



PERSONNEL COMMITTEE
22 June 2023

ITEM 05

Report sponsor: Heather Greenan, Director of Policy, Insight and Communications
Report author: Adele Ashmore, Strategic HR Manager

Colleague health and wellbeing update

Purpose

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the colleague health and wellbeing approach the Council has continued to take during 2022/23 and looks ahead to the future direction in 2023/24. The report also provides the headlines of the Council's attendance management outturn for 2022/23.

Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the considerable colleague health and wellbeing offer that is available to the Council's colleagues, and the importance of supporting colleagues to take personal responsibility for their wellbeing.
- 2.2 To note that from 1 June 2023, the Council has moved from an externally hosted absence reporting platform to colleagues contacting their manager if they are absent from work due to ill health.
- 2.3 To note the Council's attendance management performance of 13.34 FTE days lost for 2022/23, and the future focus in 2023/24 on health and wellbeing.

Reason

- 3.1 To ensure that Personnel Committee is aware of the continued focus on colleague health and wellbeing, and the context in which that focus is operating.

Supporting information

- 4.1 We have continued to keep the focus on the health and wellbeing of our colleagues during 2022/23.

4.2 Occupational Health and Wellbeing approach

Personnel Committee have regularly received updates about the ongoing work of the Occupational Health and Wellbeing service, and the continued development of the Council's health and wellbeing approach.

The Council provides an in-house, doctor-led Occupational Health service. We moved from a nurse-led appointment service in 2022, both to improve the quality of advice and reports written and because qualified occupational health physicians can carry out the full remit of an Occupational Health service.

The referring manager now receives the full Occupational Health report within 24 hours of the appointment, to support them to manage the absence quickly and efficiently.

The Occupational Health service continues to perform well against service level agreements, delivering appointments within 5-10 days of receipt of the referral. The service delivers above local benchmarks where appointments are offered within 25 days.

In addition to providing advice on pre-employment checks for successful candidates, and referrals for existing colleagues including those absent from work due to ill health, the Occupational Health team also provide a face-to-face statutory health surveillance provision for several of our job roles. In 2022, a total of 2863 appointments were offered by the service and the breakdown of those appointments is:

- 1832 health surveillance
- 1031 health assessments including for absent colleagues

An integral part of our wellbeing offer is the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), which is externally hosted. Colleagues can access information and advice on a range of health and financial matters, 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. Our usage is at 3.9%, above an industry average of 1.4% for year ending March 2023. We have extended our arrangement for this service for another two years up to May 2025. Counselling services are also available through our EAP. A total of 112 employees were provided with counselling support during April 22- March 23, each with an opportunity to access up to 8 counselling sessions which is significant benefit to make available to our colleagues. The average take-up was 7 counselling sessions each. The most popular format for the session was telephone consultations.

The top three reasons for accessing counselling sessions were anxiety, women's health and family. Work related issues accounted for 28%, whilst personal issues were 72%. A further positive development is that since last July, colleagues' family members have also been able to access support from our EAP.

We have been running a series of health and wellbeing campaigns this year, with specific theme each month. For example, throughout January we highlighted the Dry January campaign, February was focused on Financial Wellbeing, and March was Men and Women's health promotion working with our partners at Live Well. In May we focused on Mental Health Awareness Week.

4.3 Absence reporting changes

We have also changed how colleagues report their sickness absence if they are unwell and are unable to attend work. Since 1 June 2023, colleagues now ring their manager if they are unwell, rather than ringing an externally hosted absence reporting line. We anticipate that this early contact with a line manager when a colleague is unwell will help to underpin the importance of line managers engaging with colleagues at the earliest stage of their absence. Early conversations, and continuing dialogue if a colleague remains absent due to ill health, are important factors in supporting and managing colleague attendance.

4.4 Attendance Management Performance for 2022/23

The Council's performance on attendance for the last financial year is shown below. This is a slight increase on the previous year's performance of 12.81 FTE days lost.

Directorate	FTE Days Lost per Employee
Communities and Place Directorate	15.4
Corporate Resources Directorate	8.62
People Services Directorate	14.59
Derby City Council	13.34

4.5 Future focus for 2023/34

We are defining our Wellbeing Strategy, and this will form an integral part of our Council People Strategy. The recently established People and Culture Programme Board will oversee the development and implementation of the strategies, underlining the importance of positive health and wellbeing for our colleagues.

Our prevention focussed wellbeing approach supports our vision of ensuring that health and wellbeing is embedded in everything we do and championed at all levels and across all functions, so that positive wellbeing becomes part of our culture.

We recognise that wellbeing does not start and end in the workplace. We want to empower our colleagues to make informed choices and engage in positive health and wellbeing behaviours so that they can thrive at the Council and beyond. We will build on the work that we've been doing over the last 12 months to support colleagues to make these informed choices.

We will be exploring the following actions during 2023/24:

- Potential to develop our existing mental health champion network into an overarching wellbeing champion network to signpost colleagues on a range of health and wellbeing issues.
- Improve the understanding of occupational health and wellbeing and developing a culture of wellbeing – by regular team discussions to ensure that our comprehensive wellbeing offer is understood, complemented by a wellbeing programme running throughout the year.
- Provide appropriate guidance based on national campaigns and relevant research in line with our NHS partners. This will provide information to our workforce to allow them to make informed decisions about their own health and wellbeing. We will maximise all opportunities with collaborate with partners.
- Provide the support and tools needed to make healthy choices, so that our colleagues can continue to take responsibility for improving their own health and wellbeing.
- Develop a wellbeing activity calendar, and all the activity associated with the planned actions to be supported by the identified champion network

In addition, services will continue to focus on relevant actions to reduce the absence levels and an analysis of average working days lost due to sickness absence has been carried out, looking at our local data and within the national context.

Further work on this initial analysis is underway, with a working group established to bring together good practice and actions to support the reduction of absence.

Public/stakeholder engagement

- 5.1 Public and Stakeholder engagement has not been required for this report.

Other options

- 6.1 Do nothing. This is not considered to be a viable option, as the council is committed to supporting colleagues to take personal ownership of their health and wellbeing.

Financial and value for money issues

- 7.1 None arising from this report.

Legal implications

8.1 None arising from this report.

Climate implications

9.1 None arising from this report.

Other significant implications

10.1 Colleague health and well-being is a risk on the Council's strategic risk register which is monitored regularly and performance is reported to Cabinet and Scrutiny. This paper contains actions which helps to mitigate the risk.

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal Finance Service Director(s)	Heather Greenan, Director of Policy Insights and Information	13/06/2023
Report sponsor Other(s)	Liz Moore, Head of HR and OD	12/06/2023

Background papers:
List of appendices: