

## **WORKFORCE REPORT**

### Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 Our People Plan was initially developed in 2021, to provide a clarity around our strategic and tactical workforce change programme, whilst also highlighting the connections between different elements of the work we do to recruit, develop, support and engage our workforce. In the CMRG report presented in January 2023, for the 18 months to September 2022, significant progress in delivering key pillars of the People Plan were highlighted, as well as reflecting the operational success in areas such as sickness absence management and employee relations case work.
- 1.2 This report reflects our progress during 2022 /23 in developing our People Plan further and implementing new initiatives.
- 1.3 It is important in any report of this nature to reflect the high levels of commitment to public service by our workforce. Although the pandemic is thankfully an event of the past, it's impact on our workforce was significant and elements of this impact continue to be felt today. It is also worth noting that many positive changes to working practices introduced to respond to Covid have been embedded. However, for some teams work volumes seem not to have reduced post pandemic and the focus our Council Plan shapes our People Plan priorities.
- 1.4 Our Chief Executive has now been in post for over 18 months and during this period we have seen improvements in workforce engagement and productivity as key outcomes required for the Council to further improve its ability to deliver for our community, and also to build upon our emerging reputation as an outstanding local authority and employer.
- 1.5 Professional recognition is always welcome and so it was extremely satisfying that our People Operations team should win the Public Services People Management Association (PPMA) Superstar Team of the Year Award in April 2023. We have also been shortlisted for the PPMA Workforce Transformation award and the LGC workforce Best innovation in smart working for our work to adopt digital practice and tools.

#### **2. Key headlines**

- 2.1 Our headline headcount and FTE figures for the year 2022/ 23 are broadly flat over the 12 months. At directorate level the only notable change was the

reduction of headcount and FTE in Public Health, as a result of Covid related Fixed Term Contracts within Public Health.

- 2.2 Overall attrition, a measurement of how many people leave the organisation at 11.19%, is slightly above the level (8% - 10%) at which most organisations, including SMBC, would prefer to maintain it. However, whilst there are clearly significant challenges in retaining staff, especially those in professional and technical roles, it is important to highlight the attrition within Children's Services for the year at 9.69%. Given the highly competitive nature of the children's social care recruitment market, and the potentially negative impact upon service users of high attrition, turnover at this level is to be recognised as a good outcome.
- 2.3 We have relatively high turnover between 6 – 12 months service and between 2 years and 5 years' service. As a result of identifying these peaks, we are reviewing our onboarding of new recruits, and developing proposals to retain more of those with 2 – 5 years' service.
- 2.4 We have significantly improved our candidate attraction capability over the period covered by this report. Much clearer and impactful recruitment pages on the Council website, improved use of social media, including proactive attraction using LinkedIn and successful local recruitment fairs have all contributed to an internally recognised increase in the number and quality of candidates. We are developing videos for use in candidate attraction and to further engage those who have accepted our offer, and await completion of the necessary pre employment checks and onboarding activities.
- 2.5 Our leadership programme Leading Stockport was launched in January 2023, including a new Leadership Forum. Over 500 of our leaders and managers attended to listen to our Chief Executive's 'Ted Talk' about lessons from her career journey, participate in a leadership panel discussion and discuss our new leadership behaviours. Going forward, we will use the Leading Stockport programme to further develop leadership and management, as a cornerstone of our ambition to achieve the most inclusive and diverse, values based culture.
- 2.6 The past year has in part been used to develop clarity around our priorities to develop a more diverse and inclusive workforce, using data to forensically understand where we have challenges and then to develop plans to address these. Our recent data cleanse has encouraged all employees to update their personal data, which should provide a clearer more complete dataset with which to make decisions. Our plan to work collaboratively with Colleague Network Chairs to run an EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) workforce survey early in 2024 reflects our ambition to use an evidenced based approach to inform decision making in this key area.
- 2.7 Our wellbeing offer for all colleagues is leading the way in providing support and services via our Wellbeing Hub, which will enable them to improve their personal resilience and wellbeing, whilst also enabling those who need and seek it to use the broad range of support available to restore themselves to good mental and physical health.

