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Monday 30 May 2022

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

Quorum: 3

Substitutes: Councillors Heather Williams, Sue Ellington, Graham Cone, Bunty Waters,
Dr. Shrobona Bhattacharya, Peter Fane, Sarah Cheung Johnson and
Ariel Cahn

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Employment and Staffing Committee**, which will be held in **Council Chamber - South Cambs Hall** at South Cambridgeshire Hall on **Thursday, 9 June 2022 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	1 - 4
4.	Retention and Turnover Report: Quarter 3 (Q3) and Quarter 4 (Q4) 1st January 2022 - 31st March 2022	5 - 16

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| 5. | Q3 & Q4 Sickness Absence Report | 17 - 24 |
| 6. | Disability Confident Task and Finish Group Report | 25 - 30 |

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Agenda Item 3

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Employment and Staffing Committee held on
Friday, 14 January 2022 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Henry Batchelor – Chair
Councillor Dawn Percival – Vice-Chair

Councillors: Dr. Claire Daunton Sally Ann Hart
Mark Howell Heather Williams
John Williams

Officers: Lindsey Smith HR Business Partner
Donya Taylor HR Advisor
Jeff Membery Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate
Services
Laurence Damary-Homan Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no Apologies for Absence.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

By affirmation, the Committee authorised the Chair to sign the Minutes of the Meeting held on 15 October 2021 as correct record

4. Pay Policy Statement

The Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate Services presented the report. Members enquired as to whether the proportion of women in senior roles was obscuring the information on pay for women within the Council. The Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate Services agreed to offer Members clarity on the question at a later date. The Committee asked on whether the levels of pay equality were part of a wider trend in Local Authorities and the Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate Services stated that the gender pay gap was typically smaller in the public sector.

The Committee, by affirmation, **recommended** that Council approve the Pay Policy Statement.

5. Hybrid Working Policy

The Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate Services presented the report. The Committee debated the policy and made a number of recommendations. Members

commended the flexibility that the policy would bring to staff working practices, but emphasised the need to ensure that no staff were disadvantaged by the policy; this applied to both those who worked at home and in the offices. Due to the fact that this was a new policy, the Committee agreed to recommend regular review of the policy, with the first suggested to be undertaken in 12 months time. Members also stated that they would like to see a monitoring strategy for the health and wellbeing of those working from home, with both physical and mental health assessed, in order to ensure that no staff were being disadvantaged in these respects by working from home. Members felt that staff needed to be given a working environment that suited their needs and suggested introduction of a strategy to ensure that progression could be monitored for all, regardless of their working environment.

Equality of access to technology was debated and the Committee raised the following points on Member IT provision:

- Inconsistent delivery of hardware- since the start of the pandemic, delivery of hardware to Members had not been uniform. It was noted that many Members used personal devices for Council business and that Member hardware had, prior to this year, not been included in budgets which should be rectified.
- WiFi connections- Members noted that, in the Chamber, WiFi provision was inadequate and often they had to use data roaming to use their devices in the Chamber which came with both financial and security concerns. Members asked that a solution be identified, it was noted that some Members had problems with their home broadband. It was stated that connectivity issues would hinder progress towards transitioning to paperless operations.
- Access to Microsoft Teams for Members would be beneficial
- Having a dedicated member of staff to deal with Member IT would be greatly welcomed

Members noted that, for those who wished to work from home, appropriate technology needed to be provided. Concerns over the security of IT and documents was flagged with more people working from home and the Committee felt that, with the introduction of the new policy, it was an excellent opportunity to review both the infrastructure and individual understandings that ensure Council business was conducted securely.

The Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate Services and the HR Business Partner responded to the comments and suggestions raised by the Committee.

The Committee, by affirmation, **recommended** that Cabinet approve the Hybrid Working Policy subject to the comments made by Members.

6. Performance Development Policy

The Head of Transformation, HR and Corporate Services presented the report. The Committee discussed way in which to maintain a balance between a member of staff's contentment in a role and performance standards. Members highlighted the importance of communication and managing performances. Requests for clarity in some of the wording used in the policy were raised, alongside an inclination to implement tailored, individual performance review strategies and the need to provide training to successfully implement the policy. The Head of Transformation and the HR Business Partner offered response to comments made by the Members, and the Committee commended the report and the policy.

By affirmation, the Committee **recommended** the implementation of the policy.

7. Retention and Turnover Report: Quarter 2 (Q2) 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021

The HR Advisor presented the report and detailed how requests from Members in previous meetings had been incorporated into the report. A request was made to include numbering on all charts. The HR Advisor provided clarification on a number of aspects of the report in response to Members' questions. It was suggested that details of the policies in place to ensure equal hiring were included in the report.

The Committee **noted** the report.

8. Sickness Absence 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021

The HR Advisor presented the report. The Committee discussed the impact of Covid-19 on sickness absence and examined the differing impact it had on different departments.

The Committee **noted** the report.

9. Update on the Disability Confident Task & Finish Group

The HR Business Partner gave a verbal update on the scheme and informed the Committee that Level 2 had been achieved by the Council, but stated that further work could be done to shore up the scheme. The Committee debated if the Council should work towards achieving Level 3 in the near future, or consolidate the Level 2 status. The HR Business partner detailed what had been to secure the Level 2 status and responded to a number of questions from Members. The Committee stated that an in-depth paper would be needed to effectively make a recommendation on moving towards Level 3; in the interim the Committee **recommended**, by affirmation, that work was done to consolidate the Council's Level 2 status.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The Chair informed the Committee that the next meeting would be held on 9 June 2022. The Democratic Services Officer offered explanation of the gap between meetings, stating that a 'circuit breaker' was being done to allow the Turnover and Sickness reports presented to be from the previous quarter, rather than the quarter prior to that, and that the next meeting would review the reports of two quarters. A request was made that, given the gap between meetings which was deemed acceptable and appropriate, responses to the requests made in the meeting be given to Members as soon as possible.

The Meeting ended at 11.50 a.m.

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Agenda Item 4



**South
Cambridgeshire**
District Council

Report to:	Employment and Staffing Committee 09 June 2022
Lead Cabinet Member:	John Williams
Lead Officer:	Jeff Membery

RETENTION AND TURNOVER REPORT: QUARTER 4 (Q4) 1st January 2022 – 31st March 2022

Executive Summary

1. This report provides an analysis of the turnover of staff between 1st October 2021 to 31st December 2021 and 1st January 2022 to 31st March 2022. The reason for this report is to highlight trends, inform recruitment decisions and enable SCDC to develop a resource strategy, drive change in a team or area of the business and to ensure the achievement of the organisation's goals.

Key Decision

2. No

Recommendations

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

Reasons for Recommendations

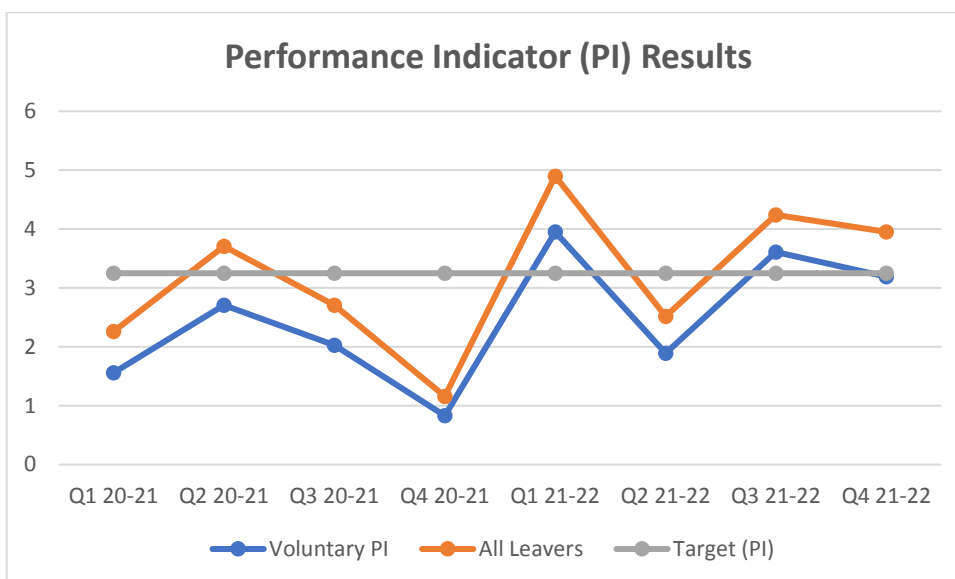
4. This information report forms part of the Employment and Staffing Committee framework for monitoring the Council's staffing resource.

