



Report to:	Employment and Staffing Committee 8 September 2022
Lead Cabinet Member:	John Williams
Lead Officer:	Jeff Membery

Sickness Absence Q1 2022-23

Executive Summary

1. The Sickness Absence rate (BVPI) for Q1 2022-2023 is 1.95 (see tab D BVPI trend).

This is a decrease of 0.19 from Q4 and a decrease of 0.08 from Q1 2021-2022.

The top 3 reasons for absence were: Covid-19 (223 days), Stress, anxiety and depression (203 days) Stomach, liver kidney and digestion (192 days).

Finance, Housing, Greater Cambridge Shared Waste and Environment saw a reduction in absence levels this quarter. Greater Cambridgeshire Shared Planning and Transformation, HR and Corporate Service saw an increase in absence levels. Various support is provided to employees in different ways, (e.g. through our Employee Assistance Programme and supportive absence meetings) and we have included data relating to this.

Key Decision

2. No.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that the Employment and Staffing Committee note this report.

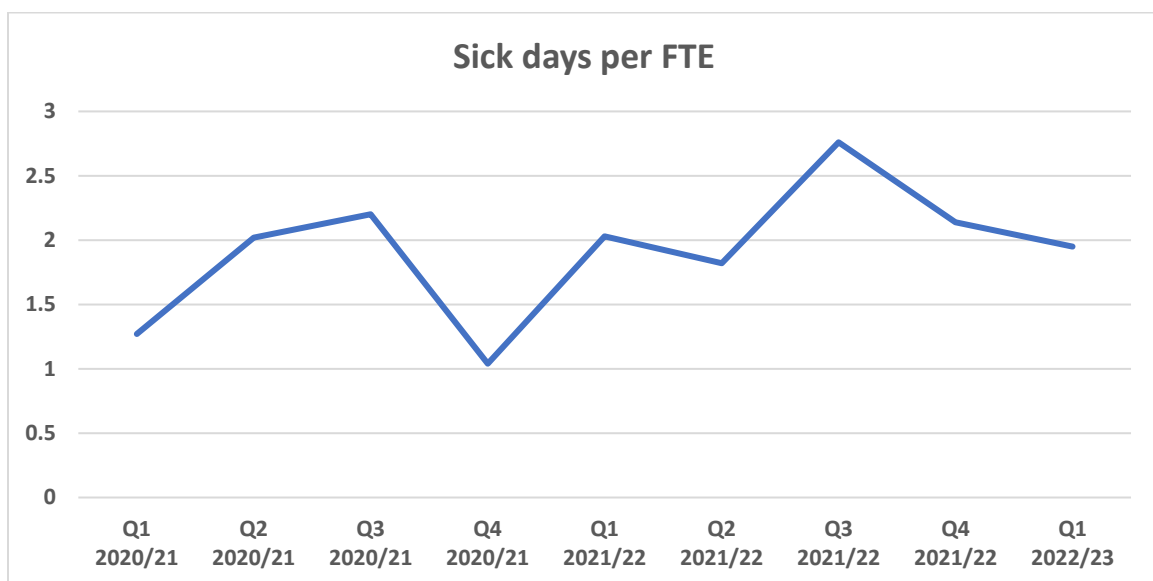
Reasons for Recommendations

4. This information report forms part of the Employment and Staffing Committee framework for monitoring the Council's staffing resource.

Details

5. Our new absence analytics package will provide us with more detailed absence metrics/reporting moving forward. For Q1, the cabinet report is a “hybrid” report. It uses data from i-trent and the new package. In Quarter 2 there will be more comparable charts and data to review – for example comparing costs quarter on quarter and more infographics.
6. The HR team have successfully removed “other” as a reason for absence to provide higher data accuracy. Tab B reason analysis therefore shows a reduction in “other” absence of 189 days which will give us more meaningful data to support employees with and shape our interventions.
7. Our BVPI figure is 1.95 days per FTE (based on an FTE figure of 640.01). Please see tab A Absence Analytics.

This is a decrease of 0.19 from Q4 and a decrease of 0.08 from Q1 2021-2022.

