe when visiting South Cambridgeshire Hall, you also have a responsibility for your own safety, and that of others.

Security

When attending meetings in non-public areas of the Council offices you must report to Reception, sign in, and at all times wear the Visitor badge issued. Before leaving the building, please sign out and return the Visitor badge to Reception.

Public seating in meeting rooms is limited. For further details contact Democratic Services on 03450 450 500 or e-mail democratic.services@scambs.gov.uk

Emergency and Evacuation

In the event of a fire, a continuous alarm will sound. Leave the building using the nearest escape route; from the Council Chamber or Mezzanine viewing gallery this would be via the staircase just outside the door. Go to the assembly point at the far side of the staff car park opposite the staff entrance

- **Do not** use the lifts to leave the building. If you are unable to use stairs by yourself, the emergency staircase landings have fire refuge areas, which give protection for a minimum of 1.5 hours. Press the alarm button and wait for help from Council fire wardens or the fire brigade.
- **Do not** re-enter the building until the officer in charge or the fire brigade confirms that it is safe to do so.

First Aid

If you feel unwell or need first aid, please alert a member of staff.

Access for People with Disabilities

We are committed to improving, for all members of the community, access to our agendas and minutes. We try to take all circumstances into account but, if you have any specific needs, please let us know, and we will do what we can to help you. All meeting rooms are accessible to wheelchair users. There are disabled toilet facilities on each floor of the building. Infra-red hearing assistance systems are available in the Council Chamber and viewing gallery. To use these, you must sit in sight of the infra-red transmitter and wear a 'neck loop', which can be used with a hearing aid switched to the 'T' position. If your hearing aid does not have the 'T' position facility then earphones are also available and can be used independently. You can get both neck loops and earphones from Reception.

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Recording of Business and Use of Mobile Phones

We are open and transparent about how we make decisions. We allow recording, filming and photography at Council, Cabinet and other meetings, which members of the public can attend, so long as proceedings at the meeting are not disrupted. We also allow the use of social media during meetings to bring Council issues to the attention of a wider audience. To minimise disturbance to others attending the meeting, please switch your phone or other mobile device to silent / vibrate mode.

Banners, Placards and similar items

You are not allowed to bring into, or display at, any public meeting any banner, placard, poster or other similar item. Failure to do so, will result in the Chairman suspending the meeting until such items are removed.

Disturbance by Public

If a member of the public interrupts proceedings at a meeting, the Chairman will warn the person concerned. If they continue to interrupt, the Chairman will order their removal from the meeting room. If there is a general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public, the Chairman may call for that part to be cleared. The meeting will be suspended until order has been restored.

Smoking

Since 1 July 2008, South Cambridgeshire District Council has operated a Smoke Free Policy. No one is allowed to smoke at any time within the Council offices, or in the car park or other grounds forming part of those offices.

Food and Drink

Vending machines and a water dispenser are available on the ground floor near the lifts at the front of the building. You are not allowed to bring food or drink into the meeting room.

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Agenda Item 3

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Employment and Staffing Committee held on Friday, 15 September 2023 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Sally Ann Hart – Chair
Councillor Anna Bradnam – Vice-Chair

Councillors: Peter Fane (substitute) Mark Howell
William Jackson-Wood John Williams

Officers: Helen Cornwell HR Service Manager
Jeff Membery Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate Services
Ian Senior Democratic Services

Councillors Heather Williams and Dr. Richard Williams were in attendance, by invitation.

1. Apologies for Absence

Councillors Sunita Hansraj and Richard Stobart sent apologies. Councillor Peter Fane attended the meeting as substitute for Councillor Stobart.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Committee authorised the Chair to sign, as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2023 subject as follows:

Minute 4 – Review of Hybrid Policy

Insert the word 'Working' between the words 'Hybrid' and 'Policy' to differentiate it from other hybrid policies.

Minute 5 – HR Recruitment, Retention and Absence Data for May 2023

In the first paragraph, delete the word 'was' from between the words 'data' and 'came' in the sentence beginning 'Officers advised...' so that the sentence now says, 'Officers advised that the data came from standard reporting packages and agreed to look at alternative presentation.'

4. Staff Health and Wellbeing Survey

The Employment and Staffing Committee received and noted by affirmation a report comparing the outcomes of staff surveys carried out in August 2022 and April 2023 to gather health and wellbeing data. The Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate Services concluded that the latter survey results showed a significant improvement in the staff's health and wellbeing.

In response to Members' questions, officers clarified the scoring system used and explained that the results for the Finance Service were indicative of the pressure staff were under at the time because of the need to get final accounts prepared for sign off. The Chair requested that the Committee be given an opportunity to review progress.

The Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate Services assured Councillor Peter Fane that managers were monitoring the working preferences of staff as between home and office.

Referring to paragraphs 7 to 9 of the report and the relevant section of Appendix A. the Vice-Chair welcomed the improvement in the data collected from those staff identifying as disabled. The HR Service Manager said that several factors may have prompted this such as the introduction of Disability Passports, the Council's status as a Disability Confident employer, the four-day-week and flexible working.

Councillor Heather Williams asked whether there had been any analysis into where members of staff preferred to work from and how attendance at South Cambridgeshire Hall was being monitored. In reply, the Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate Services said that no such analysis had been carried out at this stage. It was possible to monitor attendance at the office by analysing the use of access passes, but attendance was not the primary reason for doing so. He would raise the issue with CMT colleagues. The Vice-Chair said that staff should be trusted to work as suited them best and the outcome of the latest survey was encouraging in demonstrating increased levels of happiness.

The Chair concluded the debate by looking forward to further data, especially regarding those working part-time.

5. HR Recruitment, Retention and Absence data - June and July 2023

The Employment and Staffing Committee received and noted by affirmation a report containing absence, recruitment and turnover information.

Councillor Dr. Richard Williams suggested that the reported saving of £550,000 through replacing agency staff with permanent employees might be misleading because as posts the focus of attention were filled others might become vacant. Councillor Dr. Williams also highlighted the cost of absence. Councillor John Williams, speaking as Lead Cabinet Member for Resources, explained that the Council Budget made provision for temporary posts being filled by agency staff but did not provide for permanent posts being filled in that way.

Councillor Heather Williams sought clarification of the relationship between hard-to-fill posts and the budgeted for 20% reduction in staff. The Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate Services said that there was no fixed target for staff reductions.

The Meeting ended at 10.40 a.m.

Agenda Item 4



South
Cambridgeshire
District Council

Report to:	Employment and Staffing Committee	09 Nov 2023
Lead Cabinet Member:	Cllr John Williams- Lead Cabinet Member for Resources	
Lead Officer:	Jeff Membery- Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate Services	

4 Day Week Review

Executive Summary

Since the start of the 4-day working week trial in January 2023,

**For these indicators the score represents a comparison with benchmarked figures across a range of organisations. Minus figures show scores below the benchmark and positive figures show scores above.*

- Staff turnover has reduced by **36%**
- Intention to leave has improved (**-2** to **+9**)*
- 97 new members of staff have been successfully recruited – including some in to traditionally hard to fill roles.
- Physical Health has improved. (**-3** to **+3**)*
- Mental Health has improved. (**-4** to **+3**)*
- Motivation has improved. (**-1** to **+5**)*
- Sickness has reduced by **33%**
- The number of agency staff covering vacancies has reduced from 23 to 9
- Projected net cost of agency staff covering vacancies has reduced by **£776,000**
- Most KPIs have either improved or stayed the same when compared to the same quarter in the previous year and/or the average for that indicator since 2016.
- Complaints have reduced by **2.5%**

Based upon the current data, the ongoing year-long trial for office-based staff is on course to deliver the potential benefits identified at the start of the process.

Recommendations

It is recommended that that the Committee note the report

Reasons for Recommendations

This report looks to provide an update to Employment and Staffing Committee on the progress of the 4-day working week trial, and the current performance against the originally identified potential benefits that could be delivered. This committee was asked by Cabinet to receive these update reports to monitor the progress of the trial.

The report to Cabinet of September 2022, introducing the option of piloting a 4-day working week and identified potential benefits that a successfully managed 4-day working week arrangement could deliver. This report addresses each of these potential benefits by area and looks at the available evidence to evaluate whether they are currently being delivered by the ongoing trial for office-based staff.

Details

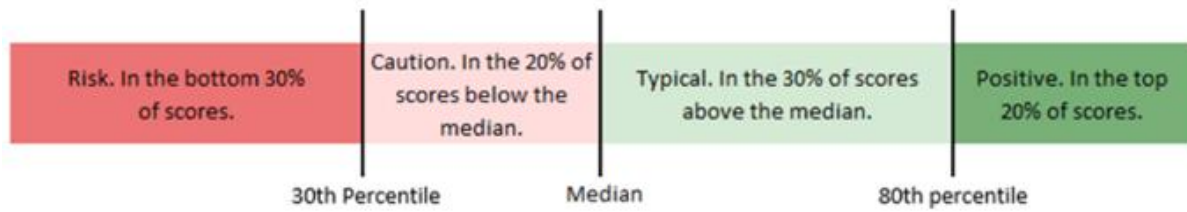
Health and wellbeing

- Improved employee health and wellbeing.
- More motivated employees.
- Reduced sickness rates.