Details

5. The Performance Indicator (PI) value for Q4 1st January – 31st March 2022 is 3.19% (based on a headcount of 659). In Q3 1st October-31st December 2021 the PI value was 3.61% (based on a headcount of 637). The quarterly target for voluntary leavers* is 3.25%¹.

¹ Voluntary leavers do not include redundancies, ill health retirements, and ending of fixed term contracts or internal transfers. Voluntary leavers do include individuals who are leaving to access their pension (retirees).

Chart 1



6. The rate of all leavers (considering both voluntary and involuntary leavers) is 3.95% for Q4. This equates to a combined total of 26 leavers: 22 voluntary and 4 involuntary leaver. It was 4.40% for Q3. This equates to a combined total of 28 leavers: 24 voluntary and 4 involuntary leavers. Involuntary leavers include dismissals, redundancies, and end of fixed term contracts. See **Chart 2** for the breakdown of Leavers and Turnover by Service Area.

7. The Stability Index indicates the retention rate of experienced employees. This is calculated as:

$$\frac{\text{Number of staff with service of one year or more}}{\text{Total number of staff in post one year ago}} \times 100.$$

The Stability Index is 81.19%. This means that since last year 18.21% of staff have either started new internal roles or have left their employment with the Council. We will be able to provide further analysis and comparisons as the year progresses. A suggested target for this index is 80%. This implies there are regular progression opportunities, but organisational knowledge is not being lost through excessive turnover.

8. There was a small increase in the number of voluntary leavers in Q4, following on from a very significant increase in Q3. There were no redundancies in either Quarter. **Q4 Reasons for Leaving² - see Charts 3 and 4.**

9. Information is recorded from Leavers Forms forwarded to HR/Payroll for processing. To improve completion of Exit Interviews, HR changed the process. From July 2021. HR Advisors now contact the leaver and arrange a virtual Exit Interview. The invite is sent out to each leaver once the leavers paperwork is received. This should enable HR to take prompt action if needed before the

² More than one reason can be chosen at the exit interview.

employee leaves. In GCSWS, exit interviews are completed by the dedicated HR Co-ordinator.

10. For those leaving in Q4, we received 20 exit interview forms from 23 leavers; in Q3 we received 25 exit interviews from 28 leavers. Some involuntary leavers completed an exit interview as these are offered to those who's fixed term contract is ending. The return rate was 87% in Q4 compared to Q3 at 89.29%, Quarter 2 at 83.3%, and 44% in Q1. This figure is an increase compared to the average of 43.6% of exit interviews received in 2019-20 and 38.1% received in 2020-21. As Exit Interviews are now conducted by HR, it is expected that this significant increase in completion rates will be sustained.
11. The exit interviews enable us to take immediate action on any issues raised. For example, feedback received on unclear benefits for fixed term workers was quickly reviewed and updated on Insite.
12. The exit interviews enable us to gain feedback from staff and establish why our employees have chosen to leave the organisation. The reason for leaving is compulsory on the online exit interview form and the leavers form. The option to state "voluntary" as the reason for leaving was removed as an option during Q2 2021-22. Where employees have completed exit interviews, we have cross-checked records and used the detail given to help narrow the reason given for leaving. Exit interviews help to identify trends and areas of concern on which the Council can make improvements and improve the employee experience and level of engagement. The Exit Interview includes two important feedback questions. The first asks leavers to rate their perceptions of SCDC as an employer against a range of factors. The second asks "Would you consider working for SCDC again?". See **Charts 5 and 6** for a summary of the responses to these questions.
13. We are now able to include information relating to Joiners: see **Chart 7 – Joiners per Service Area**.

Recruitment

14. Please see **Charts 8, 9 and 10** for Recruitment info. It should be noted that the number of roles advertised nearly doubled – from 53 in Q3 to 103 in Q4.
15. In Q4: 12 posts were re-advertised in this period. 4 were successfully filled and 5 were re-advertised in Q1 and 3 have been put on hold. In Q3: 7 posts were re-advertised in this period. 6 were successfully filled and 1 was re-advertised.
16. We have struggled to fill Apprenticeship roles with a lack of candidates in the market. We hope to fill these roles in Q2 with school leavers. We are working with local organisations (Form the Future and Growth Works) as well as exploring opportunities to support Care Experienced Leavers.
17. We are advertising a Graduate role through the LGA (Local Government Association) National Graduate Development Programme later this year, to start in September 2022.

18. In Q2, Market Factor Supplements were awarded to Project Managers in response to market concerns. With the introduction of iTrent, we are now able to run a more accurate report regarding Market Factor Supplement payments. This figure for Q4/Q3 has remained the same as Q2.
19. Concerns around retention particularly at GCSWS have led to an introduction of a Retention Scheme in Q3. This is targeted at Drivers, who will receive payments of £2400 over a 2 year period, at quarterly intervals. During Quarter three 35 Drivers signed up to the scheme and received payment. 2 signed up in Q4.
20. For Q3 & Q4, the number of temporary workers (agency) in each department was as follows:

Service Area	Q3 (% of total agency workers)	Q4
GCSPS	24 (33.3%)	29 (34.9%)
Transformation	6 (8.3%)	6 (7.2%)
Finance	6 (8.3%)	6 (7.2%)
Housing	1 (1.4%)	1 (1.2%)
SW&E (excl GCSWS)	1 (1.4%)	2 (2.4%)
GCSWS	34 (47.2%)	39 (47.0%)
Economic Development & Investment	0	0

21. Since January 2021 the recruitment team has been working to create a new Casual Worker Bank to support the Council to reduce agency fees. In this Q3, 5 new casual workers started and in Q4, 4 new casual workers started within posts that would normally be filled with an agency worker, reducing our agency spend. We are working to add more workers to the bank to enable a pool of skilled talent that we can call upon.
- 22.1 Golden Hello Payment was made in Q3 with 6 new eligible hires appointed with a Golden Hello with 6 being advertised. In Q4 1 Golden Hello Payment was made. In Q4, 4 roles were appointed to with a Golden Hello. These employees will receive their Golden Hello Payments upon the successful completion of their probationary periods.
23. The Recruitment Coordinator has been busy during both quarters and there continues to be high volume of recruitment forecast for April to June. The Recruitment Coordinator is now preparing for future recruitment and the implementation of the Recruitment module within the new HR System.
24. A new HR induction and onboarding process was implemented during Q2 2021-2 with new employees having remote inductions with a member of the HR team. This includes follow up meetings between 2 & 4 weeks later. Employees have given positive feedback that they are able to speak to a 'face' in HR. Managers are also supported as new employees are helped to settle into their

new roles without having the added stress of sorting out annual leave entitlement, flexitime sheets and processing lots of forms.

25. HR deliver Manager Induction training sessions, currently remotely. This is both for newly promoted managers and new recruits to the Council. The intention is to run these sessions quarterly, and there are further sessions planned for 2021-2022. In Q3 and Q4 4 managers attended an Induction. More are planned for Q1.

26. The Council is currently finalising its' Apprenticeship strategy. We have separated the Apprenticeship data, so that we can identify external, new hire Apprentices and existing staff who are undertaking an Apprenticeship. See **Chart 11** for the detail. Incentive payments were extended by the Government to the end of January 2022; we have a new Cohort of 5 Internal Apprenticeships who started in Q4. We have advertised Apprenticeships in both Quarters, however have found it difficult to recruit. We are exploring opportunities to advertise our roles more widely and looking at options including Traineeships.

Wider Context

27. The most recent Labour Market Report³ from the CIPD was published in early 2022. Recruitment difficulties are increasing, as we can see in our data as well as in the Labour Market Report. Almost half employers are reporting hard-to-fill vacancies, particularly when filling low-skilled vacancies. Our fill rate was 81% for Q3. We have introduced new Retention measures in Q3 affecting GCSWS, highlighted in the Report. Other organisations are taking positive action to attract the best candidates raising pay, advertising more jobs as flexible and upskilling existing staff. Almost half of employers (46%) have hard-to-fill vacancies, including 52% in the public sector. Recruitment intentions with employers remain high, in line with pre-pandemic levels.