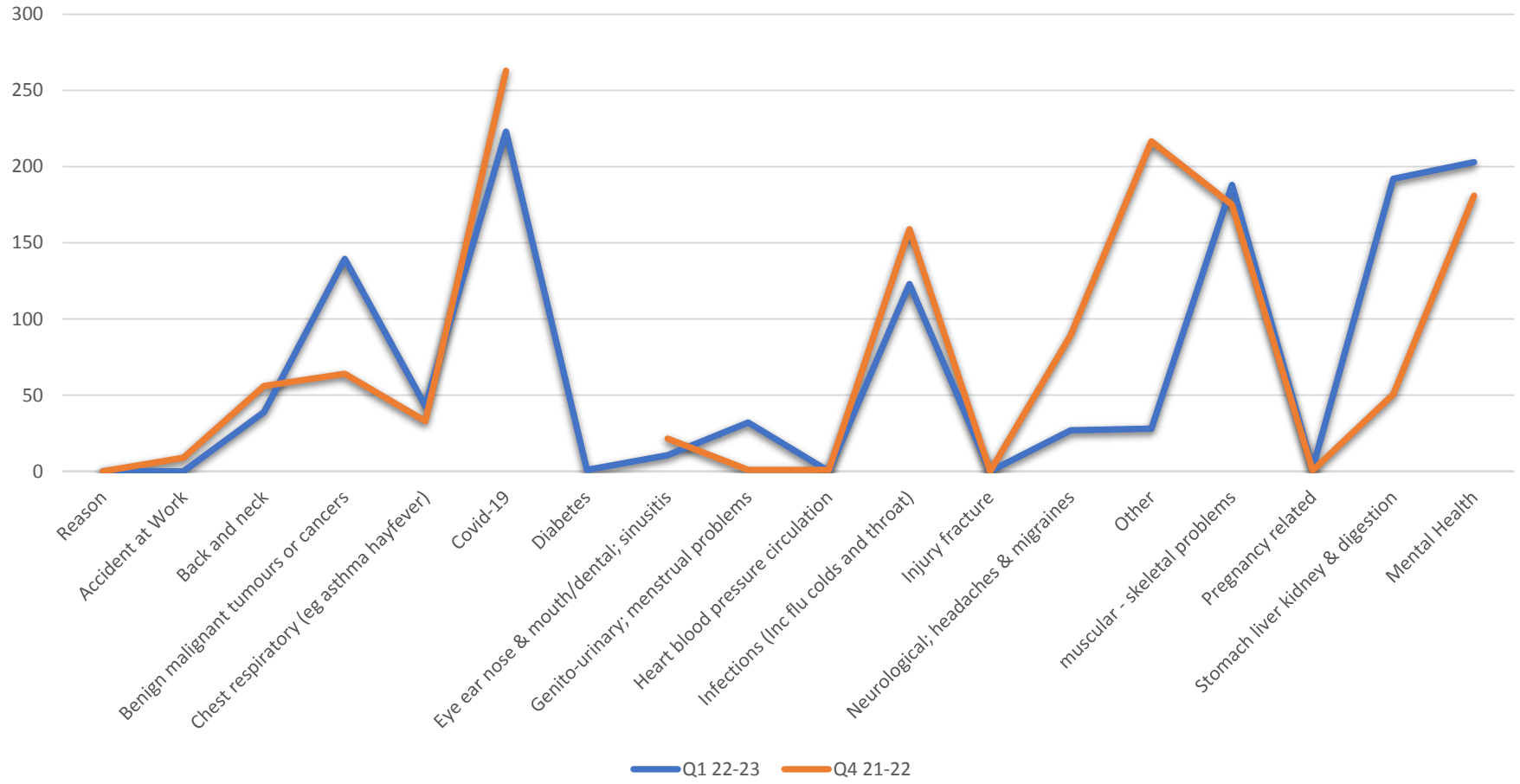


Absence by Organisation Structure

Org Structure	Employee Count Current Qtr	Employee Count Current Qtr (FTE)	Absence Instances in Current Qtr	Emp Absence Count Current Qtr	Days lost previous Qtr	Days Lost Current Qtr	Ave Days Lost per Emp Current Qtr	Ave Days Lost Duration Current Qtr	Days Available in Period per Emp Current Qtr	Days Lost Working Cost Current Qtr	BVPI
Executive	17	16.21	1	1	1	2.5	0.15	2.50	1000.28	£256.29	0.15
Finance	75	72.67	19	16	81.5	50	0.67	3.13	4364.86	£5,726.80	0.69
Housing	126	113.59	51	36	334	305	2.42	8.47	6937.46	£39,034.72	2.68
Shared Planning	126	122.97	32	21	107	188	1.49	8.95	7098.23	£33,612.71	1.53
Shared Waste and Environment	221	219.69	91	68	699	588	2.66	8.65	13210.99	£55,176.50	2.68
Transformation, HR and Corporate Services	98	94.88	36	30	98	117.5	1.20	3.92	5473.21	£15,452.48	1.24
Total	663	640.01	230	172	1320.5	1251	1.89	7.27	38085.03	£149,259.49	1.95