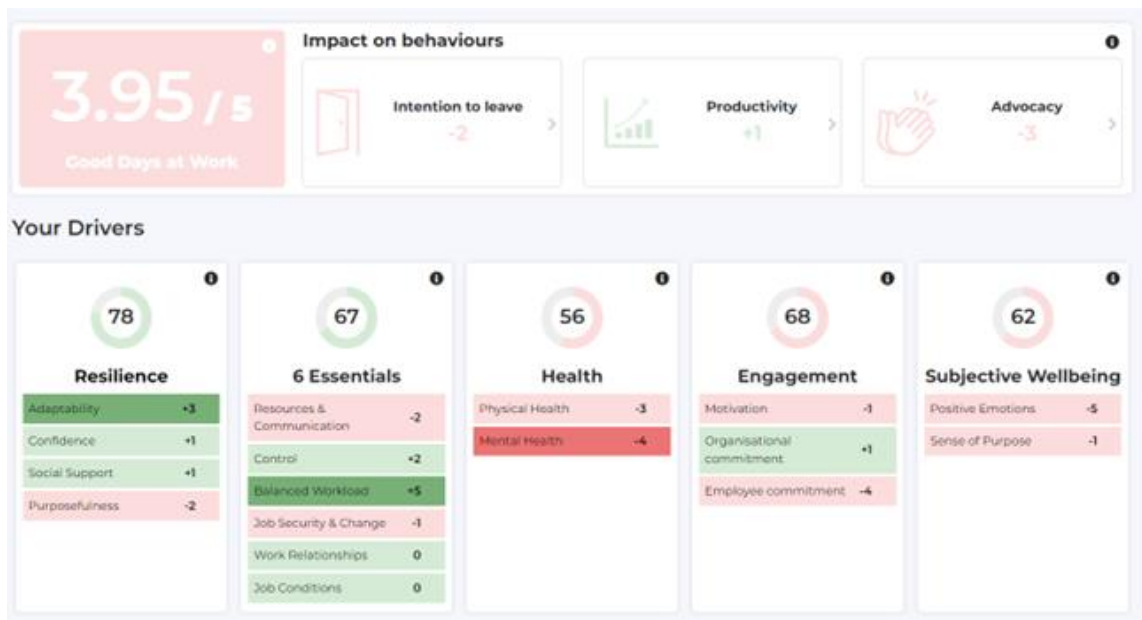
During the 4DW trial we have seen an overall improvement in staff wellbeing, shown through a decrease in sickness absence and through our health and wellbeing survey and feedback from colleagues.

Our staff survey, conducted in April 2023, showed a very positive improvement in all areas of staff wellbeing. The most significant improvements were made in the Six

Essentials category Resources & Communication; Control; Balanced Workload; Job Security & Change; Work Relationships; and Job Conditions) and the Health Overall Category (Physical Health; and Mental Health).



All staff dashboards
2022 – 310 respondents



All staff dashboard
2023 – 331 respondents



Of particular relevance to the identified potential benefits are;

- The improvement in physical health from -3 at the start of the initial trial to +3 at the end of it
- The improvement in mental health from -4 at the start of the initial trial to +3 at the end of it.
- The improvement in motivation scores from -1 before the start of the initial trial to +5 at the end of it.

In the nine-month period prior to the start of the trials (April 2022 to December 2022) our sick days per non-waste FTE for staff, was 0.76.

In the period January 2023 to September 2023 our sick days per non-waste FTE was 0.51, showing a decrease of 0.25 days per FTE sickness. This is a reduction in sickness levels of 33%

It is noticeable that this same level of reduction was not seen in the waste service who had not started their 4-day working week trial at that time. Their April 22 to December 22 FTE figure was 1.1 and for the period January 2023 to September 2023 was 1.06, showing a decrease of only 0.04. This is a reduction in sickness levels of slightly over just 4%

Although the results of the 2024 staff survey will need to be carefully analysed to ensure that the improvement in wellbeing has been maintained, based upon the currently available evidence it is safe to conclude that health and wellbeing have significantly improved since the start of the 4-day working week trial.

Recruitment and retention of staff.

- Better retention of staff.
- Improved recruitment.

In the pre-trial period, our voluntary turnover figure was 1.08. During the first 9 months of the trial this figure decreased by 36%, to 0.69.

Our 2022 staff wellbeing survey gave us a score of -2 (cautionary) in the “intention to leave” category, whereas our results from April 2023 showed a +9 score in this category, putting us in the top 20% of scores. This indicates that staff who may have considered leaving the council pre-trial are now intending to stay.

Within the trial period so far, we have successfully recruited 97 new members of staff, and 48 employees have been internally recruited into new positions.

Since August 2023 we have been sending a survey to all applicants who have been invited to interview for the council, asking for feedback on our recruitment processes and what attracted them to a role at the Council. Of the 21 responses we have received so far, 10 respondents selected the 4-day working week trial as a reason they chose to apply to the Council; 5 of these applicants had applied for ‘hard to fill’ roles including HGV drivers and planning officers.

We have also invited new starters at the Council to complete a survey on their induction and onboarding experience. So far we have received 16 responses, all of whom have stated that the 4-day working week trial impacted on their decision to apply for and accept a role at the Council. The most common reason was the health and wellbeing benefits, with greater flexibility and the opportunity for agile working being cited slightly less frequently. Only one respondent said that the 4 day-week had a negative impact on them due to the reduced time to learn their role and

complete their work. However, they added that they felt the 4-day week was a positive measure overall.

Productivity and performance

- Improved productivity
- No loss of performance
- Improved quality of work output.

This was an important series of benefits as a key consideration in evaluating the success or otherwise of the 4-day working week was that the Council needed to ensure that residents and businesses continued to receive at least as good a service from the Council as they did before the trial started. As officers were working less hours, this could only be achieved by increasing both individual and corporate productivity.

The Council uses Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to drive performance improvements, focussing as they do on those areas of our service that are most impactful on our residents and businesses. These KPIs are influenced by a range of factors such as levels of demand, the external economic environment (such as the cost-of-living crisis), current staffing levels and local events, and so naturally will vary in response to these.

An analysis of our performance in KPIs for the first quarter of this year (the details of which are contained in the report to September's Employment and staffing committee) show that: - compared to Q1 for 2022/23

- 12 improved.
- 2 are unchanged.
- 5 reduced.

Of those that reduced, all but one showed a reduction of less than 5%. Changes of +5% or – 5% are usual in any set of KPIs due to the factors mentioned above.

Perhaps the most statistically significant comparison however is a comparison with the average performance for these indicators since they were introduced in 2016. This mitigates against the impact of one-off events. This evaluation shows.

- 16 KPIs are better than or the same as the average since 2016.
- 1 is lower than the average since 2016
- 2 indicators cannot be directly compared.

It is worth noting that 3 of the KPIs reported in first quarter for this year were the best or 2nd best first quarter performance figures since 2016.

The importance of monitoring complaints was also identified in the report to Cabinet as this would potentially highlight any issues that might not be readily apparent from the KPIs.

In the period January to September 2022 the Council received 202 complaints about services included in the trial, in the period January to September 2023 the Council received 197 complaints in respect of those services, a reduction of 5 or 2.5%

The factors influencing KPI performance - as described above – means that variations in performance will happen whether or not a 4-day week trial is in operation. However, the combined performance information to date suggests that productivity has improved and the aim of ensuring that residents and businesses continued to receive at least as good services as before the trial has been met to date. Further KPI information up to and including March 2024 will continue to be an important part of determining the success or otherwise of the pilot.

Reduced costs of agency covering vacant posts.

- A potential reduction in the cost of agency staff covering vacant posts.

For the initial report to Cabinet in September 2022, in order to estimate the likely annual cost of agency staff covering vacancies, the number of such staff in July 2022 was taken as a base. (There were 23 such staff at the time). The salary cost was projected for 52 weeks giving a cost figure of just over £2 million. Doing a

comparison of the salary cost of permanent staff for those same roles (around 1.1 million) gave us an estimated potential savings figure of just under £1 million.

The background to this projection being that the Council had seen a steady increase in the need to use agency staff to cover vacancies in recent years, particularly in areas of high technical expertise such as planning. Therefore – if nothing else changed – the likelihood would have been that at any moment in time over the next 52 weeks we were likely to have around 23 agency staff (with a possible variance of 1 or 2 staff either way) and the monthly cost would therefore likely be reasonably consistent.

This was explained in the report to Cabinet of September 2022

“Our current use of agency staff across the Council to fill posts that we can’t recruit to is significant. When considering office-based staff, excluding agency staff whose posts are externally funded, as of August 2022, we have 23 agency staff. If we were to extrapolate their costs over a 12-month period, it would be £2,065,000. If these posts were filled with permanent staff, the costs would be approximately £1,100,000. Saving close to £1,000,000”

This same exercise of projecting cost based upon the current number of agency staff covering vacancies is undertaken regularly. The difference between the cost projected before the start of the trial and that at the time the new calculation was undertaken gives us the level of projected saving.

Date of calculation	Number of agency staff covering vacancies	Cost of agency (52 weeks)	Cost of permanent (52 weeks)	Net additional cost
July 2022	23	£2,065,000	£1,100,000	£965,000
October 2023	9	£455,000	£266,000	£189,000

The difference between the original net additional cost of £965,000 in July 2022 and the current (October 2023) net additional cost of £189,000 identifies projected savings of £776,000.

The 9 posts in the October 2023 figure, includes 6 vacancies in the Revenues and Benefits service which are covered by agency staff in the short term, but are not actively being recruited into at the current time as some of these roles are due to be removed from establishment in the next few months as part of a departmental restructure.