28. This shows that the challenges we are facing in Recruitment and Retention are mirrored in the wider context. The number of roles we advertised, particularly in Q4 at 103, is very high, and goes some way to explain why the fill rate dropped between Q4 and Q3.

Equality and Diversity

29. The new iTrent HR system enables reporting on the diversity of all leavers by age, ethnicity, gender, disability and religion. We don't have 2021 Census data to compare this to yet. However, the reporting of Leavers data is a very manual process. This is in contrast to the Joiners breakdown, which is produced as part of the Analytics Package.

Conclusion

30. The turnover rate has increased significantly since Q2.

³ [Labour Market Outlook: Winter 2021](#)

31. The most common reasons for voluntary turnover cited in exit interviews were linked as they included more career progression, higher salary and personal reasons.
32. The number of roles increased significantly from Q3 to Q4 – nearly doubling.
33. The number of staff who internally transferred to new roles was lower than Q2 but still relatively high compared to previous quarters. It was the same amount in Q4 and Q3. This demonstrates that staff are keen to develop their skills and remain at the Council. Further analysis and review of information recorded as part of the performance review cycle will enable us to enhance and improve on this.
34. The Council has demonstrated it looks for new avenues to continue to recruit the best talent available by pursuing alternative digital recruitment solutions and recruiting Apprentices. The Council has also streamlined its recruitment application process and offered incentives for applications, including Market Factor Supplements and Golden Hello Payments.
35. The Council continues to seek feedback about all aspects of the employee life cycle to make improvements to continue to support the retention of talent.
36. The Council, where appropriate, offers support to staff through flexible working policies and other options such as flexible retirement. For staff who experience health issues or have a disability, the Council has an Occupational Health service which supports staff to remain working at SCDC wherever possible.

Options

37. That the Employment and Staffing Committee either notes the report as presented or note it with the addition of appropriate comments.

Implications

38. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:-

Financial

39. There are financial implications in terms of the costs of advertising and recruitment of replacement staff. There are also financial implications in respect of using temporary staff to cover work if standards of service are to be maintained.

Staffing

40. A certain level of turnover is healthy for an organisation as it enables new ideas and skills to be brought into the organisation. There will always be a natural number of leavers and this creates opportunities for reviewing job purpose and the skills and attributes that an organisation needs for the future. However, high turnover and the loss of important skills, knowledge and capacity can have a detrimental impact on staff morale and the Council's ability to deliver its business plan objectives.

Risks/Opportunities

41. The council will seek to mitigate and eliminate risks associated with employment relations matters for example, change management, case management and involuntary leavers.

42. Current identified risks in relation to recruitment challenges are included on the risk register. The council continually reviews measures to mitigate this risk.

43. Proposed changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) and caps on Public Sector exit payments mean we will need to be mindful when dealing with succession planning and change management.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

A modern and caring Council

44. By monitoring Retention and Turnover levels, and making any necessary recommendations, we can ensure that the Council is structured and appropriately resourced to deliver the ambitions of our communities.

Appendices

Appendix A: Q3 and Q4 21-22 Turnover Charts.

Report Author:

Bethan Gregory – HR Advisor

Telephone: (01954) 713654

Donya Taylor – HR Advisor

Telephone: (01954 712900)

Chart 2 – Leavers by Service Area

Org Structure	Leavers in Q3	Leavers in Q4	Turnover Q3	Turnover Q4
Executive	0	0	0.00%	0.00%
Finance	2	2	0.00%	7.7%
Housing	4	1	3.23%	3.8%
Shared Planning	6	8	5.17%	6.67%
Shared Waste and Environment	13	10	2.34%	30.8%
Transformation, HR and Corporate Services	3	5	0.00%	19.2%
Total	28	26	4.40%	3.95%