8. To note the highest cost to the Council was in Shared Waste and environment. The highest BVPI figures were in Shared Waste and Environment, Housing and Shared Planning. There was a decrease of 69.5 days in Q1 compared with Q4 21-22.
9. As detailed in tab B reason analysis Quarter 1 you will see infographics highlighting top reasons for absence broken down by short term and long term. The top reasons for short term absence were Covid 19, Infections and Stomach and Digestion. The top reasons for long term absence were stress, depression and anxiety, other muscular skeletal and stomach, liver, kidney and digestion. The HR team break down stress depression and anxiety into whether work or personal so this is why this is not highlighted in the infographic.

Quarterly analysis by reason

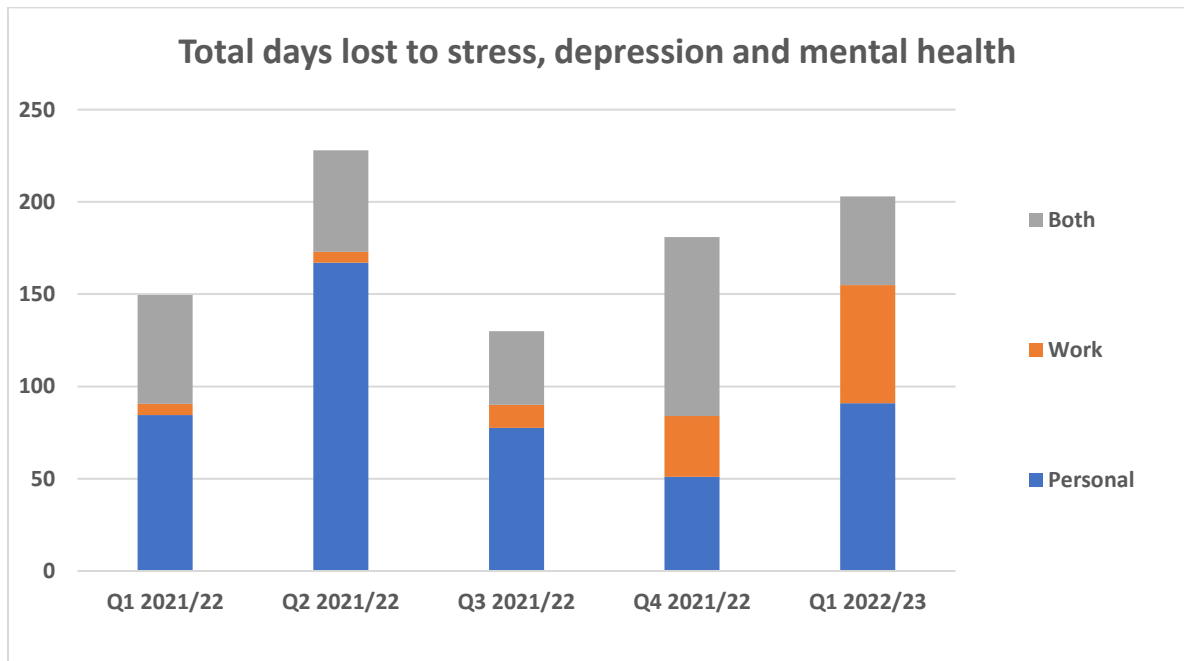


11. Looking at Tab C Qtr reason analysis Q1 has seen an increase in mental health related absences and stomach, liver kidney and digestion. 65 days of the stomach liver kidney and digestion was due to a long term individual case managed under the Attendance Management policy.