- 2.8 We have worked diligently to gradually embed our values and aligned behaviours across the Council. As an example, our new Leadership Behaviours are closely aligned with our values and will be used as an integral part of our new appraisal approach 'My Conversation' to assess how leaders have delivered their performance outcomes.
- 2.9 Our HR Case Management team, continue to work skilfully to support the management of complex and potentially high risk cases. Although the number of cases is, by any measure not high, each case represents potential reputation damage for the organisation, and the fact that we have not had a tribunal case recently is testament to the skill and commitment of the team.
- 2.10 Sickness absence has reduced to an average of 9.86 days per FTE, which is a welcome reduction from the 10.77 days per FTE recorded for 2021/22 although, greater insight will be provided by understanding the split of short and long term sickness absence.
- 2.11 Occupational Health referrals have started to reduce, which is good news, but are still at a level which is high when compared with referrals across the GM area.

### 3. Workforce Analysis

- 3.1 In April 2022, Council permanent headcount was at 2976 and at March 2023, 2926, a decrease of 1.68%. FTE also decreased slightly from 2546.78 to 2535.96, a decrease of 0.42%.
- 3.2 At a directorate level, Adult Social Care, Public Health and Childrens Services all saw a decrease in headcount during the year, although Children's Services saw a marginal increase in FTE of 0.36%. Corporate Services and Services to Place saw slight increases in both headcount (CSS 0.78%, Place 2.14%) and FTE (CSS 1.45%, Place 2.00%). Public Health saw a significant reduction in both headcount and FTE, related to the end of Covid related Fixed Term Contracts.

	2023 Q4		2022 Q4		Comparison	
	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE	Headcount	FTE
Adult Social Care and Health	629	551.06	647	562.96	-2.78%	-2.11%
Public Health	62	50.19	107	73.78	-42.06%	-31.97%
Childrens Services	823	696.26	826	690.99	-0.36%	0.76%
Corporate and Support Services	1030	920.37	1022	907.22	0.78%	1.45%
Services to Place	382	318.07	374	311.83	2.14%	2.00%
<b>Council (Total)</b>	<b>2926</b>	<b>2535.96</b>	<b>2976</b>	<b>2546.78</b>	<b>-1.68%</b>	<b>-0.42%</b>

- 3.3 Given the need to deliver further MTFP related cost reductions, it is worth highlighting the key role the HR & OD Team plays in managing and delivering headcount reductions during the past year.

#### 4. Rolling 12 Month Retention Analysis

4.1 Overall workforce turnover during the year 2022/23 was 14.97%. This figure includes voluntary (resignations) and involuntary turnover (for example redundancies and dismissals).

4.2 The voluntary turnover figure relating to permanent contract holders (i.e., excluding those with temporary contracts and potentially more likely to move jobs) for 2022/23 was 11.19%.

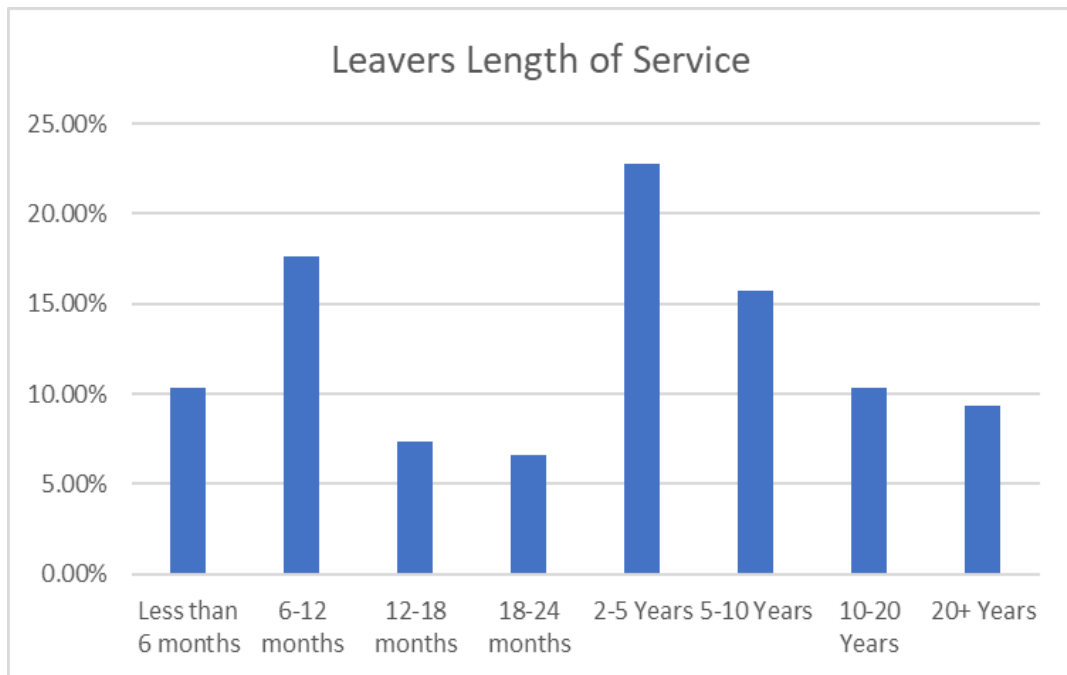
	Total	Adult Social Care	Children's Services	Corporate & Support Services	Place	Public Health
Headcount	2926	629	823	1030	382	62
Overall Turnover	14.97%	14.94%	11.54%	15.05%	14.14%	64.52%
Voluntary Turnover	13.94%	12.88%	11.06%	13.98%	13.61%	64.52%
Voluntary Turnover (Permanent)	11.19%	12.60%	9.69%	11.54%	10.79%	12.90%