Chart 3 – Q4 Voluntary Reasons for Leaving

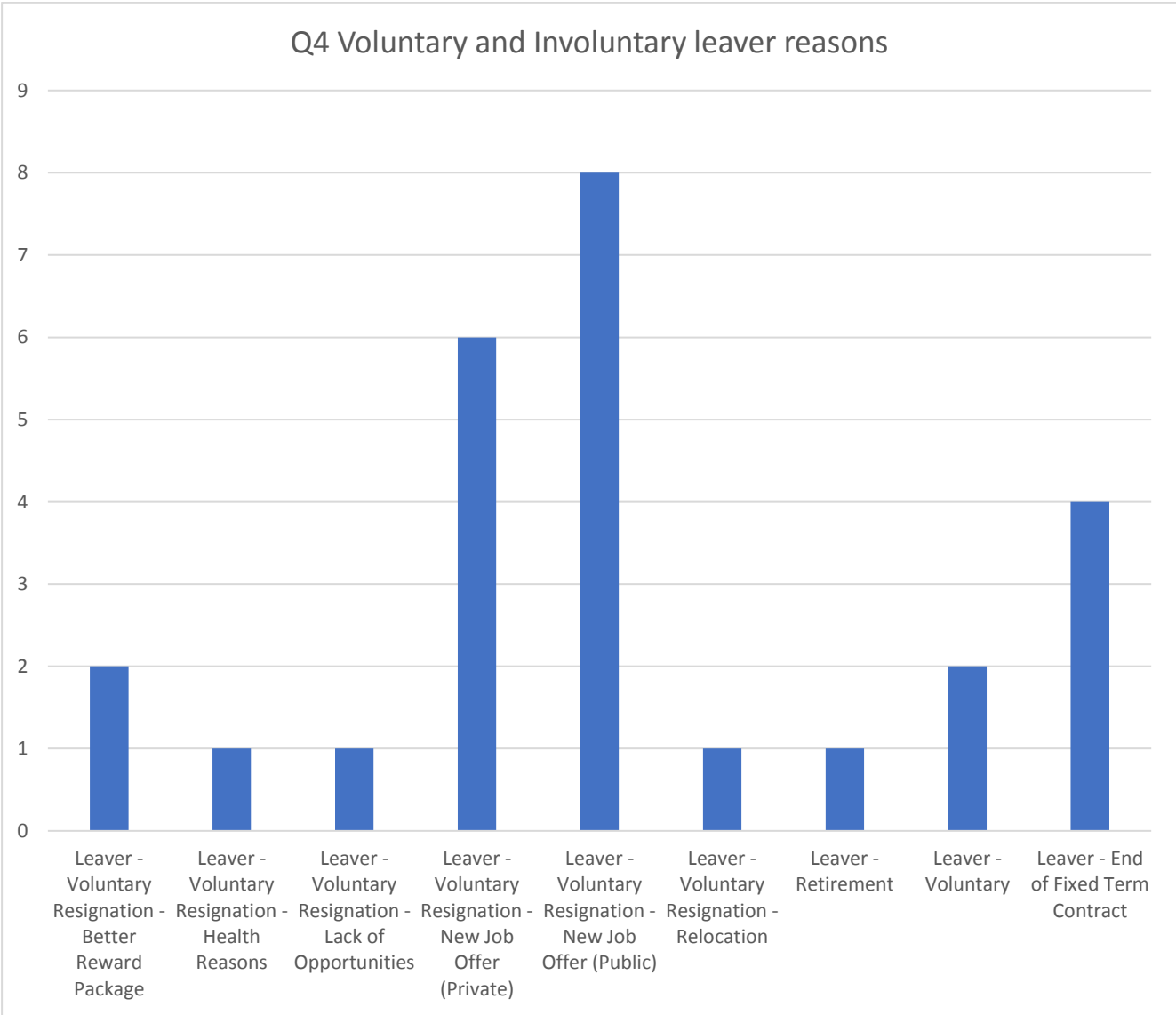


Chart 4 – Q3



Chart 5 – Q4

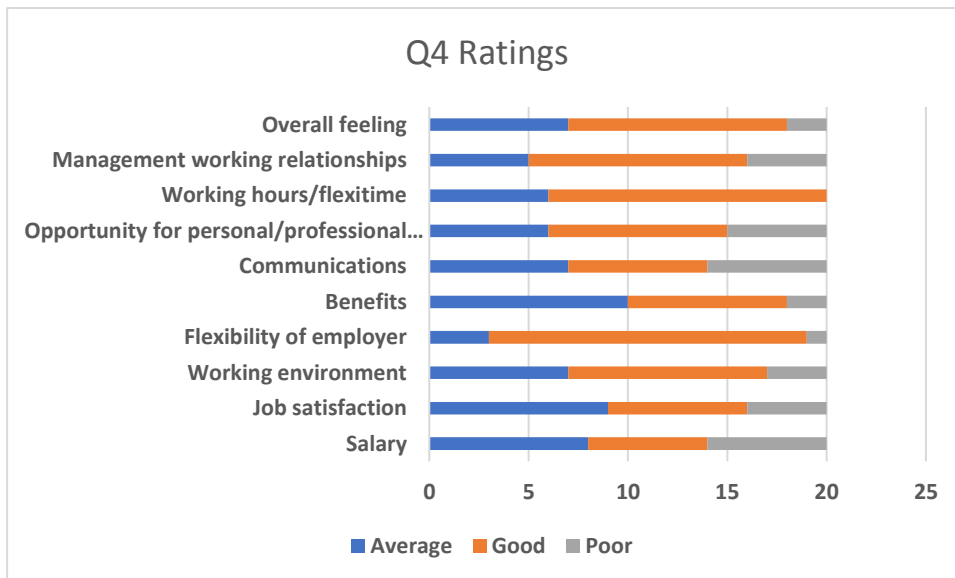


Chart 6 - Q3

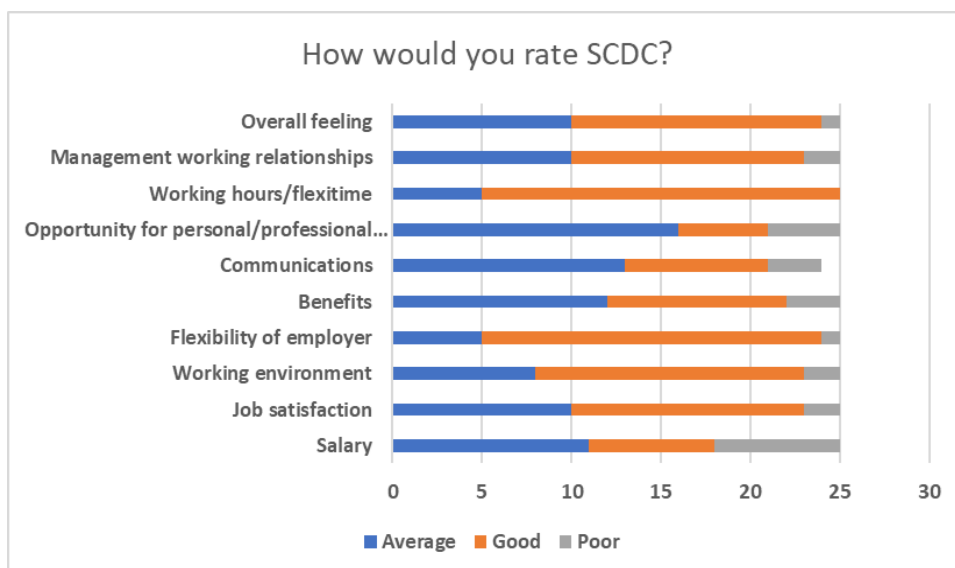


Chart 7 – Q4

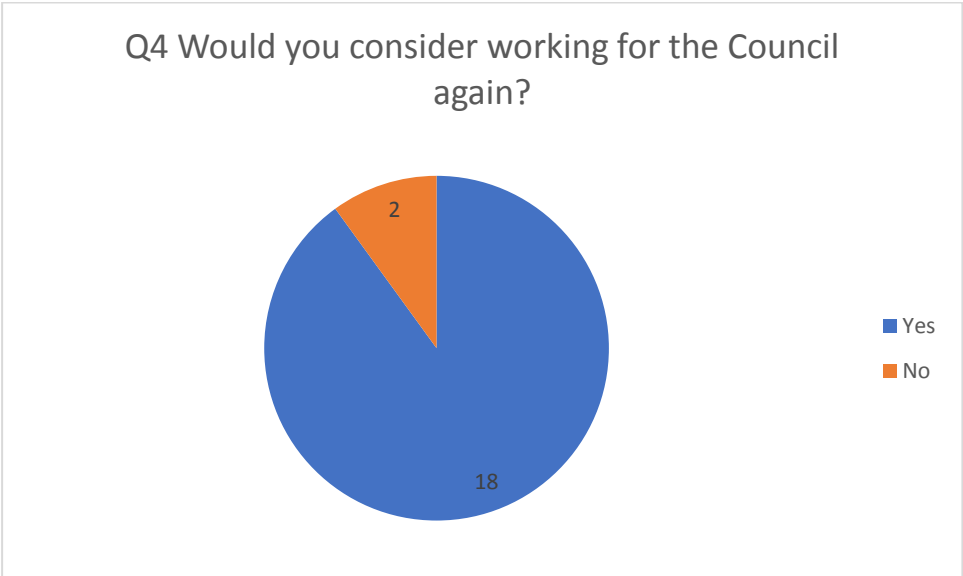


Chart 8 - Quarter 3:

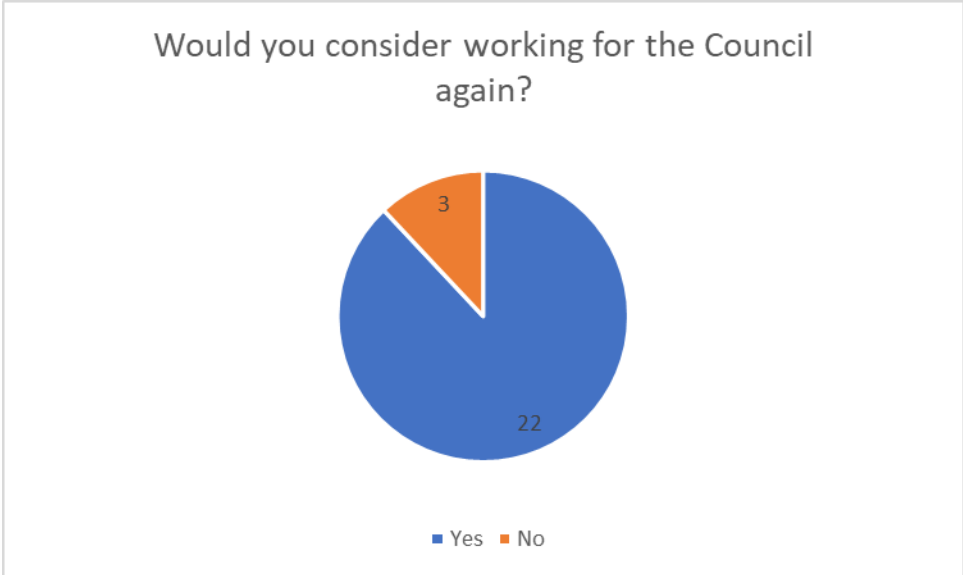


Chart 9 –Joiners in periods, by Service Area

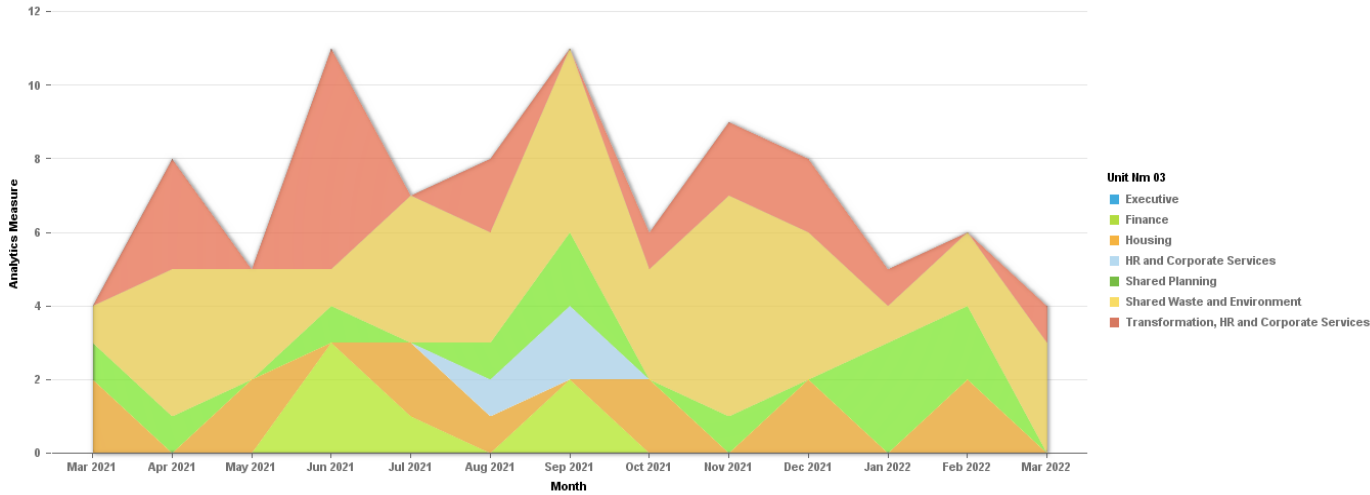


Chart 10

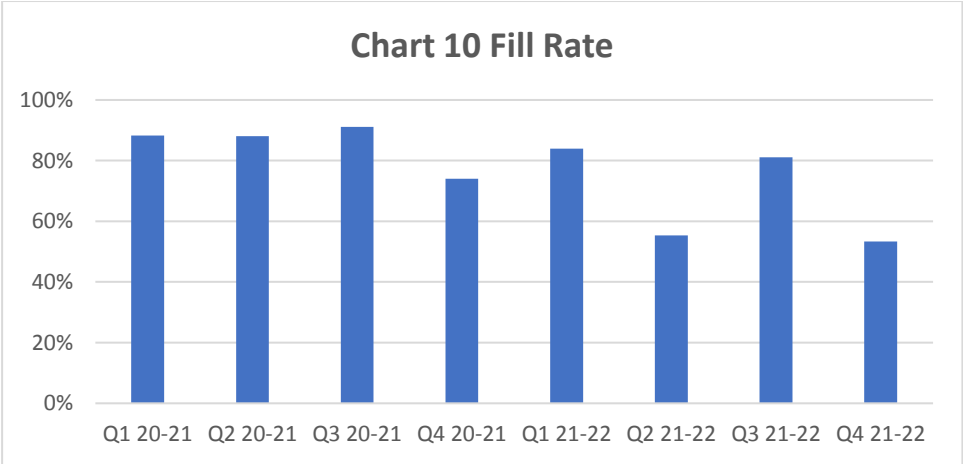


Chart 11

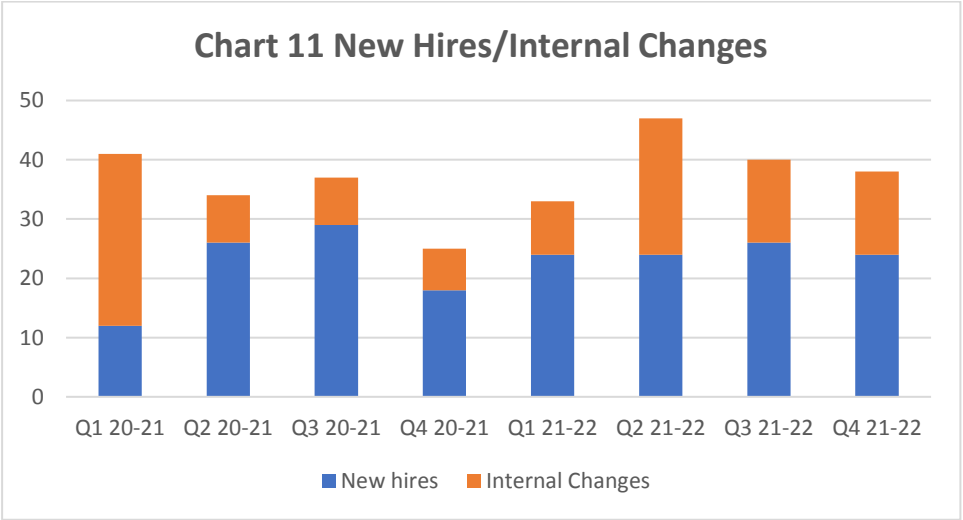
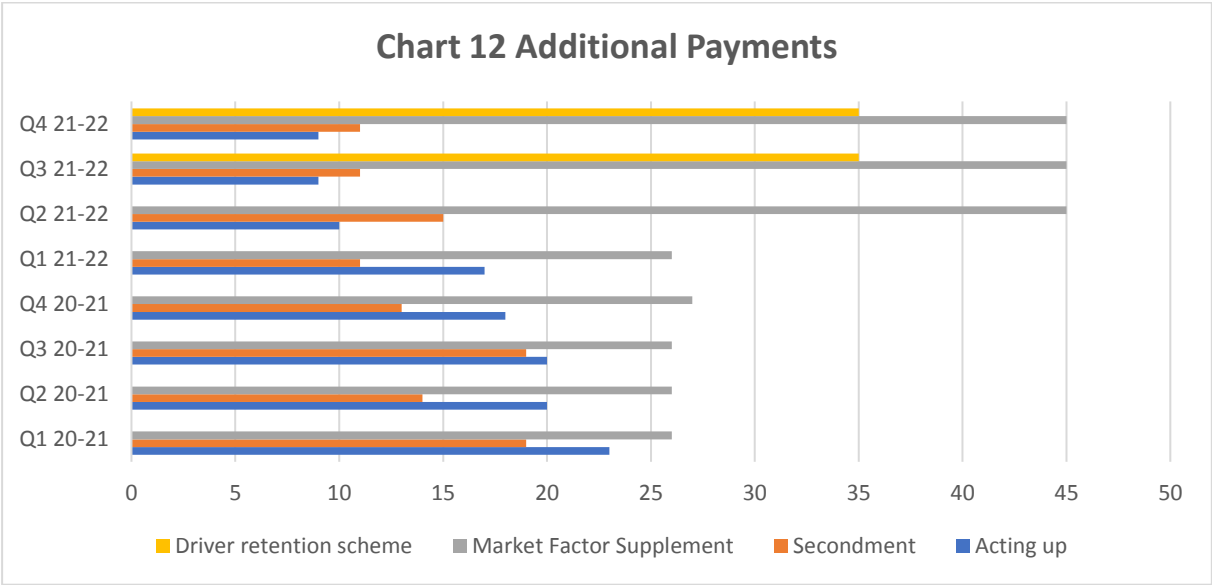


Chart 12



Agenda Item 5



**South
Cambridgeshire**
District Council

Report to:	Employment and Staffing Committee 09 June 2022
Lead Cabinet Member:	John Williams
Lead Officer:	Jeff Membery

Sickness Absence Q4 2021-22

Executive Summary

1. The Sickness Absence rate (BVPI) has decreased in comparison to Q3 2021-22 (2.76) but increased in comparison to Q4 2020-21 (1.04). The top 3 reasons for absence were: Covid-19 (263), Other (216.5) and other MSK (175). Stress, Anxiety and Depression accounted for 181 days absence. Nearly all Service Areas (except Housing), saw a decrease in absence this quarter. Sickness days lost to Covid-19 decreased in this Quarter; there is a lot of absence, particular at the Depot, where employees are either self-isolating or asymptomatic. This is not recorded as Sickness absence (however we have included calculations in the Report as to the exact number of days lost.) Support is provided to employees in different ways, (e.g. through the EAP) 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

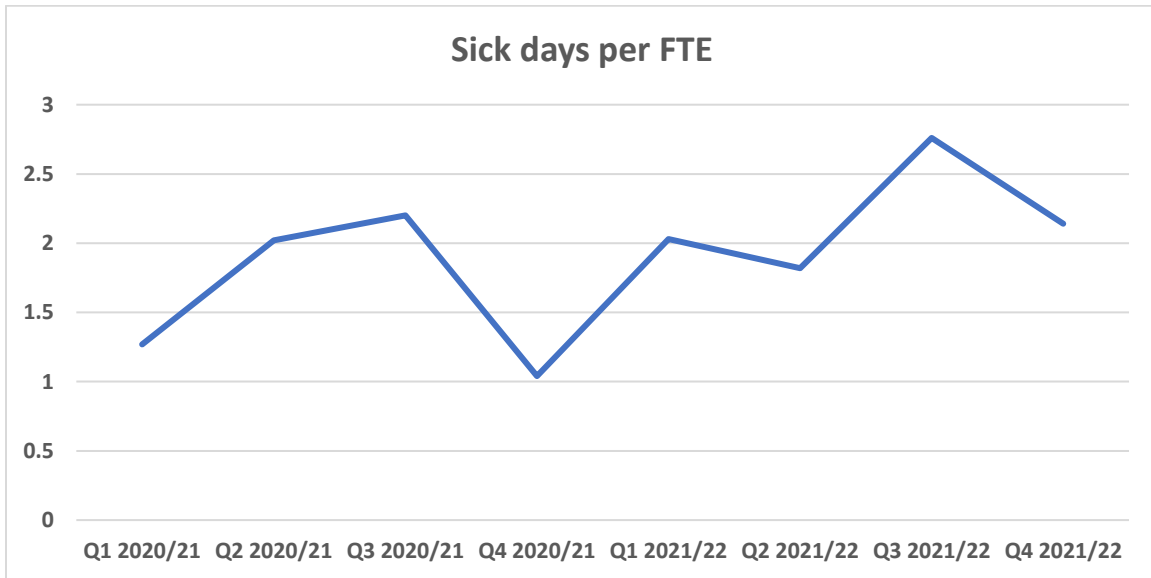
4. This information report forms part of the Employment and Staffing Committee framework for monitoring the Council's staffing resource.

Details

5. We have now successfully implemented our new HR/Payroll management system, which has increased our trend identification and reporting capabilities. This report has been created using our new sickness analytics package, which is why the reports do not look the same as previous reports. As part of this, we have also

increased the number of options for absence reasons, which will better allow us to track changes and implement targeted supports.

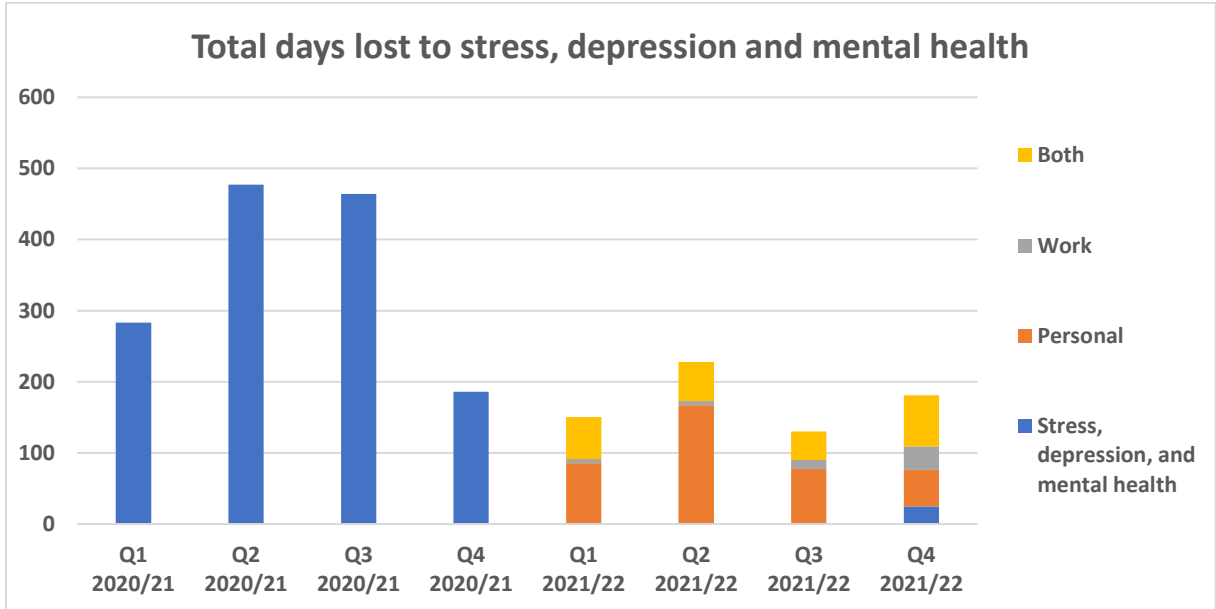
6. Our BVPI figure is 2.14 days per FTE (based on a headcount of 676), which is a decrease on Q3 figure. (2.76). This is also an increase compared to Q4 2020-21 (1.04).



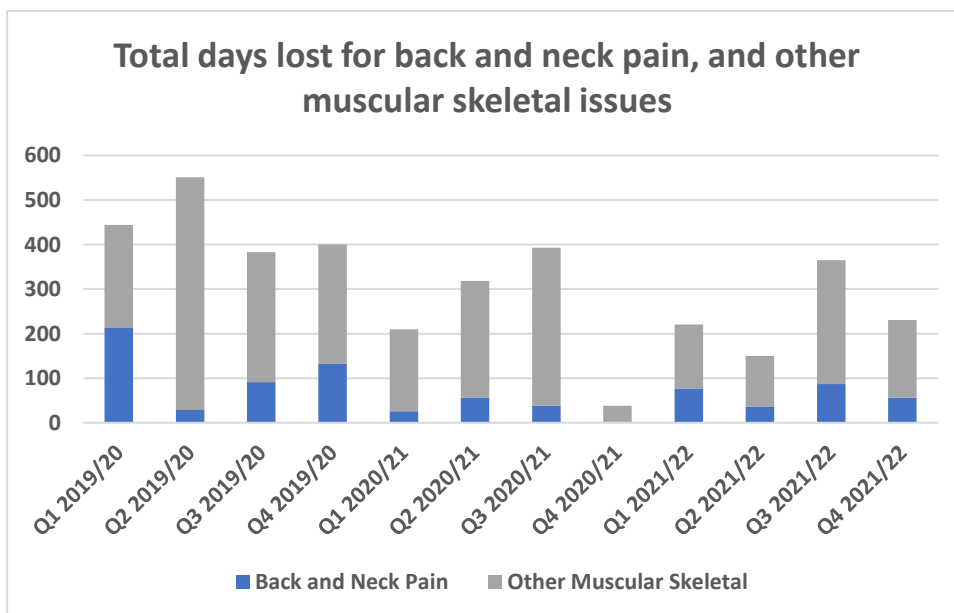
7. Our absence figures have decreased this quarter. In Q4 2021-22 the number of days lost for absence was 1320.5 compared to 1647.5 days lost in Q3, which is a decrease of 327 days.
8. We changed the Absence Types in relation to MSK absences; previously absences were logged as MSK including Back and neck, and other MSK. We have changed this to Back and Neck Problem and Other MSK.
9. Looking at “Absence Analysis by Reason”, there has been a significant increase in Neurological: Headaches and Migraines and Stress Anxiety and Depression (Work and Personal). There have been decreases in Covid-19 , Infections (inc. Cold and Flu), Other MSK and Stomach Liver Kidney and Digestion and in Chest Respiratory absences.
10. Neurological: Headaches and Migraines have seen an overall decrease of 70.5 days, and Stress/Depression (Personal, Work, Work and Personal) combined show an increase of 77.5 days.
11. For more details please see Appendix – Absence Analysis by Reason
12. Within this Quarter, 168 employees have had absences due to sickness (compared to 233 in Q3), meaning 508 employees have not had any absences within this period.
13. The total days lost in Q4 for Shared Waste & Environment account for 46.44% of total days absences (616 out of 1320.5). This is a slight increase from 45.78% in Q3 (605 out of 1321.5).
14. The chart below shows the number of days absence attributed to stress/depression & mental health over the past two years, with the new differentiation between causes of stress, depression, and mental health reflected in the 2021-22 columns.

Taking into account data provided later in this report, in relation to our EAP and Counselling provision, more employees have accessed Telephone or Video Counselling, and downloaded CBT workbooks. This may have led to more employees remaining in the workplace, by seeking support at an earlier time, than has been the case in previous Quarters.

15.