The report to Cabinet in May 2023 also highlighted the additional benefit that many of the vacant posts in the original list now being filled permanently were in the planning services which are usually exceptionally hard to fill due to the national shortage of planners. Of the original 23 posts identified as vacant and covered by agency in July 2022, all but 2 have now been either recruited in to or have been removed from establishment as the work has subsequently been automated or subsumed into other roles as efficiencies freed up officer time. Of those recruited into, the majority have been in the planning department which is a particularly welcome development.

Although projected costs give the best indication of potential savings ongoing, final figures can be influenced by other factors such as changes in the labour market and wage inflation - particularly in the agency sector.

It is however important to note that the Council's agency spend still fluctuates due to the need to bring in agency staff to carry out short term programmes where permanent staff are not required. For example, this includes employing temporary staff to support the Council's commitments under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

What can be said with certainty is that before the trial of the 4-day working week the trend for the number of agency staff needed to cover vacancies had been steadily increasing and stood at 23, since its introduction the trend has been steadily falling and currently stands at 9. This reduced need to use agency staff for this purpose will deliver a significant reduction in cost in this area.

The Trial in the Waste Service

The trial of the 4-day working week within the waste service commenced in September 2023 and coincided with changes to collection arrangements introduced to ensure route optimisation. These two separate events were introduced at the same time in order to minimise disruption to residents.

Although very early into this trial, the initial signs are that it is progressing well with performance on missed bins showing we collected 99.75% of bins against a target of 99.70% (see table below). Once fully meaningful data is available, a report will be brought to this committee giving a full update.

KPI Target	Collections						Crew Reporting				
	Week	Bins on Rounds	Bins Emptied	Bins Missed	% Bins Collected	Authorised Recollections	Crew reported issues are created during the collection				
							Bin Not Out	Wrong Bin Out	Bin is Contaminated	Other Issue ¹	
99.7%	Month 1	1	177,447	176,943	504 ✓	99.72%	131	5,318	478	519	301
		2	181,297	180,880	417 ✓	99.77%	109	3,595	118	465	416
	Month 1	1	177,447	176,869	578 ✗	99.67%	49	4,105	140	505	420
		2	181,297	180,691	606 ✗	99.67%	49	3,408	93	568	254
	Total:	717,488	715,383	2,105 ✓	99.71%	338	16,426	829	2,057	1,391	
Month 2	1	177,447	177,194	253 ✓	99.86%	48	2,624	99	438	482	
	2	181,297	180,846	451 ✓	99.75%	72	3,339	96	417	385	

¹ Other crew reported issues may include overweight, damaged or frozen bins etc.

	Total number of calls to external contact centre.				Total number of calls to internal contact centres			Total number of calls & emails to Business Support Team				Combined calls & emails received - All channels	Total calls and emails that related to route optimisation	
	WEEK	CCC	SCDC	TOTAL	CCC	SCDC	TOTAL	Calls	Emails	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	%	
	Month 1	1	220	201	421	88	92	180	31	1,361	1,392	1,993	98	4.92%
2		240	200	440	79	106	185	42	1,427	1,469	2,094	87	4.15%	
1		223	177	400	53	73	126	41	1,228	1,269	1,795	20	1%	
2		185	142	327	45	65	110	32	1,171	1,203	1,640	2	0%	
Total:		868	720	1,588	265	336	601	146	5,187	5,333	7,522	207	2.75%	
Month 2	1	170	140	310	41	48	89	21	1,131	1,152	1,546	1	0	
	2	104	97	201	67	67	134	19	964	983	1,318	4	0	

Conclusion

The data for the office-based trial continues to be very positive. Retention has improved, recruitment has improved, health and wellbeing has improved whilst performance has been at least maintained and projected costs reduced.

Report Author:

Jeff Membery
Telephone: 07714-600944

Agenda Item 5



South
Cambridgeshire
District Council

Report to:	Employment and Staffing Committee 09 Nov 2023
Lead Cabinet Member:	Cllr John Williams- Lead Cabinet Member for Resources
Lead Officer:	Jeff Membery- Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate Services

Resolution Policy & Toolkit

Executive Summary

1. We are seeking approval to proceed with the introduction of a Resolution Policy and Employee toolkit to replace the current outdated [Grievance policy](#), last reviewed in 2012. It is hoped that the new approach to complaints raised will encourage a more solutions focused approach.

Key Decision

2. No

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that ESC approves the introduction of the Resolution Policy and Employee toolkit in replacement of the current Grievance Policy.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. Feedback received from colleagues:
5. Following formal complaint under grievance policy, that the policy is outdated, and the process was unclear. With no clear indication on who had access to raise a grievance. This led to a risk to the organisation receiving grievances from ex-employees with an option to appeal a decision to employment and staffing committee even though they were no longer employed.
6. Feedback from member of LT:
7. *“The hearing brought up several issues within the relevant team that I was not aware of at all. I will be working with HR to see how such issues can be addressed, essentially, I would like all colleagues to feel comfortable and confident enough to raise any matter of concern to them, either to me, HR or other member of LT that can take action.”*

8. A resolution request is more people and solutions focused. Phase 2 of our policy review would include discussion with Unions to incorporate the Dignity at Work Policy into the resolution toolkits.

Details

9. The Resolution approach has been taken by other organisations including the [NHS](#), [North East Lincolnshire Council](#) and the [London Borough Council for Newham and Havering](#).
10. Key changes:
 - a. Resolution focused whilst remaining aligned with ACAS Code of Practice
 - b. Process is clearer with a descriptive flowchart
 - c. An informal Resolution Request involves an assessment meeting which could resolve the issue or result in a facilitated conversation; mediation; one-to-one coaching; a team conference in the case of team disputes or collective “resolution request”; or formal investigation.
 - d. If not resolved informally, request will move to a formal process which will result in a formal recommendation for resolution.
 - e. Resolution request can be raised formally in the first instance if employee feels the seriousness of the concern cannot be resolved informally.
 - f. Employee toolkit created to be used in conjunction with policy – explained in a question-and-answer format.
 - g. Right to appeal updated to align with ACAS Code of Practice
 - h. Appeal in grievance was to “the Chair of the Employment Committee, who will appoint a panel of three members to hear your appeal” – update to appeal being heard by an appointed manager (member of LT) via the HR Manager.

Options

11. Option 1 – Approve the new style resolution policy and toolkit to progress to Union discussion and colleague feedback.
12. Option 2 – Review existing grievance policy and update in line with current employment law legislation and ACAS best practice.

Implications

Equality and Diversity

13. An EqIA has already been completed.
14. Proposed Resolution policy is in line with best practice and employment law.

15. Proposed Resolution policy offers all colleagues a platform to voice any concerns or issues they have in the workplace. As well as upskilling managers to have difficult conversations in the workplace.
16. The proposed Resolution policy is a more accessible format, and provides more guidance to employees via the introduction of a toolkit.
17. It should have a positive impact to those that raise concerns as it is a solution focused process and encourages effective communication to resolve the issues in the first instance. The toolkit includes a requirement for reasonable adjustments to the process/policy where required.
18. Any issues raised will be dealt with more proactively as the new policy is solutions focused and will likely produce a more amicable outcome

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

A modern and caring Council

19. The Council's business plan priorities include to be a modern and caring Council. We will ensure the Council is structured and appropriately resourced to deliver effective services. We create places where people feel safe, and communities thrive. This policy promotes and actively encourages positive and constructive behaviours in the workplace. ⁽¹⁾

Appendices

Appendix 01 – Resolution Policy
Appendix 02 – Employee Toolkit

Report Author:

Bethan Gregory, Senior HR Advisor & Emma Weston, HR Advisor
Telephone: (01954) 713030

¹ [Do traditional grievance procedures destroy relationships? - Personnel Today](#)

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Resolution Policy and Procedure

Document Control	
Date of Last version	Oct 2012
Latest review	June 2023
Name of Reviewer	Emma Weston/ Bethan Gregory
Consultation	
Approved by	
Next Review Due	

Resolution Policy

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Guiding Principles

The Council believes that its employees should be treated equally and with respect.

This policy encourages early resolution and has a collaborative approach to dispute resolution. It promotes mediation throughout the process to balance the rights and best interests of all parties.

Any dispute should be treated in a fair and consistent way and dealt with quickly.

This policy applies to all permanent and fixed term employees as a method for resolving disputes. It may be used in individual disputes, team disputes and in collective disputes.

A resolution request by an agency worker, casual worker or ex-employee will be investigated. Ex-employees should raise a request as soon as possible after leaving or within 3 months of the last instance. Following the investigation, you will receive a written outcome. In the interest of confidentiality, the outcome will provide limited information.

If you are unsure whether to use the resolution policy or another policy such as Dignity at Work, please contact HR.

This policy should be used in conjunction with the employee toolkit which can be found on Insite.

Statutory Guidance

This policy meets and exceeds the standards set out in all relevant legislation and in the [ACAS Code of Practice](#).

Role of HR Team

The role of the HR Team is to advise managers and employees on the application of this policy. A member of the HR team can:

- answer questions that you may have about the resolution process or policy;
- signpost to any support that may be beneficial as part of the resolution process;

A member of the HR team will usually be present during any meetings to:

- take notes,

- support the manager chairing the meeting,
- advise and ensure that the procedure is followed,
- act as a mediator or chair a facilitated conversation.

The Informal Resolution Process

Resolution Request

1. You can make a request to your line manager. If you have an issue with your line manager, you can make a request to their line manager. Provide a copy to the HR team. **See *employee toolkit for template.***
2. Groups of employees can raise a "resolution request" if they have the same issue.
3. The resolution assessment process will begin when HR receive your resolution request.
4. In the interests of confidentiality, during the resolution process, you can only discuss this matter with your workplace companion or Trade Union Rep.
5. If you would like wellbeing support throughout this process, please include this in your request, or subsequently speak to a member of HR.

Assessment Meeting

After receiving a resolution request, you will have an Assessment Meeting. Your line manager or an appointed manager will chair the meeting and a member of the HR team will be present. The outcome from the assessment meeting may result in the following:

- A facilitated conversation;
- Mediation;
- One-to-one coaching;
- A team conference in the case of team disputes or collective "resolution request";
- Investigation,
- Request is accepted.

See the *Employee Toolkit for further information.*

Formal Resolution Meeting

If the matter is not resolved informally, a formal resolution meeting will take place. An independent manager will Chair the formal resolution meeting.

The outcome will be a formal recommendation for resolution, usually agreed by the attendees in the meeting. You must take all reasonable steps to attend this meeting.

Within 5 business days of the meeting, you will receive a written outcome. If there is a delay, the Chair will write to you to confirm expected date of outcome.

Employees have the right to appeal the outcome of the formal resolution meeting.

In the case of Head of Service or Chief Operating Officer, an Executive Director or the Chief Executive will hold the Formal meeting with you. If your resolution request is about an Executive Director or the Chief Executive, then it will be referred to the Chair of the Employment & Staffing Committee and an Independent Advisor.

Appeal Process

To appeal a formal resolution outcome, you must write to the HR Manager within 10 business days of receiving the written outcome. You cannot appeal an informal resolution meeting; instead, you should move to the formal resolution stage.

The decision given at the Appeal stage is final.

Keeping Records

In the interests of both employer and employee, written records will be kept during the resolution process. Records will include:

- The issue(s) raised
- A copy of any written communication from the employee(s)
- The employer's response
- Action taken
- Reasons for action taken
- Whether there was an appeal and, if so, the outcome
- Subsequent developments.

Records will be kept in confidence and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (2018).

A copy of the minutes of all meetings will be provided to the manager and the employee.

In certain circumstances (for example to protect a witness) the employer might withhold some information. This is in line with ACAS Code of Practice on Discipline and Grievance.

Employee Resolution Toolkit

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When should I raise something under the Resolution Policy?

If you feel unable to resolve your concern following conversations with your manager, you can speak to Human Resources to understand your options.

The Resolution policy aims to bring complaints, conflicts or disputes to a resolution speedily and effectively. Wherever possible, the resolution policy places responsibility for the resolution of conflicts and disputes directly with the people involved.

You might decide to use the resolution policy if you have a dispute with a colleague. Another example might be if you have concerns over terms and conditions of employment; health and safety; new working practices; the working environment and/or equality of opportunity.

What do I do if I have the same issue to be resolved as a colleague?

Your resolution request is collective when you and your colleagues all have the same issue. No employee should be pressured into raising a collective resolution request.

A collective resolution request is applicable if you and your colleagues raising the request agree to do so (without any pressure put on others to join the collective process)

If you and your colleagues are all members of the same trade union, you can seek their support. Alternatively, you and your colleagues can agree to nominate one of you to act on behalf of all of you.

If there is not a nominated representative, you and your colleagues will be entitled to address concerns individually at the formal meeting, but you will have no additional right to be accompanied beyond having your colleagues present.

If you have raised a collective resolution request:

- You and your colleagues will have one formal hearing and one appeal hearing (if required).
- You and your colleagues will be notified individually of the outcome at each stage of the process.

If you or your colleagues wish to be represented by your trade union representatives on an individual basis, the “resolution request” will be treated on an individual basis.

Resolution Procedure

1. Employee raises a request for resolution
2. Assessment meeting takes place
 - a. Assessment meeting outcomes:
 - i. Coaching
 - ii. Facilitated conversation
 - iii. Team conference
 - iv. Mediation
 - v. Investigation – which could result in moving to a Formal Stage or another policy
 - vi. Request is accepted
 - b. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you can request a formal meeting
 - i. A formal meeting will be arranged with an independent chair/facilitator to discuss your ongoing concerns and what outcome you are pursuing
 1. If you are not satisfied with the formal resolution outcome you can appeal to the HR Manager. An appeal meeting will be arranged. This is the final stage of the resolution procedure.

Informal Resolution Procedure

How do I make a resolution request?

This could be in writing by email or letter. An example can be found below. *Please delete the blue text as appropriate*

“To: *(your line manager or their manager if the issue is regarding your own line manager)*”

Cc: *HR@scamb.gov.uk*

I am writing to request a resolution to the following issue(s):

I have tried to resolve this in the following way(s):

I am seeking the following resolution:

I would like to raise this request: *informally / formally (If formally please explain the reason for not addressing the issue informally in the first instance.)*

I *do / do not* require wellbeing support.

I have attached the following evidence:

I would like to suggest you to speak to the following people as witnesses to the issue:

I would prefer the assessment meeting to take place: *in person / on Microsoft Teams*".

What is an Assessment Meeting?

The resolution assessment meeting is an opportunity for a manager and/or the HR department to talk with you and identify the most suitable route to resolution. This should take place within 10 business days from receipt of your request. This is a meeting to get context around your concerns raised.

Your line manager/appointed manager will Chair and HR will be present. You can be accompanied by a TU Rep or work colleague.

This could take place in person or via Microsoft Teams. Please let HR or your line manager know your preference.

What can the outcome be of an Assessment Meeting?

A facilitated conversation

It's an informal meeting to identify and resolve a disagreement or conflict. This is an opportunity for everyone to get together and constructively find a way forward. It can be difficult to resolve concerns between colleagues without everyone present and hearing what each other have to say.

This is a confidential discussion between all parties. HR may be present.

The role of the Chair (facilitator) is:

- to remain neutral
- explain the conditions for dialogue
- actively listen

The meeting should be solution focused with the aim of reaching an agreed outcome. No HR record is kept of any facilitated conversations, only the agreed outcome.

Independent mediation delivered by a trained and accredited mediator

The mediator is an impartial third party who helps the parties have an open and honest dialogue. The mediator may be a trained line manager, HR professional, or an external mediator. The meeting should be solution focused with the aim of reaching an agreed outcome. Any agreement should come from the parties involved, not the mediator, they are not there to advise or judge. Mediation is a voluntary process, so all in attendance have to agree to be there. No HR record is kept of any mediation sessions, only the agreed outcome.

What is the difference between mediation and facilitated conversation?

[Click here to find a document which explains the differences.](#)

One-to-one coaching

We have trained up a team of workplace coaches who are now on hand to help you to gain greater awareness of yourself, your situation and your challenges so that you can discover new ways of working or behaving that will help you fulfil your true potential. Coaching can provide an opportunity to work on meeting these challenges whilst achieving your own goals and objectives. [Click here for information on coaching.](#)

A team meeting in the case of team disputes or collective “requests for resolution”

Where a dispute is within in a team, or a collective resolution request is raised team conferencing may be used. This can take place in person or remotely.

The four core principles to Team Conferencing:

- All affected parties should attend the conference
- It promotes a collaborative approach
- It's led by neutral facilitator(s) who manage the process
- It's confidential.

Investigation

The key purpose of the investigation is to discover all the relevant information in a fair, and objective manner. An investigation may include gathering evidence such as witness statements/interviews, photographic or video evidence, copies of communication. The length of an investigation will depend on the complexity of the concern but will always be dealt with as quickly as possible. If the investigation cannot be completed within 15 business days, you will receive an explanation as to why and an expected completion date.

The outcome of the investigation at this stage may result in:

- Moving to the formal meeting stage
- or for the matter to be transferred to the disciplinary and/or dignity at work policy.

Your request is accommodated.

Your request may be able to be resolved and accepted during the assessment meeting. You will receive a written copy of the assessment meeting within 5 business days.

Formal Resolution Procedure

What happens if I don't want to raise a resolution request informally?

If you feel your issue cannot be resolved informally, you can request to have a formal resolution meeting. This request should be included in your initial resolution request to your line manager which includes a reason for not addressing informally.

Formal Resolution Meeting – what is it?

A new independent manager will chair the formal resolution meeting. There may be a delay to holding the formal resolution meeting if an investigation is required.

You will be given 5 business days' notice of the formal meeting.

Any previous documentation will be shared with the Chair. You should provide any additional evidence 3 business days prior to the meeting. You should also inform the Chair if you are intending to bring a witness to the formal resolution meeting.

Outcome of a Formal Resolution Meeting

The outcome of a Formal Resolution Meeting will be a formal recommendation for resolution. This is usually agreed by the attendees in the meeting. The purpose of a formal resolution meeting is to find a mutually agreeable solution to resolve the issue.

Appeal

If you are not satisfied with the Formal Resolution Recommendation, you can write to the HR Manager to request an appeal meeting.

Your appeal should include the reason you are appealing and your desired outcome. Your reason must fall into one of these categories:

- New information has come to light which was not considered at the previous formal meeting.
- Incorrect application of procedure at earlier stages.
- The Manager chairing the earlier meetings did not consider all of the resolution options available to them.
- The outcome does not resolve the problem.

You will then be invited to attend a meeting with the nominated Head of Service.

The nominated Appeal Meeting Chair will supply a written reply to your appeal within 5 business days of the meeting. If there is a delay, the Chair will write to you to confirm an expected date of outcome.

You will receive 5 business days' notice of an appeal meeting.

FAQs

When will HR be present during this process?

HR will normally be present at any meetings to support the Chair to advise on procedure, take notes and ensure the procedure is followed. HR won't be present at mediation meetings.

When can I be accompanied?