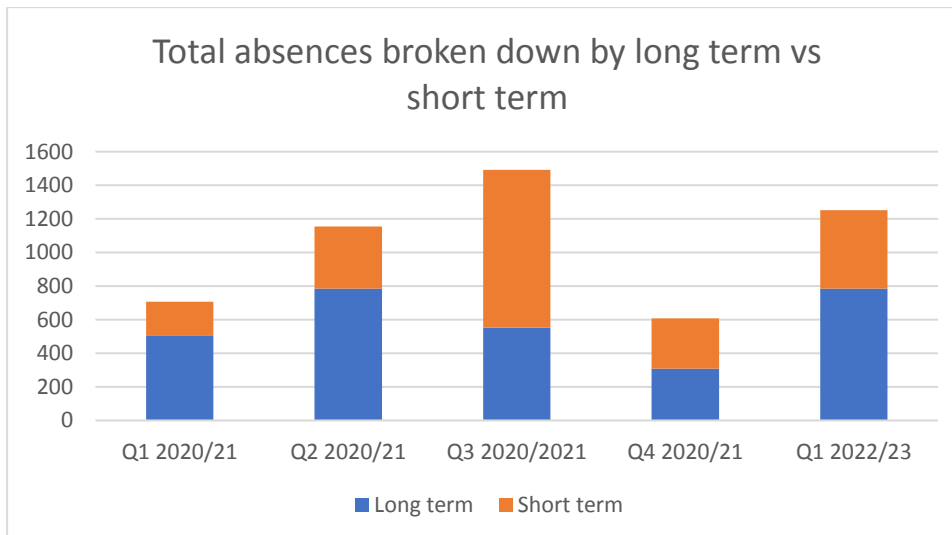
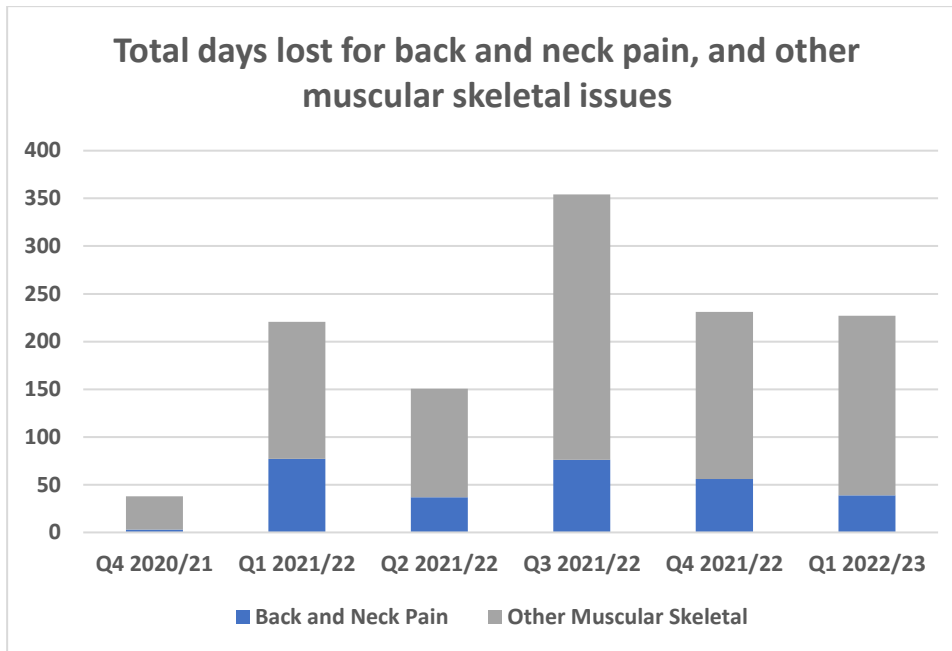
12. Within this Quarter, 172 employees have had absences due to sickness (compared to 168 in Q4).