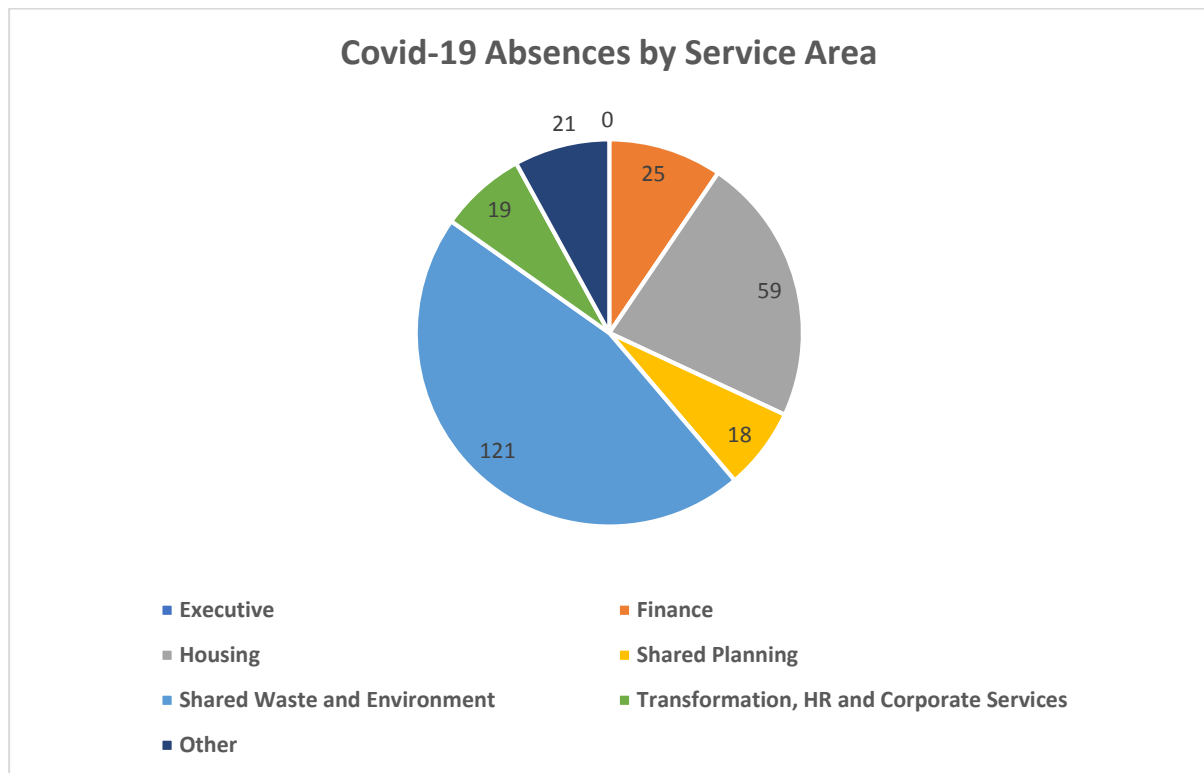


16. The chart below shows the number of day's absence attributed to Back and Neck Pain, Other Muscular-Skeletal, and Musculoskeletal problems incl. back and neck over that last year.



17. Covid-19 Absences

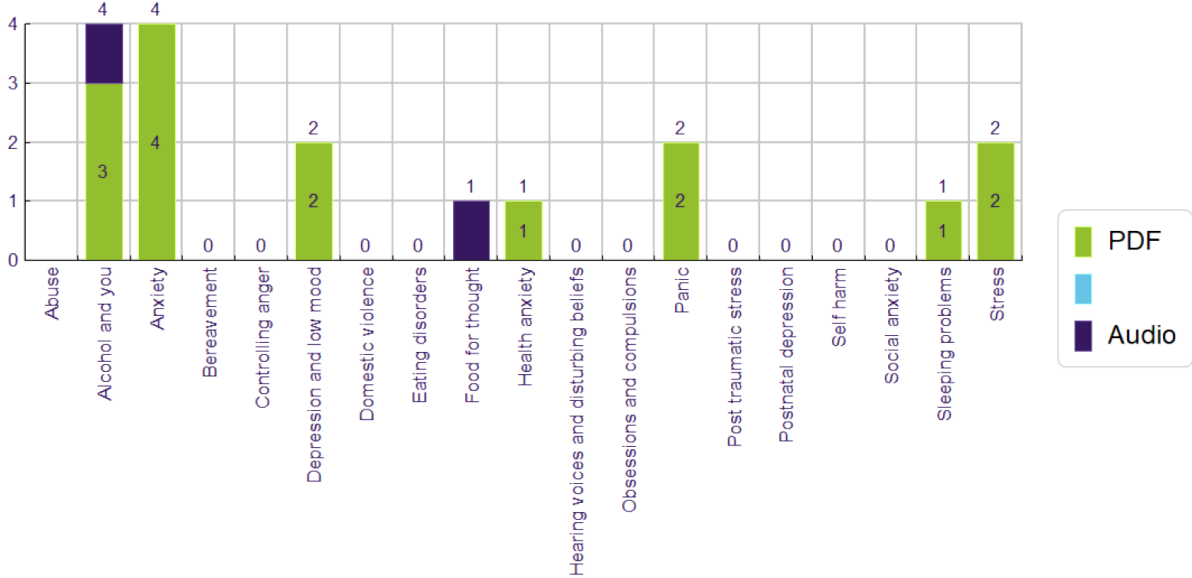
This chart shows the number of days' absence, at Service Area Level.



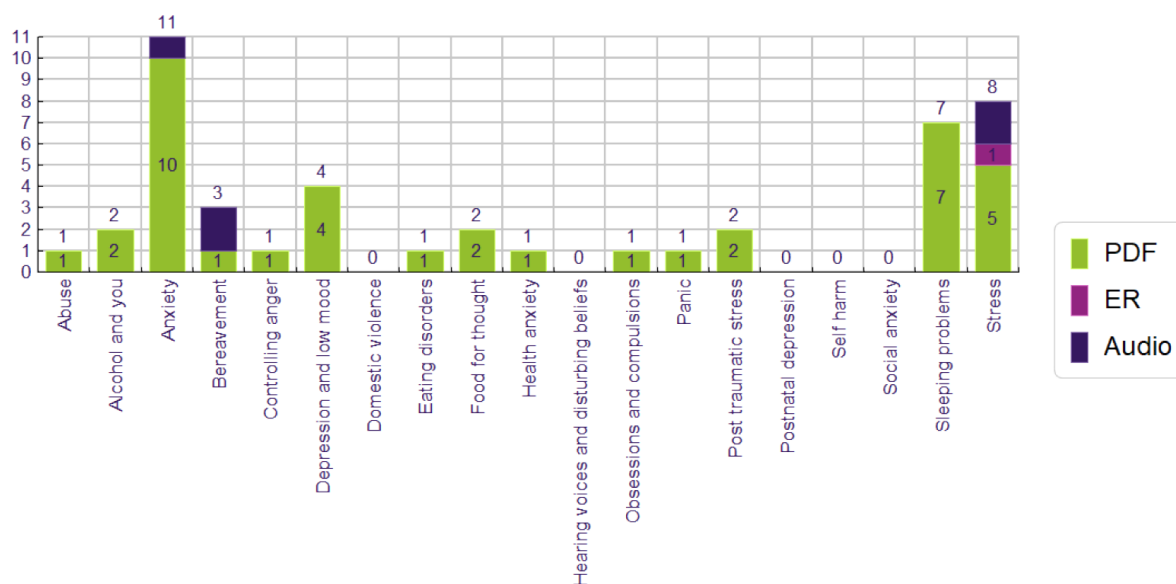
18. 138 days were lost at the Depot in this Quarter due to isolation or asymptomatic cases (compared to 102); these are not recorded as sickness absences. Going forward we will no longer be providing this information. Unfortunately, we are not currently able to provide the usual breakdown between long term and short-term sickness absence, but we are continuing to work on developing the reports and are hopeful this information can be reported on again in the future.
19. During Q4, 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 also run "Wellness Action Plan" sessions, which employees or managers can attend to find out more about and create their own Wellness Action Plan.
22. We have also continued to provide regular guided meditation sessions, which are now once a fortnight and are available to all staff to either attend live or to access the recordings at any point via Insite – we have over 45 sessions recorded now.

- 23. 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 March 2022, analysing the number of employees who have used the DSE training/assessment tool: 404 have completed it, 119 employees are yet to complete the assessment. There has been minimal progress since Q3, there is currently a 77% completion rate.
- 25. We have also been promoting our new Employee Assistance Programme (through Vivup) which includes free confidential counselling for all staff, as well as access to additional resources such as CBT guides. The HR Team ran a campaign entitled the HR Elves - 12 Days Of Christmas. These were a series of short email topics about specific benefits, highlighting different areas of support across the Council. We received positive feedback from employees about this campaign. This included highlight the benefits provided through Vivup, including the EAP and CBT resources. Looking at the graphs below, it is clear that there has been a significant decrease in various CBT workbooks accessed in Q4, compared to Q3.