You can bring a Trade Union Rep or work colleague to an assessment meeting, formal meeting or appeal meeting. You should arrange this support and notify the HR team of the name of your companion or Trade Union Rep. The role of the companion or Trade Union Rep is to support you, they cannot answer questions put to you.

My request for resolution involves an issue with my manager, I don't feel comfortable raising it to their manager.

If you are uncomfortable raising your request to your line manager's manager, you can send your request to HR and they can appoint an independent chair for the assessment meeting.

What happens if I have raised a resolution request whilst I'm going through a disciplinary process?

If you raise an issue while you are subject to disciplinary proceedings, if appropriate (depending on the nature of the issue(s) raised), the disciplinary proceedings may be temporarily suspended pending the outcome of your resolution request.

The organisation may also follow both the disciplinary and resolution processes concurrently. If you feel that the disciplinary action taken against you is wrong or unjust, you should appeal against the decision under the Disciplinary Policy.

What happens if I raise a resolution request and I've handed in my notice or left employment?

Employees are encouraged to raise any issues at the earliest opportunity. If a former employee of the Council makes a complaint about an issue related to their employment, they should write to the HR Team as soon as possible after leaving, but within three months of the last incident. The complaint will be managed under the Council's Resolution Complaints Policy.

An appointed manager will investigate and provide recommendations for next steps. You will receive a written outcome, with limited detail due to confidentiality.

For example:

The outcome recommends another employee required a Performance Improvement Plan. The outcome letter you receive wouldn't include this information.

What is my role under the resolution policy?

- To fully engage in respectful dialogue to resolve issues at the earliest possible stage of conflict.
- To work together to find mutually acceptable, win/win outcomes to conflict.
- To be courageous and take steps to pro-actively resolve conflict in a solution focussed manner.
- To approach all conversations respectfully, constructively, and non-judgementally.
- To raise any matters in a timely manner, so that they can be resolved fairly and quickly.
- To maintain confidentiality and deliver on any agreements reached throughout the process.
- To take ownership and responsibility for resolving any conflicts or disputes.

What is my manager's responsibility?

- They should seek advice from Human Resources in a timely manner.
- To promote constructive and collaborative conversations and respectful dialogue.
- To listen actively, non-judgementally and with sensitivity.
- To act with compassion, impartiality, integrity and without taking sides.
- To raise the profile of the Resolution Policy and the approaches available to effectively manage conflict.
- To maintain an open culture where people can speak up about their experiences.

What is HR's responsibility?

- Ensure provision of training, support, and guidance for managers.
- Regularly review and monitor the operation and effectiveness of the policy and toolkit.

Reasonable Adjustments

In the application of the resolution policy, the Council will make reasonable adjustments for employees who are unable to deal with written correspondence and requirements due to disability, as well as any other reasonable adjustments that may be required to enable an employee to fulfill their obligations as part of this Policy. Employees who need assistance with interpreting this policy can contact the HR team for guidance and support.

Absence During the Resolution Process

If you are involved in the Resolution Process and are unfit to attend work due to illness, the manager will contact you. If appropriate, medical advice will be sought.

If possible, the Resolution Process will continue and you will be invited to attend meetings as necessary, or alternative arrangements will be made to engage with you, for example setting questions in writing. If it is not possible for the Resolution Process to continue during your absence, this will be reviewed upon your return to work.

Agenda Item 6



South
Cambridgeshire
District Council

Report to:	Employment and Staffing Committee 09 Nov 2023
Lead Cabinet Member:	Cllr John Williams- Lead Cabinet Member for Resources
Lead Officer:	Jeff Membery- Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate Services

Fertility Treatment Policy & Manager Toolkit

Executive Summary

1. In November 2022, [The Fertility Treatment Bill](#) was introduced in Parliament. The Bill will require employers to allow an employee to take paid time off work to attend fertility treatment appointments. In addition, an employee who has a "qualifying relationship" with a person receiving fertility treatment would be entitled to take unpaid time off work to accompany the person to the appointments. The next stage for this Bill, second reading, in the house of commons is scheduled to take place on Friday 24 November 2023.
2. In the interest of being a proactive employer, we have drafted the Fertility Treatment policy and manager toolkit to support those who are undergoing fertility treatment, both with paid time off for appointments and links to support including external organisations and charities
3. The policy and toolkit have been approved by Leadership team to be taken forward to ESC and has been sent to Trade Unions for feedback.

Key Decision

4. No

Recommendations

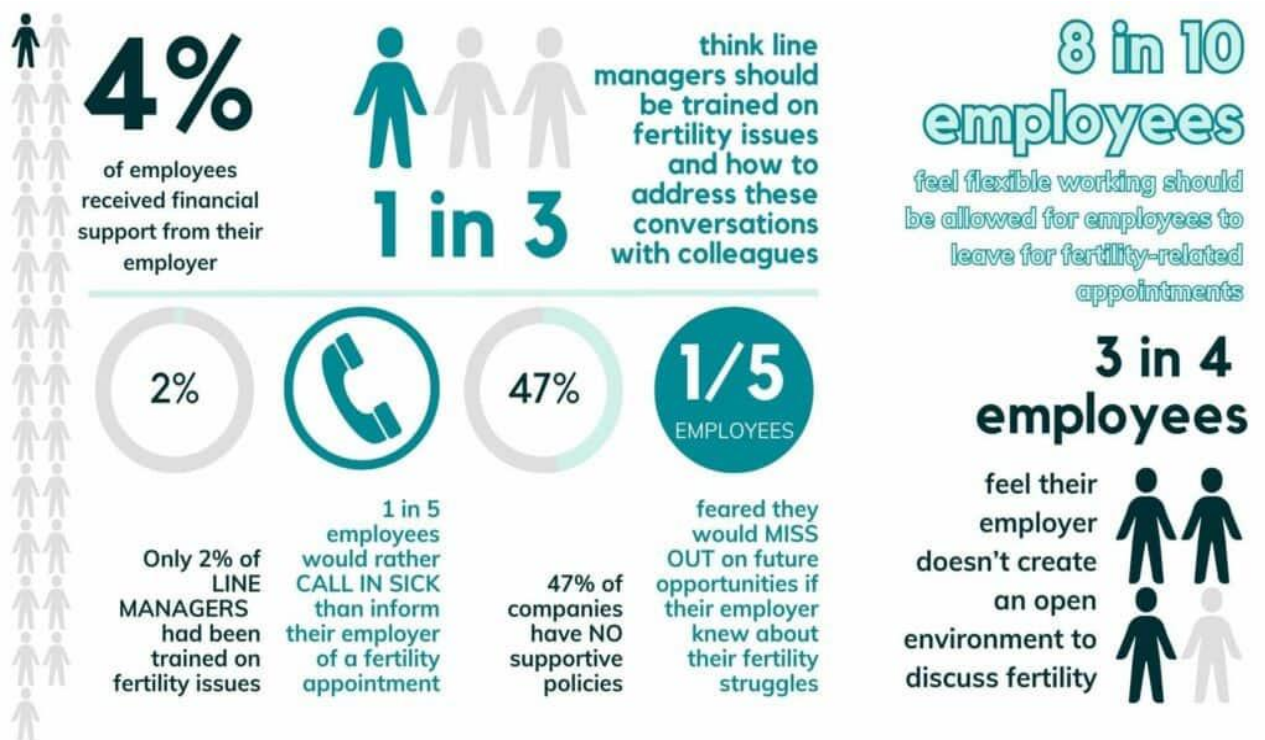
5. It is recommended that Employment and Staffing Committee approves this policy and toolkit.

Reasons for Recommendations

6. "IVF's emotional impact is immense: Fertility Network's Impact of Fertility Problems survey (2016) revealed 90 per cent of people were depressed and

42 per cent suicidal. But not only is IVF extremely distressing, it is also time-consuming and time-sensitive with multiple appointments at often distant clinics and a need for flexibility as last-minute adjustments to appointments are often required. The result is women and men having fertility treatment experience conflict between the demands of work and the time and emotional demands of treatment. Workplace support is crucial for managing this conflict but sadly this is typically lacking.” (1)

7. “Many couples will also be going through some financial strain as a result of infertility. There’ll be pressure to keep working to pay bills for fertility treatments. For example, IVF is only available on the NHS if certain criteria are met. But yet our survey found that only 1 in 25 people (4%) get financial support from their employer”. (2)



Details

8. Infertility is defined as a disease by the World Health Organisation (WHO) who state that 15% of the world population experience it, with it impacting one in six couples in the UK according to Fertility Network UK. As of 23/08/2023 we have 668 employees, which in theory would mean around 111 of our employees will be affected by infertility at some point in their lives (either directly or through their partner).