4.3 Some turnover within a workforce is healthy and most organisations would seek to maintain turnover at between 8% - 10% per annum. The national average is 15%. So, although 11.19% is not extreme, it is at a level that we should be concerned about. The Greater Manchester (GM) recruitment market was extremely challenging throughout 2022 and into 2023, as the local economy came out of Covid related restrictions.

4.4 Across the UK, increasing living costs provided an incentive over the past 12 – 18 months for many people to seek a new role. Some of those in vocational roles (social work, teaching and nursing) moved, increasingly some of these movers have entered the contingency labour market as agency temps (exchanging higher base pay for greater job insecurity) and some moved completely away from their professions.

4.5 Although there were pressure areas, it is also important to highlight our success in retaining talent, particularly in Children's Services. At a time when many GM local authorities are extremely stretched and a few have a majority of contingency workers in their children's services teams, our annual voluntary turnover rate was 9.69%. It is likely that a retention payment paid to Social Workers and Senior Practitioners in Stockport Family on SO2 and SO3 pay scales significantly contributed to the reduction in voluntary turnover.

4.6 Reviewing leavers by length of service, over 15% of new starters leave within the first 12 months of starting and over 20% leaving between 2 – 5 years' service.



## 5. Values and Behaviours

- 5.1 In early 2022 it felt timely to review our values and behaviours framework, following the end of the Covid pandemic and the new ways of working that have been adopted. The May 2022 All Colleague Survey informed us that there was a significant level of engagement with our values, with 94% of colleagues being aware of them and colleagues recognising them in the behaviours of their managers and team members. However, it was also recognised that the underlying behaviours could be improved to reflect the type of inclusive culture we aspire to. Work to evaluate a revised set of values and behaviours with colleagues began in spring 2022 and continued throughout the year culminating in a refreshed set of values being launched in October 2022.
- 5.2 The statements underpinning each value were developed after a series of workshops and other opportunities for colleagues to provide feedback run during the spring and summer.
- 5.3 All Colleague Briefings were led by our Chief Executive and presented our updated values and behaviours. As a team, People and Organisation Development are working to embed the agreed values and our new leadership behaviours into products such as Performance & Development Reviews (and it's replacement – My Conversation) , recruitment and selection tools and our training modules.
- 5.4 Our Ambitious Stockport workstream will increasingly embed our values and associated behaviours. For example, encouraging colleagues to reference our values when making decisions, including values based discussions at team meetings and reflecting upon our values and behaviours as a part of our new appraisal process 'My Conversation'.

## 6. People Plan Overview

Our People Plan has been iteratively developed since its inception in 2021 and was recently included as a workforce product supporting our Peer Review process. The same five pillars have been retained and there is now a more comprehensive view of the outcomes expected from each of the pillars, aligned with our Council Plan ambitions.

# OUR FIVE PILLAR PLAN



**JOIN US**



**GROW  
AND THRIVE**



**FEEL  
SUPPORTED**



**BELONG  
HERE**



**LIVE OUR  
VALUES**

- 6.1 The people plan is ambitious and reflects a wide range of work and outcomes which we aspire to achieve during the multiyear lifetime of the plan.
- 6.2 It is important that the people plan reflects our organisational priorities. These are agreed, reviewed and updated by the Workforce Steering Group, which includes representatives from each part of the Council, with oversight from the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT).
- 6.3 As well as our pillars, our People Plan also reflects our Council Plan, our values, data about our workforce, what we have heard from colleagues in developing the people plan, agreed priorities for each pillar and proposed metrics to enable us to track progress within each pillar.
- 6.4 Our CLT and Workforce Steering Group have been presented with and agreed several priorities within each of the People Plan pillars:

**Join Us:** Developing resourcing strategies for critical roles, implementing good practice, efficient recruitment practice and processes.

**Grow & Thrive:** Supporting improved leadership through our Leading Stockport programme. Reviewing and implementing an updated Performance and Development process and the optimised use of our Apprenticeship Levy.

**Feel Supported:** Promoting our enhanced wellbeing offer and tracking usage, using employee surveys to understand our workforce's view on wellbeing and

publishing the results. Promoting our Cost of Living support within and across our workforce using innovative approaches to provide support where possible. Highlighting the importance of our sickness absence management processes and supporting colleagues to return to work as quickly as possible.

**Belong Here:** Working with our engagement groups to shape our equality, diversity and inclusion policy and practice, using data to strengthen our understanding of issues and to prioritise actions. Implementing CLT sponsorship for our employee engagement groups in a way which supports each groups development. Implementing a reverse mentoring programme, as part of our approach to deliver EDI outcomes from our Leading Stockport programme.

**Live Our Values:** Promoting our values alongside our organisational vision and mission, updating our HR products to align with our values, including an assessment of values based behaviours within our new performance and development review process and improving data skills generally across our organisation.

- 6.5 To provide a structure for this report, our progress is shared in the context of our People Plan pillars. Subsequently our employee relations case management activity is reviewed, providing insights to levels of grievances, disciplinary and sickness absence cases. Finally, the report shares detail about our wellbeing and occupational health progress, including on sickness absence.

## 7. Join Us Pillar

- 7.1 Our small recruitment team made great strides during the year, both in terms of our use of digital tools, and in the quality and value of applicants. We still have much to do, particularly to address identified adverse impact in our selection processes, but 2022/ 23 was a year of progress. The significant achievements during the year are;
- Recruitment to 3 senior Director level vacancies, as noted above within tight timescales, within a tight, candidate driven recruitment market.
  - Development of recruitment pages on the Council website to include more information about services, benefits of working for Stockport and spotlighting various job roles, plus a message from the Chief Executive and links to social media which has all resulted in greater clarity around our recruitment proposition. The new recruitment webpages have received double the number of visits compared with the same time prior to the changes. In addition, we are developing a more proactive approach to talent acquisition by increased use of social media and a LinkedIn recruiters' licence, all resulting in an improved ability to attract more candidates of a higher calibre.
  - We have organised 4 successful recruitment fairs;

- SMBC jobs (all roles) – September 2022. Around 700 attendees – for this we appointed several people in IT, Reach Service, Libraries, Opportunities Together and Business Support.
- Home Support Worker jobs fair – November 2022. Around 50 attendees – appointed 10 people.
- Supporting Stockport (entry roles) April 2023. Around 100 attendees Recruiting managers gave valuable feedback on this event, particularly Revenue and Benefits.
- One Stockport Health & Care Recruitment Event June 2023. Attended by over 200 people seeking employment, training and voluntary opportunities. 31 Organisations attended on the day offering a range of Health and Social care roles. 3 Organisations conducted interviews on the day and 5 jobs were offered on the day. Feedback from potential candidates and recruiting organisations was positive.

## 9. Grow and Thrive Pillar

- 9.1. Our commitment to investing in the Organisations leaders and line managers is evidenced by the January 2023 launch of “Leading Stockport”, our new leadership development programme. This programme brings together 4 elements of management development and leadership development activity:
- **Leading Stockport Foundation** – a refreshed 4-day induction course for new leaders at the council.
  - **Leading Stockport Masterclasses** – shorter focussed training sessions on key leadership topics
  - **Leadership Qualifications** – qualifications at a range of various levels for existing and aspiring leaders
  - **Leading Stockport Network** – regular forums for all with management/ leadership roles, hearing from both colleagues and expert speakers on how to be effective leaders and managers.
- 9.2. We continue to develop our use of the Apprenticeship Levy within Stockport Council as a way of both bringing in new talent to the organisation and upskilling our existing workforce. During 2022 / 23 we have improved our alignment of apprenticeship levy spend with skills / jobs where we have identified current or future shortages in critical roles. Examples of this include the 22 colleagues currently studying Social Work Degree apprenticeships, and the 2 colleagues who have just graduated with Civil Engineering Degrees and will be able to undertake roles in our Building Control department. This is an area we continue to grow and have considerable ambitions for during 2023 / 24 and beyond.
- 9.3. One of the actions agreed because of the May 2022 All Colleague survey was a review of our Performance Development and Review approach. A task and finish group of colleagues representing all parts of our organisation initially



