

Report to:	QSMTM Q4, Part 2 2023-24
Report by:	Kim Berry, Finance and Administration Manager (FAM)
Meeting Date:	31 May 2024
Subject/ Title: (and VC no)	CR Ill health absence report 2023-24 VC208627
Attached Papers (title and VC no)	<p>Print-outs from Ill health absence workbook (vc)</p> <p>(1) Report on Ill Health (Hours and Days) Absence 2023-24</p> <p>(2) Ill health Absence – Hours Lost by Reason Report 2023-24</p> <p>Benchmark statistics used in the preparation of this report - ONS sickness absence in the UK labour market statistics. As at 23 May 2024 there is no 2023-24 Sickness absence data available from ONS yet.</p>

Purpose of report

- The purpose of this Committee Report (CR) is to provide the Senior Management Team (SMT) with the ill health absence data for the organisation for 2023-24.

Recommendation and actions

- I recommend the following:
 - the SMT notes the CR and the attached papers and provide their views on the following:
 - whether there are any issues arising in relation to ill health absence levels which require noting and possible further action
 - whether there are any issues in relation to the variance between the Commissioner's statistics and the national statistics which require possible further action
 - this CR and attached papers should be published as set out in paragraph 23.

Executive summary

Background

- Papers attached:
 - Paper 1 – “Report on Ill Health (Hours and Days) Absence 2023-24” – showing absence by hours and by days per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) and including comparator figures for 2022-23
 - Paper 2 - “Ill Health Absence - Hours Lost by Reason Report 2023-24” - showing sickness absence by reason for 2023-24 analysed by % of hours lost and including comparator figures for 2022-23
- Working hours and days per FTE and any changes in work patterns have been taken account of in the calculation of the statistics referred to below.
- Where sickness absence continued over a weekend/weekends, only working hours lost have been taken into account.

6. In November 2013, the SMT agreed to adopt the Office for National Statistics (ONS) public sector benchmark as a comparator. The latest statistics were released on 26 April 2023 and can be viewed at: [Sickness absence in the UK labour market - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk).
7. As at 23 May 2024, ONS has not released sickness absence statistics data for 2023-24.

Statistics- Commissioner’s office 2023-24

8. For 2023-24:
 - 454.95 days ill health absence – an increase of 147.11 days when compared to the previous year (2022-23 307.84)
 - the total days of ill health absence per FTE member of staff is 18.97, an increase of 3.2 days when compared to the previous year (2022-23 15.77).
 - the total days lost to sickness absence per FTE member of staff is 13.27 days higher than the ONS benchmark of 5.70 (2022-23 10.07).

Reasons for ill health absence

9. s38(1)(b) [Redacted]

10. s38(1)(b) [Redacted]

11. The above figures illustrate that the reasons for staff absence can vary greatly between years.
12. It should also be noted that, due to our relatively small staff complement, any absence of a significant length can have an adverse effect on the overall absence levels and, also, can have a significant effect on the % figures and prior year comparisons.

Mitigation

13. However, rather than just comparing the ill health absence reasons between years, it can be useful to look at the main reasons for absence and identify if there are any mitigating factors or any additional actions which can be taken to address the cause or mitigate against similar absence in the future.
14. Return to work interviews carried out by line managers are also helpful as they can provide an opportunity to identify any issues which should be addressed to ensure a member of staff’s health and safety and wellbeing.

15. As hybrid working is also in place, remote working assessments are carried out for all staff and these assessments may also identify actions which can be taken to increase staff wellbeing and help reduce sickness absence.

Risk impact

16. The collection and monitoring of ill health absence statistics mitigates a number of operational risks, including those relating to not having robust governance arrangements, not ensuring the availability of human resources and not managing business resilience.

Equalities impact

17. There is no direct equalities impact arising from this CR

Privacy impact

18. There are no direct privacy implications arising from this CR.

Resources impact

19. None directly arising from this CR.

Operational/ strategic plan impact

20. Monitoring of ill health absence is within the “business as usual” actions for HOCS in the Operational Plan 2023-24.

Records management impact (including any key documents actions)

21. None.

Consultation and Communication

22. None.

Publication

23. The CR and attached papers should be published as follows:-
- CR - published with the exception of paragraphs 9 and 10 which are withheld on the basis of exemption s38(1)(b)
 - Paper 1, Report on Ill Health (Hours and Days) Absence 2023-24 – published in full
 - Paper 2, Ill Health Absence Hours Lost by Reason Report 2023-24 - withheld on the basis of exemption s38(1)(b)