¹ [Fertility Network launches Fertility in the Workplace initiative to support employers and employees | Fertility Network \(fertilitynetworkuk.org\)](https://www.fertilitynetworkuk.org/)

² [The 2023 Workplace Infertility Stigma Survey: Do UK Workplaces Offer Sufficient Support for Employees on their Fertility Journeys? | Fertility Family](https://www.fertilityfamily.com/the-2023-workplace-infertility-stigma-survey-do-uk-workplaces-offer-sufficient-support-for-employees-on-their-fertility-journeys/)

9. Our current leave policy treats fertility treatment appointments as other medical appointments which are taken as annual leave, Flexi, TOIL or unpaid. Those undergoing the surrogacy route are able to take unpaid leave to attend a maximum of two antenatal appointments.
10. The new proposed policy and toolkit have been designed to be supportive and encourage open communication between those undergoing fertility treatment and their managers, to manage expectations, and look at workplace pressures which may be alleviated.
11. The new proposed policy offers employees undergoing fertility treatment up to 30 hours paid leave for appointments per treatment cycle for up to 3 treatment cycles, this is extended to the partners of those undergoing treatment, so they can support their partner. In addition to this, those undergoing the surrogacy route can attend up to 10 antenatal appointments with their surrogate.
12. The number of appointments required in a fertility treatment cycle varies person to person depending on the different procedures they might require and how well they respond to treatment. The duration of appointments will also vary depending on the type of treatment being carried out at each appointment. The average fertility treatment cycle takes between 3 to 6 weeks, though this will vary dependent on the individual needs (3).
13. Other organisations such as Manchester University have offered 5 days paid time off to those undergoing treatment and 2 days paid time off for partners of those undergoing treatment, for one cycle per 12 months and up to 3 cycles (4). This new proposed policy offers the time to be taken as hours which offers more flexibility if an appointment doesn't require a full day absence from work. The Coop do not specify the amount of paid leave which is offered in their policy and refer to it as "a reasonable amount of paid time off" which is left to the manager to decide upon (5).

Options

14. The different options which are available:
 - i) To proceed with policy as presented.
 - ii) To offer paid time off to those undergoing treatment/surrogacy and offer unpaid leave to partners of those undergoing treatment.
 - iii) To offer unpaid time off to both those undergoing treatment/surrogacy and partners of those undergoing treatment and review once the bill has been decided on.
 - iv) To put the proposal on hold and review once an update on the bill is provided.

³ [How Long Does IVF Take In The UK? | IVF Blog | abc ivf](#)

⁴ [display.aspx \(manchester.ac.uk\)](#)

⁵ [IVF and fertility treatment policy - Co-op Colleagues \(coop.co.uk\)](#)

Implications

Financial

15. The cost implication of an employee utilising this policy has been calculated out on an average salary basis:
- Average hourly rate of an SCDC employee - £18.20
 - Maximum paid time offered under the policy 30 hours x 3 cycles
 - $£18.20 \times 90 = \mathbf{£1,638.00 \text{ per employee}}$
 - Things to note, not all employees would require the 30 hours offered in each cycle, and not all employees would necessarily utilise 3 cycles.

Risks/Opportunities

16. In addition to the policy and toolkit, the general awareness of fertility treatment and the impact infertility can have on individuals, will need to be raised throughout the council. Ideally an introduction of a network of employees who have experienced/or are undergoing treatment, to offer support to each other in addition to the support options which are available to them both internally and externally.

Equality and Diversity

17. Infertility is not a protected characteristic; and case law indicates that infertility is not a disability under the Equality Act. However, we need to be mindful that infertility may be caused by a mental or physical health condition, which could be a disability. It may also occur that mental health conditions arise in connection with infertility or fertility treatments, which could be considered disabilities.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

A modern and caring Council

18. Infertility is becoming a wider discussed topic, in the interest of being a caring council this policy is offering compassionate support which can have a significant impact, helping someone to balance work demands with their personal situation. If employees feel supported and can access helpful adjustments at work, resources and/or flexibility, they are more likely to feel able to work to the best of their ability. Making employer support available sends an important message that the organisation values employees and their health and wellbeing and recognises the difficulties they are going through.

Background Papers

1. [Fertility Network launches Fertility in the Workplace initiative to support employers and employees | Fertility Network \(fertilitynetworkuk.org\)](#)
2. [The 2023 Workplace Infertility Stigma Survey: Do UK Workplaces Offer Sufficient Support for Employees on their Fertility Journeys? | Fertility Family](#)
3. [How Long Does IVF Take In The UK? | IVF Blog | abc ivf](#)
4. [Time off for Fertility Treatment Policy – Manchester University](#)
5. [IVF and fertility treatment policy - Co-op Colleagues \(coop.co.uk\)](#)

Appendices

Appendix A: Fertility Treatment Policy

Appendix B: Manager’s Toolkit for Fertility Treatment

Report Author:

Emma Weston – HR Advisor

Telephone: (01954) 713039

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Fertility Treatment Policy

Document Control	
Date of Last version	August 2023
Name of Reviewer	E Weston
Consultation	
Approved by	
Review due on:	

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Introduction

As part of our family friendly leave policies, we have introduced this policy as we understand that each fertility journey is different, and we want to support colleagues undergoing fertility treatment to reduce the impacts of the emotional stress experienced.

Access to Policy

This policy applies to all employees undergoing fertility treatment irrespective of the number of hours worked per week or length of service. Elements of this policy are also applicable to the partner of the person undergoing treatment. It does not apply to agency workers, contractors, consultants or any self-employed individuals working for the organisation.

Communication

We encourage you to speak with your line manager about undergoing fertility treatment, at SCDC we encourage managers to create a supportive environment within their teams. Whilst we understand it might be a difficult or sensitive subject to discuss, it will make the process less stressful for you. If your treatment will involve

taking lots of leave, you can also take some time in advance to think about what you'd like to tell your colleagues.

Time Off

Whilst we appreciate that every fertility journey is different and the number of appointments required will vary person to person, we will grant up to 30 hours per cycle as paid leave for up to 3 cycles of fertility treatment.

Line managers are encouraged to be supportive with accommodating appointments where possible. Consider swapping non-working days where appropriate, and flexibility around appointments during the day allowing working from home before and after appointments if possible. You should give your line manager as much notice as possible of when you need the time off and, wherever possible, arrange your appointments to reduce impact to your working day, e.g., at the start or end of your working day or on a non-working day.

However, we understand that you may need to take time off at short notice to attend your appointments. We also understand that the amount of time that you may need off for each appointment will depend on the nature of the appointment and the type of treatment that you are receiving and therefore we need to remain flexible.

For operational staff, if your appointment is in the middle of your working day, you may be required to take half a day annual leave to account for the remainder of the working day if there are no alternative duties available.

For partners and for couples undergoing a surrogate route, we understand you may want to attend appointments, we will grant up to 30 hours per cycle as paid leave for up to 3 cycles of fertility treatment.

Your line manager may need to see your email/text appointment confirmation or appointment card.

If you need additional time off to attend any further appointments, this will be treated in the same way as other medical appointments, please refer to our [Leave Policy](#). You may take the time off as annual leave, unpaid leave or, in some cases, we may agree a flexible working arrangement so that you can make up lost time by working additional hours at another time.

Working flexibly on a temporary basis

We recognise that for individuals receiving fertility treatment, the option to work flexibly on a temporary (rather than permanent) basis may be appropriate. For example, this could include working from home, hybrid working or changing your start and finish times. This is not a definitive list.

If you feel that you would benefit from a temporary change to your working arrangement on an ad hoc basis because you are undergoing fertility treatment, you should discuss and agree these with your line manager.

We will try to facilitate temporary flexible working arrangements wherever this is possible and will continue to review these to ensure that they meet your needs and the needs of the business.

Implantation

From the point of implantation of a fertilised ovum, an employee is considered pregnant and has a statutory right to paid time off for antenatal appointments. For further information, please refer to our [Maternity Leave Policy](#).

Adverse Effects to Treatment

If you suffer with any adverse effects to your treatment this will be addressed in line with the [Sickness Absence Policy](#) which can be found on Insite.

Miscarriage

In the case you suffer with a miscarriage please see our [Pregnancy Loss Policy](#) which can be found on Insite.

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Manager Toolkit for Fertility Policy

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A member of my team has an appointment that falls in the middle of their working day, and they might not be able to return to the office after the appointment, what can I offer?	2
A member of my team is undergoing a cycle of IVF treatment and they've used up the 30 hours for paid appointments, what else can I offer?	3
Do I record the appointments in iTrent?.....	3

A member of my team is undergoing fertility treatment, what do I do?

You need to remember that every journey is different. Each individual undergoing treatment will likely need a different number of appointments and require a different level of support. It's a good idea to [read up on the subject](#), this might make it easier for you to have discussions with your team member.

Confidentiality

This will likely have been a very difficult conversation for your team member to have with you, please respect their privacy. When speaking with them ask whether they would like to share this with any colleagues, they may have already thought about what they want to disclose to colleagues. It is likely they have shared it with very few people due to the sensitive nature.

Communication

The best thing you can do is listen. Agree on the best way for you to communicate with them and how often, for example, email, or a call for updates on treatment or upcoming appointments once a week. Establishing a plan for communication relieves some of the stresses that they will be experiencing.

Support

Be mindful that the process can be a very emotional and trying time for the employee and that updates may not be positive ones, they may need some support, particularly if the employee has had bad news:

- [Employee Assistance Programme \(EAP\) or counselling](#)
- Occupational Health (Speak to HR about making a referral)
- External Support

A member of my team has had treatment and since become unwell, what do I do?

If your team member has had an adverse reaction to their treatment, this would be recorded as sick leave, and you should follow the usual process as per the sickness absence policy.

A member of my team has an appointment that falls in the middle of their working day, and they might not be able to return to the office after the appointment, what can I offer?

- Working from home before/after the appointment
- Annual Leave
- Flexibility around missed working hours being completed across other days
- Unpaid Leave
- Swapping non-working day

A member of my team is undergoing a cycle of IVF treatment and they've used up the 30 hours for paid appointments, what else can I offer?

- Annual Leave
- Flexibility around missed working hours being completed across other days
- Unpaid Leave
- Swapping non-working day

Do I record the appointments in iTrent?

Given the confidential nature of the process, it is best not to record these appointments in iTrent, instead you should keep a record saved securely, it is important that you keep this up to date to ensure that the correct amount of paid leave is allocated. If an employee has used all their paid appointment times and is utilising unpaid leave and annual leave should be recorded on iTrent to ensure the correct deductions are made.