13. The chart below shows the number of days absence attributed to stress/depression & mental health.

14.



15. The chart below shows the number of day's absence attributed to Back and Neck Pain, Other Muscular-Skeletal, and Musculoskeletal problems incl. back and neck over that last year.

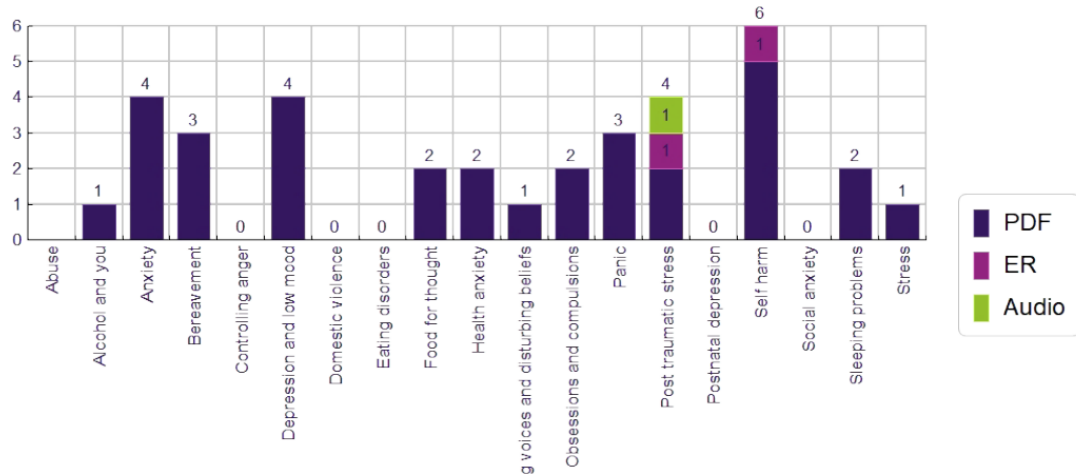


19. During Q1, the HR team have been continuing to work alongside managers, introducing a new way of working/new tools to try to assist managers in proactively managing long term absence. Virtual welfare visits are carried out with all long-term sickness cases.
20. During the year, the HR team have also delivered some managerial masterclasses titled 'Managing Stress' and 'Managing Absence'. These are targeted at managers, and focus on our policies, procedures, and the tools and supports available, including our stress audit tool, counselling service, our Mental Health First Aid team, and our Occupational Health provider.
21. We have a number of employees affected currently by cancer, we are providing support to the Line Managers and employees affected. A number of managers

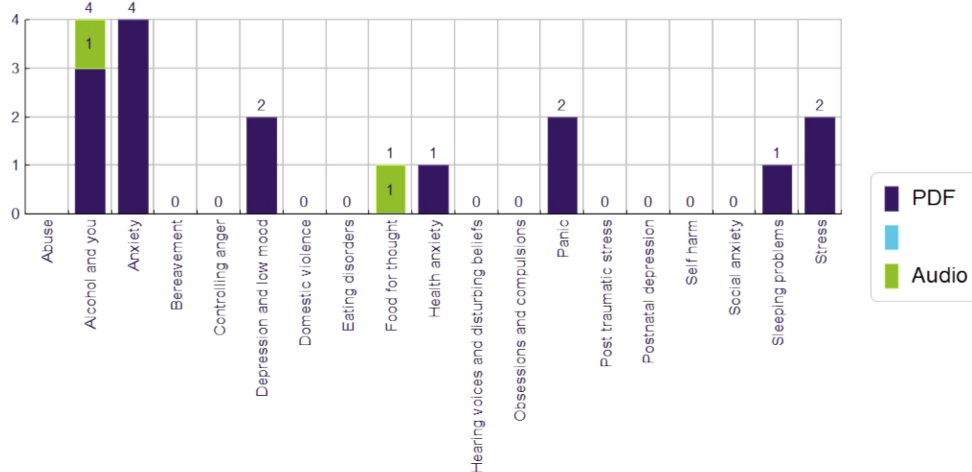
and the HR team have attended the Macmillan workshop this year and that we are looking at potential changes to provide further support.