developed design principles which were agreed by the Workforce Steering Group and CLT.

- 9.4. Subsequently, a new performance and development approach has been developed, called 'My Conversation.' My Conversation is a coaching, strengths based approach which enables feedback to be used by colleagues to understand how to improve their performance and to receive recognition when they do an excellent job. My Conversation is being piloted now and is planned to go live across the Council in April 2024.
- 9.5. During 2022 / 23, in line with its vision of creating opportunities for everyone in the borough, the council has invested considerable time to develop a range of work placement opportunities for those in the community who need support into work. These opportunities have been focused on groups including care leavers, those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, and the long-term unemployed. Through schemes including Kickstart, Supported Apprenticeships and, more recently, our Jumpstart and Supported Internships schemes, almost 60 work placements have been identified over the last 2 years, with many leading to longer-term employment and apprenticeship vacancies. Key to the success of these placements has been the dedication of the colleagues working in those teams that have supported a placement, providing induction, training and pastoral care the individuals concerned.
- 9.6. Going forward we are developing a talent strategy which will enable the Council to plan and implement the recruitment and development of talent and retain the skills needed to deliver our future services in a way which is values led and aligned with our Council Plan strategic ambitions.
- 9.7. The 2021/22 CRMG workforce report provided detail about the All Colleague Survey run in May 2022, and the actions taken at an organisational level to follow up on the survey outcomes;
  - **Reward and recognition**, including helping colleagues understand how their pay is calculated and exploring non-financial approaches to recognise consistent high performance as well as loyal and long service. Included with the Join Us people plan pillar.

In March 2023, we ran our first Ambitious Stockport Awards ceremony, which recognised the contributions of colleagues across the Council under a number of different categories;

- Thinking Stockport
- Achieving as a Team
- Working with Ambition
- Showing Everyone Respect
- Fair and Inclusive
- Climate Response
- Working in Partnership

The Awards ceremony was held in the Town Hall ballroom, with shortlisted nominees attending and winners receiving their awards from the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive. The event which enabled exemplar colleagues to be recognised, was a great success; recognising the achievements of individuals and teams and receiving excellent feedback. The Ambitious Stockport Awards will return in March 2024.

- **Development of our performance and development review** approach, with a greater focus upon the conversation – discussing both objectives and behaviours and less of a focus upon a form or annual process. Included within the Grow & Thrive people plan pillar. As noted above, My Conversation is being piloted across the Council now, with full implementation planned for April 2024.
- **Progression and development** opportunities including the launch of our Leading Stockport programme, and a structured approach to core, essential modules for new starters, professional career ladders and succession planning. Included in the Grow and Thrive people plan pillar.
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion** including further engagement with our employee engagement groups and agreement of a clear set of actions to improve representation at all levels within our organisation as well as developing the more inclusive culture we aspire to.

The Belong Here section of this report provides more detail on our significant progress in this area. Key achievements are the launch of the CLT Sponsorship of employee networks, our reverse mentoring scheme launch and the improved use of data to understand some of the systemic challenges in creating a more diverse and inclusive working environment.

- **Working smarter** by considering opportunities to develop HR policies which are less prescriptive, and support line managers to make decisions within a framework. Using restorative practice within our employee relations environment to reduce the number of formal employee relations cases and using digital technology to reduce the need for manual intervention from HR colleagues. This workstream is being taken forward by the Human Resources & Organisation Development team as part of our continuous improvement programme. Within the HR and Organisation Development team, we are leveraging technology and digital tools to work smarter. We acquired a LinkedIn recruiter licence early in 2023 which is improving both the quality and quantity of job applications. The schools that buy our HR services have benefitted from the implementation of electronic forms, which have significantly reduced the need for manual input and reduced the error rate.