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Agenda Item 7



**South
Cambridgeshire
District Council**

Report to:	Employment and Staffing Committee 09 Nov 2023
Lead Cabinet Member:	Cllr John Williams- Lead Cabinet Member for Resources
Lead Officer:	Jeff Membery- Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate Services

HR Recruitment, Retention and Absence Data – August and September 2023

Executive Summary

Monitoring of absence levels supports the HR team's approach to colleagues' wellbeing.

Review of recruitment and turnover information is critical to ensure that the Council is aware of risk areas. This may be in resourcing and delivering services to the public.

HR Officers review data in this report to inform future policies and highlight areas where early intervention may be needed.

Key Decision

- No

Recommendations

- To note the report.

Reasons for Recommendations

It is important that members are kept up to date with recruitment, retention and absence data.

Details

Recruitment and Turnover

Throughout August the recruitment team advertised 22 job opportunities, which attracted 106 job applications.

1 of the adverts was internal, which has been recruited to as a secondment.

Throughout September the recruitment team advertised 8 job opportunities, which attracted 50 job applications.

2 of the adverts were internal, 1 has been recruited to and 1 is still being advertised.

In August a Customer Contact Advisor role for Transformation (two posts) received 36 job applications and after four interviews was successfully recruited into the two posts (1 internal and 1 external candidate). The Refuse Loader advert received 44 applications and after 20 interviews, 8 new members of their team were recruited.

Survey of those who have been interviewed for a role at SCDC.

Recruitment sent out 73 surveys for feedback in mid-October for some roles interviewed in July and all positions in August and September. We received 21 responses, which is a 29% return rate.

When prompted why the applicants applied for their role, there was a multitude of different responses. The 4-day week trial, pay and reward, a career opportunity and a local government opportunity were all cited between nine and eleven times each. A few respondents also said pensions and the opportunity to work part-time as reasons for their applications.

The online job application process was rated an average of 4.1 out of 5 by all respondents, suggesting that most people had a good experience of using this system. Almost everyone said they were confident they had enough information about their role before the interview.

Four respondents suggested that the recruiting managers didn't give them sufficient information to make them feel it was a suitable role during their interview. One person said this was related to the conduct of a member of the panel, two suggested this was about poor communication and not being told they had been unsuccessful, and one person withdrew from the process for personal reasons.

Only seven respondents were offered the opportunity to receive feedback about their interview. However, all but two respondents would consider applying for the Council again in future. One person cited a lack of timely communication about whether they had been successful whilst the other person believed they had been shortlisted as a result of their gender and that their interview was too long.

The new recruitment module of iTrent has been launched and HR will review how we can send out the surveys at the end of each month using data from the system.

A survey of staff after 3 months - post-induction follow up.

We are collecting data about our employees' induction experience through a quarterly survey. For the period 13th July 2023 to 30th September 2023, we received 16 responses. This was sent to 33 employees.

Almost all of the responses we received were positive about the quality of their inductions into the Council.

All 16 respondents said that the 4-day week trial impacted on their decision to apply and accept their role at the Council. The most common reason was the health and wellbeing benefits, with greater flexibility and the opportunity for agile working being cited slightly less frequently. Only one respondent said that the 4 day-week had a negative impact on them due to the reduced time to learn their role and complete their work. However, they added that they felt the 4-day week was a positive measure overall.

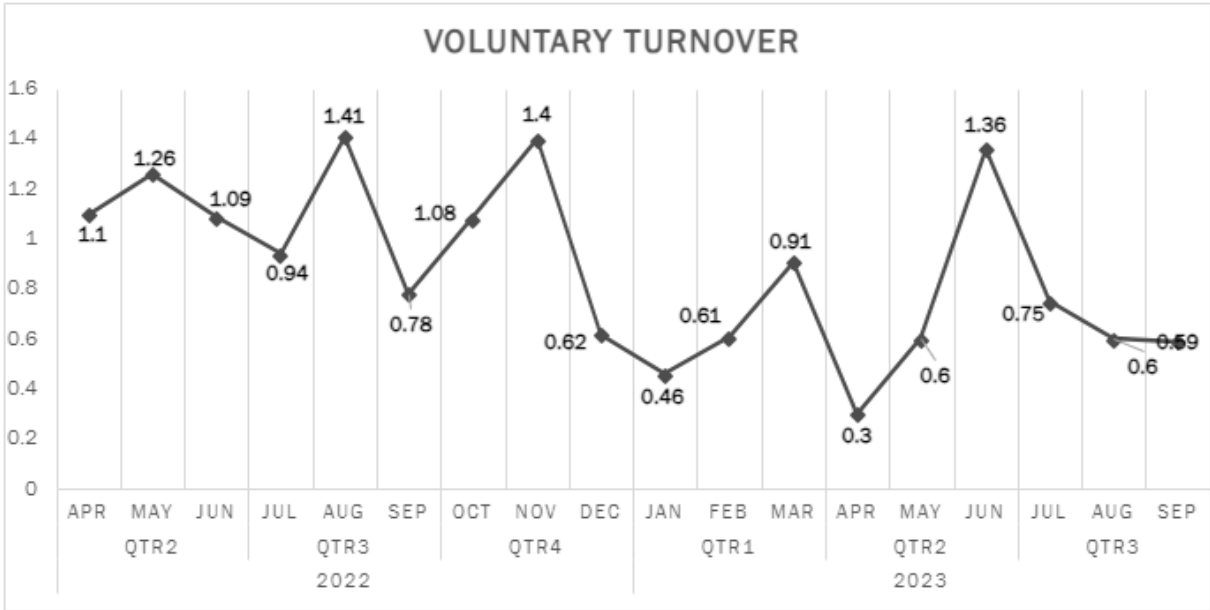
A working group has been set up initially within the HR and Recruitment team to look at improving our induction and onboarding process.

Review of any posts which were not successfully recruited to.

The HR and Recruitment team meet with hiring managers when a role is not successfully recruited to first time. A note is made internally to collate information and also discuss ways to improve the recruitment for the role with the hiring manager.

The new HR software module for recruitment was soft launched in September. There are currently 12 roles being processed through it. We are speaking to managers to gain feedback and are making improvements to the process. This will allow more comprehensive monitoring of our success in recruiting to vacant posts. Data will be extracted from the system for all roles in future, but we are unable to provide further data at this time.

Voluntary Turnover – Chart 2



The voluntary turnover rate fell in August 2023 to 0.6, this and declined again slightly in September 2023 to 0.59. These two months continue the trend of a decline in turnover since June 2023. Four employees accepted a new role with another organisation, two left due to having a career break, one retired and one relocated.

Exit interviews have taken place with all but three voluntary leavers. The feedback from three voluntary leavers was a desire to leave due to a lack of career progression whilst two others left due to taking a career break.

The HR team encourages those leaving to share this information with their manager or allow us to share this information with their manager so that continuous improvement can be sought. On this occasion slightly less than half wished for the exit interview information to remain confidential within HR.

Sickness absence data

Chart 3 – Sick days per FTE (Shared Waste)

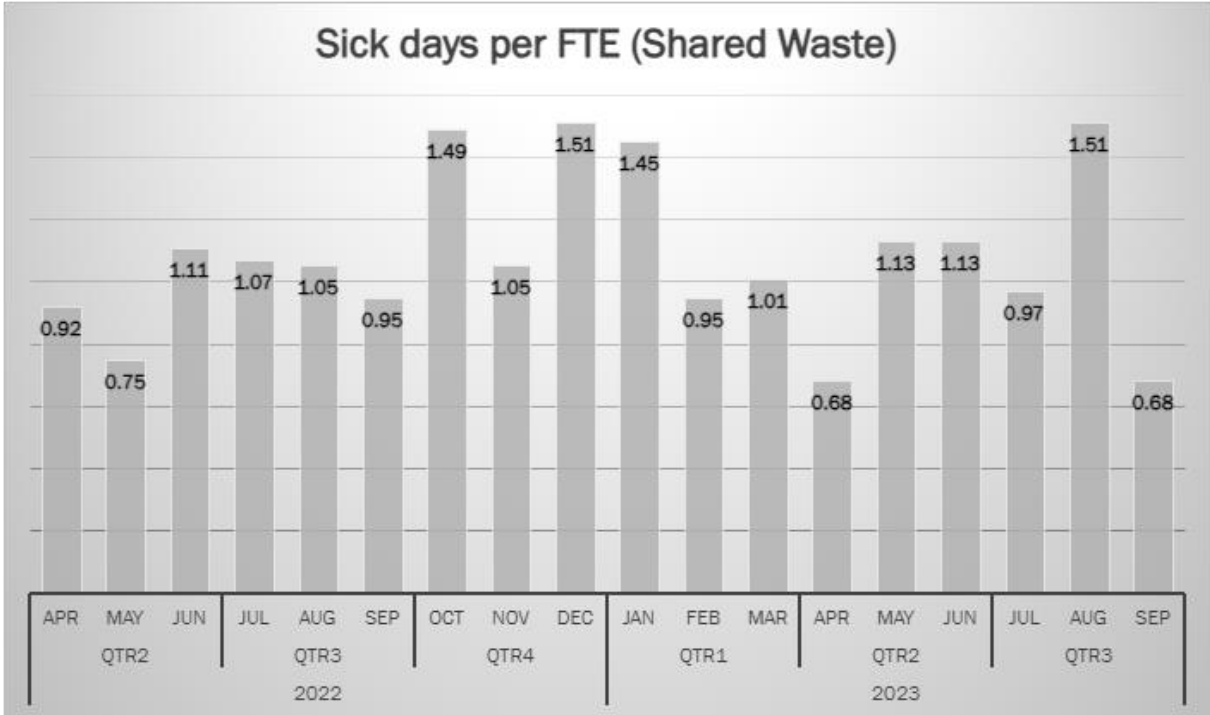


Chart 4 – Sick days per FTE (Council excluding Shared Waste)

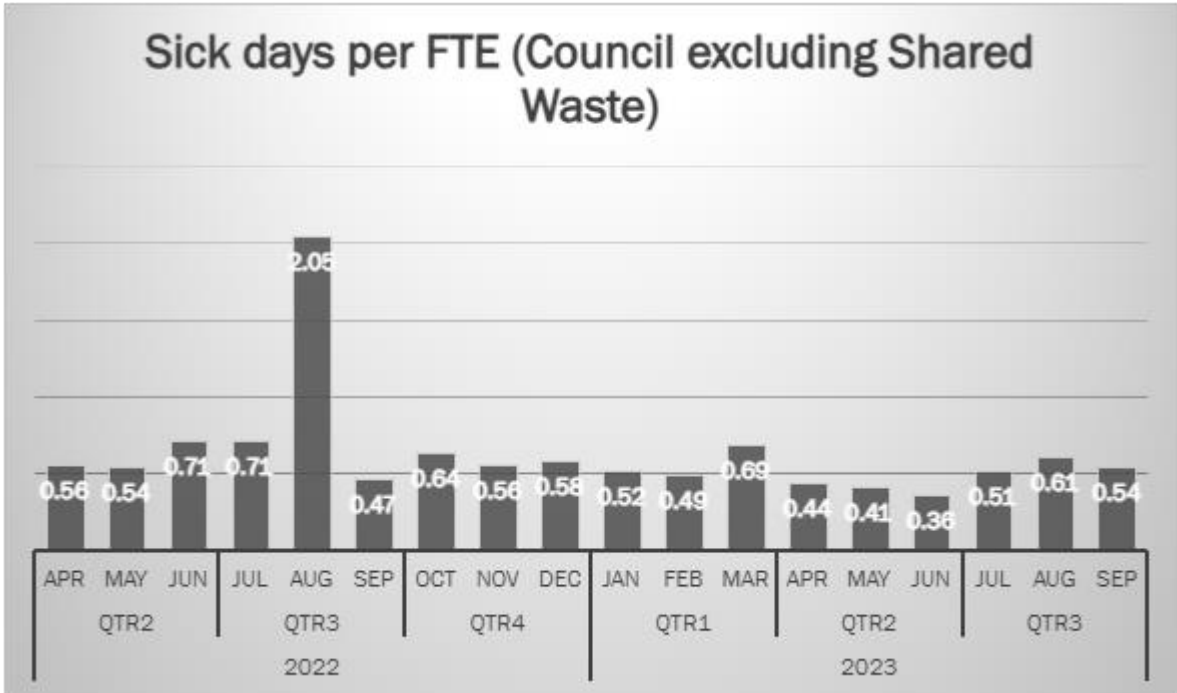


Chart 5 - % of days lost due to sickness – (Council)

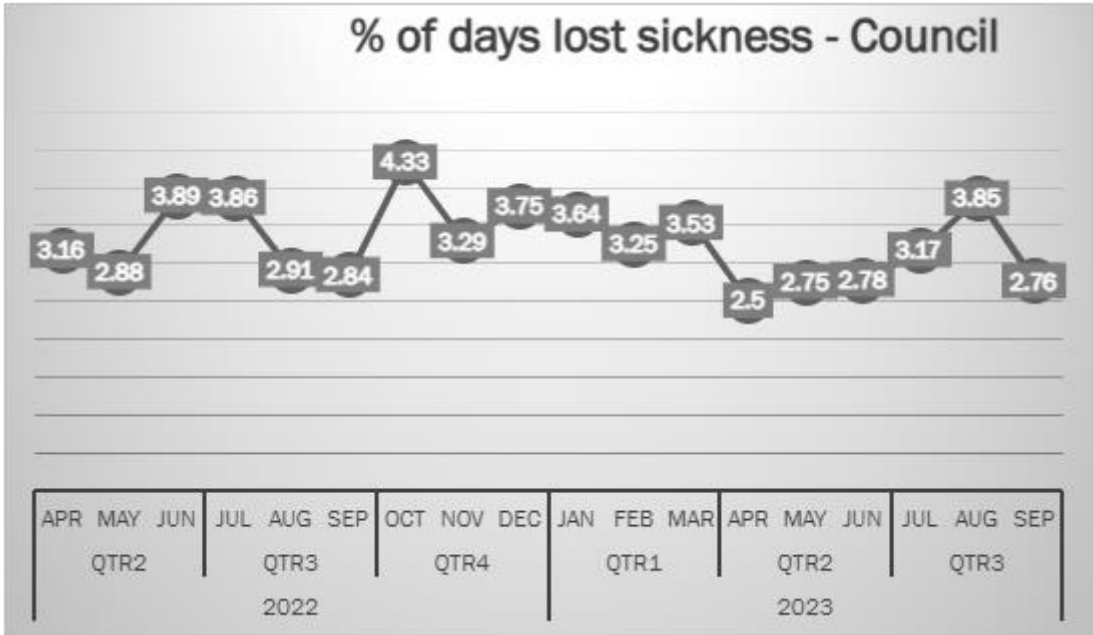
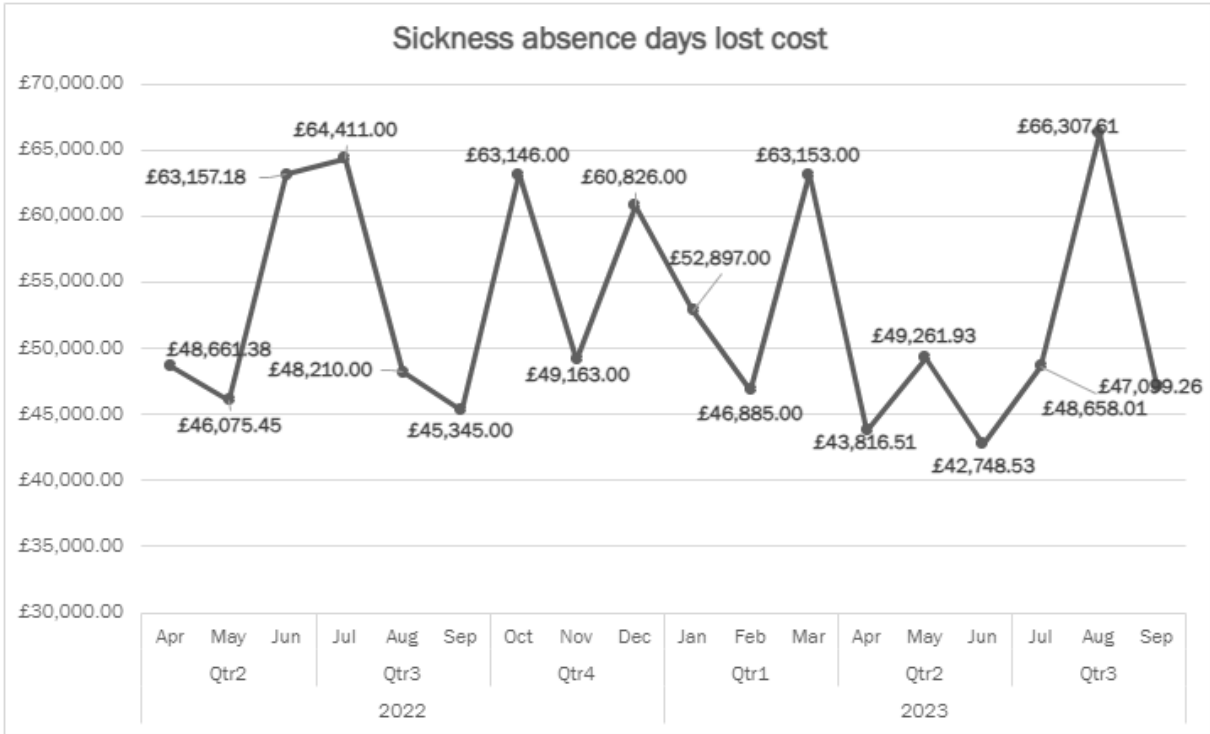


Chart 6 – Sickness absence days lost cost (Council)



As seen in chart 6, the cost to the Council for sickness absence days lost in August was higher than April to July 2023 but this returned to a level comparable with other recent months in September 2023.

The HR team are aware of the need for external benchmarking and are currently exploring options to provide this information corporately.

The latest LGA inform data is for 2021/2022 and stands at a mean of 9.2 days per FTE.

The SCDC data for October 2022 – September 2023 for the Council excluding Shared Waste stands at 6.35. In contrast, the SCDC data for October 2022 – September 2023 for Shared Waste was 13.56.

Period	Sickness Absence Rate		
	Days per person		
	Minimum for East (ADASS Region)	Mean for East (ADASS Region)	Maximum for East (ADASS Region)
2021/22	9.1	9.2	9.3

Implications

Staffing

This report provides data about absence and recruitment both of which are directly relevant to staffing and the work of the Employment and Staffing Committee.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

A modern and caring Council

The review and response to these statistics helps us to inform policies and support measures for staff and to identify any improvement opportunities.

Background Papers

None

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