22. We have also run “Wellness Action Plan” sessions, which employees or managers can attend to find out more about and create their own Wellness Action Plan.
23. We have launched a course called Navigating Change – Controlling the Mental – starting Wednesday 21st September 2022, 10:00-11:30. This is to support staff with the current changes occurring both within the organisation and the wider working context.
24. We have also continued to advertise our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) to all staff and managers, through Insite posts and inclusion on the new monthly HR newsletter. In this quarter we also offered employees the choice of Telephone Counselling (provided through EAP) or Video Counselling (provided by Evolve). There has been some uptake of the Video Counselling, where staff felt uncomfortable having telephone-only sessions.
24. With respect to muscular skeletal absences HR/Health and Safety have been encouraging all staff to undertake a DSE assessment on their home set up and sending out wellbeing tips about regular breaks and additional equipment. As of 31st June 2022, analysing the number of employees who have used the DSE training/assessment tool: 404 have completed it, 112 employees are yet to complete the assessment. There has been minimal progress since Q4, there is currently a 76% completion rate. 1% less completion than Q4.
25. We have also been promoting our Employee Assistance Programme (through Vivup) which includes free confidential counselling for all staff, as well as access to additional resources such as CBT guides. Looking at the graphs below, it is clear that there has been a significant increase in various CBT workbooks accessed in Q1, compared to Q4.

**South Cambridgeshire District Council
Self Help Downloads**



**South Cambridgeshire District Council
Self Help Downloads Previous Period**



26. During Q1 35 employees accessed the CBT resources (vs 17 in Q4), 14 calls were made to the Helpline (vs 26 in Q4), there were 2 telephone assessments (vs 7 in Q4). There was a total of 26 Counselling sessions (compared to 24 in Q3). The presenting issue for SCDC this period was depression/low mood. There was one new client this quarter.
27. We also offer Video Counselling through Evolve; there were 4 employees accessing Counselling in this way (vs 4 in Q4). This provider offers Video Counselling, compared to the telephone-only sessions offered through Vivup.
28. Following mental health awareness week, information was shared Council wide with respect to the Able Futures programme. This offers free 9 month programme to support people struggling with their mental health in the workplace. This is available to all employees confidentially. The programme

is being advertised on a roll out basis with attendance expected by an Able Futures Advisor to CMT in September.

29. In relation to Managing Absence, there were 28 new HR cases that started in Q1 (compared to 30 in Q4); note this only reflects new cases. The reasons for these cases on our Log include:
- an Informal Trigger has been met,
 - a Formal meeting is due
 - a Long-Term absence trigger has been met
 - absence due to Stress/Depression: a HR Advisor/BP is involved with every case, to ensure a Stress Tool and other supportive measures are put in place

Options

30. This report is for information only.

Implications

31. There are no significant implications.

Staffing

32. The staffing implications are considered as part of this report.

Equality and Diversity

33. All Sickness Absence is managed under the Attendance Management Policy, to ensure it is applied in a fair and consistent manner. Reasonable Adjustments are considered for all employees in accordance with the Equality Act (2010). The Attendance Management Policy is currently under review, and an EQIA is in progress.

Health & Wellbeing

34. We use an external Occupational Health Provider as needed. We offer an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), referred to earlier in this document. This provides employees with support including Counselling and CBT workbooks. DSE assessment information is included in this report.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

A modern and caring Council

35. Through the Attendance Management Policy, the Council aims to ensure that employees maintain good health and that sickness absence is minimised by offering a safe working environment coupled with flexible working practices, family friendly policies and the positive promotion of employee wellbeing.

36. The HR team are currently reviewing the Attendance Management Policy.

Appendices

Absence analytics package Q1

Report Author:

Bethan Gregory – HR Advisor
Telephone: (01954) 713030