**South Cambridgeshire District Council
Self Help Downloads**



South Cambridgeshire District Council Self Help Downloads Previous Period



26. During Q4 17 employees accessed the CBT resources (vs 36 in Q3), 26 calls were made to the Helpline (vs 21 in Q3), there were 7 telephone assessments (vs 4 in Q3), with 5 employees accessing Counselling for the first time. There was a total of 26 Counselling sessions (compared to 24 in Q3).
27. We also offer Video Counselling through Evolve; there were 4 employees accessing Counselling in this way (vs 9 in Q3). This provider offers Video Counselling, compared to the telephone-only sessions offered through Vivup.
28. In relation to Managing Absence, there were 30 new HR cases that started in Q4 (compared to 29 in Q3); 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

29. This report is for information only.

Implications

30. There are no significant implications.

Staffing

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

Equality and Diversity

32. 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

33. 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

34. 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.

Appendices

Unable to include Appendix A: Sickness Absence Data for Q4 2021-22 due to issues with running the relevant reports.

Report Author:

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Agenda Item 6



**South
Cambridgeshire**
District Council

Report to:	Employment and Staffing Committee – 9 June 2022
Lead Cabinet Member:	John Williams
Lead Officer:	Jeff Membery/Lindsey Smith

Disability Confident Task and Finish Group

Executive Summary

1. This report is in response to an email received by the Employment and Staffing Committee from Councillor Sarah Cheung-Johnson, Lead of the Disability Confident Task & Finish Group. Councillor Cheung-Johnson questioned whether the task and finish group needed to continue now that Disability Confident Level 2 had been reached.
2. The Council achieved Disability Confident Level 1 on April 2019 and was accredited Level 2 in April 2021 which is valid for 3 years. As a Disability Confident Employer we are committed to:
 - recruiting the right people for our organisation.
 - retaining and developing our staff.
3. Since achieving Level 2 accreditation in April 2021, the Council has undertaken a number of actions to fulfil our duty as a Disability Confident employer, however further work needs to be done to consolidate the Council's Level 2 status before considering moving towards level 3.

Key Decision

2. No.

Recommendations

4. It is recommended that the Employment and Staffing Committee considers this report and decides whether the Task and Finish Group needs to continue now that Level 2 has been achieved.

Reasons for Recommendations

5. A decision is needed whether the Task and Finish Group needs to continue so a response can be provided to Councillor Cheung-Johnson.

Details

6. The Disability Task and Finish group was set up in 2019, as the Council wished to obtain Disability Confident accreditation. Disability Confident is a government scheme designed to encourage employers to recruit and retain disabled people and those with health conditions. It has replaced the previous Two Ticks Positive About Disabled People scheme. It is voluntary and has been developed by employers and disabled people's representatives.
7. The lead member of the Task and Finish group is Councillor Sarah Cheung-Johnson and other members are Councillor Mark Howell, Councillor Jose Hales, Councillor Eileen Wilson, Councillor Alex Malyon. The group was supported by Susan Gardner-Craig, Head of HR and Lindsey Smith, HR Business Partner.
8. The scheme has 3 levels and you must complete each level before moving on to the next.
 - Disability Confident Committed employer (Level 1)
 - Disability Confident Employer (Level 2)
 - Disability Confident Leader (Level 3)
9. The Council achieved Level 1 status in April 2019 and was accredited Level 2 in April 2021 which is valid for 3 years. As a Disability Confident Employer we are committed to:
 - recruiting the right people for our organisation.
 - retaining and developing our staff.
10. The Scheme links with the Council's Equality Strategy and we have undertaken a number of actions to fulfil our duty as a Disability Confident Level 2 employer including:
 - inclusive and accessible recruitment.
 - raising awareness of us as a Disability Confident Employer through our branding.
 - engaging with Job Centre Plus and Papworth Trust to consider how we can encourage disabled applicants to apply for our vacancies.
 - supporting managers with recruiting candidates who have declared a disability.
 - offering an interview to disabled people who meet the minimum criteria
 - providing reasonable adjustments for applicants to attend interview/undertake tests.

- supporting existing employees through providing reasonable adjustments following advice from our Occupational Health provider.
- delivering disability awareness training for all existing staff, and new staff as part of the Council's induction process.
- introduced the Reasonable Adjustment Disability Passport to support disabled employees.
- Promoting Disability History month.

11. During 2022/23 we plan to deliver inclusive recruitment training for all recruiting managers and disability awareness training is to be offered to Members as part of their training programme.

12. Due to the pandemic and working from home arrangements, we haven't been able to fulfil all our actions under level 2, including offering work experience placements or conducting a disability assessment of the building. However, there are a number of further actions planned as we return to the office and move to hybrid working.

13. To achieve Level 3 Disability Confident Leader status, the Council would continue to complete all activities under Level 2 as well as undertaking the following 3 additional steps:

14. **Challenge** – the self-assessment which was completed for level 2 needs to be independently validated. This involves the validators looking at each of the criteria and evidence recorded on the self-assessment and being assured that we:

- are delivering against all of the core actions and are employing disabled people
- can provide evidence for each of the activities we are undertaking to recruit the right people and retain and develop our employees.

The independent validation can be completed by at least one of the following groups:

- recognised accreditation organisations whose accreditation covers the components of the Disability Confident Employer self-assessment
- existing Disability Confident Leaders
- disabled employees or customers/clients
- internal diversity and inclusions groups/forums
- disabled stakeholder groups or forums
- national disability network groups
- local disability organisations, Work and Health Programme providers, network groups
- disabled people's user led organisations (DPULOs)
- national disability organisations

15. Leadership – provide a narrative of the activities we are or will be doing to demonstrate our commitment as a Disability Confident Leader. This may include:

- using social media to promote and share good practice on Disability Confident.
- networking with other employers in our industry.
- being a mentor, coach, buddy or providing peer support to others.
- engaging with other local employers to share good practice.
- celebrating success, for example being nominated for or the winner of a recognised award.
- being nominated for and/or winning local, regional and national awards for the employment of disabled people.
- sponsoring or hosting Disability Confident inspired events.
- providing validation of self-assessment(s) to other employers.
- using contracting to drive positive change, with supply chain providers encouraged to become Disability Confident.

16. Reporting on disability, mental health and wellbeing - publicly report information on disability, mental health and well-being on the Voluntary Reporting Framework. This can be done through an annual report and published on our website. The report needs to cover the following:

- explain the activities in our organisation in relation to the recruitment and retention of disabled people.
- where possible report the percentage of individuals within our organisation who consider themselves to be disabled or have a long term physical or mental health condition.
- explain the activities in our organisation in relation to supporting the health and wellbeing of our employees.
- report the output of staff surveys that provide measures of employee wellbeing.

17. Once all the actions and activities to be a Disability Confident Leader have been completed, we would need to request to become a Disability Confident Leader by submitting the relevant form on the Government website.

18. Once approved, the Disability Confident Leader status is valid for 3 years.

Options

1. The Task and Finish Group ends as we continue to complete further actions under level 2.
2. The Task and Finish Group continues as we complete more actions under level 2 and undertake further actions to move to level 3.

Implications

19. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:-

Financial

20. There are financial implications in terms of costs of delivering training on equality, disability and inclusion training to staff and members as well as inclusive recruitment training to recruiting managers.

Legal

21. Under the Equality Act 2010 the Council has a duty to provide reasonable adjustments for applicants and employees with a disability.

Staffing

22. Officers are required to implement the actions under the Disability Confident scheme.

Risks/Opportunities

23. The Council will seek to mitigate and eliminate risks associated with employment relations matters for example by making reasonable adjustments for applicants and employees with a disability.

Equality and Diversity

24. Through providing reasonable adjustments for applicants and employees with a disability, we are ensuring individuals from this protected group are not disadvantaged.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

A modern and caring Council

25. By being a Disability Confident Employer, we are demonstrating our commitment to recruiting and retaining disabled people in a safe environment.

Report Author:

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