- 9.8. Our plans for the 2023 All Colleague Survey are well advanced, including an all organisation data cleanse to improve both employee and organisational data. This year's survey is due to run in September, with new action plans,

responding to the survey's outcomes due to be completed before Christmas 2023.

## **10. Belong Here Pillar**

- 10.1. We have made progress in our work to understand and improve the diversity of our workforce and the lived experience of those colleagues with at least one protected characteristic.
- 10.2. Greater emphasis on data and insights, particularly around EDI has provided insights upon which we have acted. For example, our recruitment and selection outcomes provide an opportunity to further improve the diversity of those recruited. As a result, we are developing a more rigorous selection process and training for recruiting managers. We intend to launch a values based selection approach in early 2024.
- 10.3. The Council has developed our engagement of those with protected characteristics through our Employee Networks. Each Network has a Chair, who attends our Corporate Equalities Steering Group as well as collaborating with colleagues to improve the employee experience of those within their group.
- 10.4. A member of CLT now sponsors each of our Employee Equality Networks to enable a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities to improve employee experience at the most senior level within the Council.
- 10.5. A reverse mentoring scheme was agreed and is currently being trialled with CLT colleagues and members of Employee Equality networks as the first cohort. Reverse mentoring uses the same principles as mentoring but rather than a more senior person mentoring a more junior mentee, the colleague who is more junior mentors the mentee who is more senior. Reverse mentoring creates a safe space for the mentors to explain to the senior mentee what is really going on in their experience, and it is an opportunity for the mentee to try to see organisational life through the eyes of others and to take action as a result.
- 10.6. An employee passport scheme is being designed, in collaboration with our Disability Network. The scheme will introduce a more structured approach to enable colleagues to share any additional needs they have with their line manager or to highlight an adjustment which would assist them. It also introduces a system for those colleagues with reasonable adjustments in place, to have these electronically recorded in a transparent way which enables any changes in team leader to recognise and retain reasonable adjustments.
- 10.7. We are in the final stages of designing education and challenge sessions for CLT and the wider Senior Leadership Group. The decision about which supplier to use for these sessions is pending and will be made with input

from Employee Network Chairs. The purpose of these sessions will be to educate in terms of the challenges those with protected characteristics face at work, and to challenge our current practice with a view to developing a genuinely more inclusive culture for all colleagues.

- 10.8. At a Greater Manchester level, we have worked hard to further engage with other local authorities and have contributed to the development and agreement of proposals to implement innovative interventions specifically to improve representation and the employment experience based on race and disability.

## **11. Feeling Supported Pillar**

- 11.1. To lead our work on wellbeing, the Wellbeing Steering Group, chaired by the Assistant Director, Legal & Democratic Governance exists to develop initiatives and the health and wellbeing of the council's employees. The Steering Group achieves this objective by engaging with representatives from across the council, including trade union colleagues, to understand organisational issues relating to physical and mental health and wellbeing. The Group oversees an action plan to both raise awareness of these issues and undertake projects of work to improve the wellbeing of our workforce. The Steering Group chair reports progress to the Corporate Leadership Team and to the Corporate Health & Safety committees at regular intervals.
- 11.2. Using a dedicated site on the Council's intranet, the Wellbeing Hub promotes a range of different wellbeing opportunities to support financial, physical and emotional and mental wellbeing and general wellbeing. The group has made great progress over the 2 years it has been in existence. A few of the most impactful initiatives are:
  - In 2022, running the Destination Go activity challenge to address sedentary working habits. This event is currently running again for 2023 and is due to finish at the end of August.
  - Disseminating information across the workforce to support colleagues with menopause and perimenopause symptoms, including setting up a support group for colleagues. A recent meeting with Cllr Jilly Julian is expected to lead to our being able to build upon the work completed to date. For example, by developing a greater understanding of the physical and mental challenges of working during menstruation and the menopause and seeking to create a supportive culture which enables colleagues to be their best at work.

## **12. Our Values Pillar**

- 12.1. As a team, People and Organisation Development are working to embed our values and behaviours into Human Resources and Organisation Development

products such as the new My Conversation approach, which assesses outcomes and the behaviours which underpin our values, our recruitment and selection tools and our training modules.

- 12.2. Leading Stockport, our leadership development programme, which is an organisational priority, consistently works with our leaders to develop a consistent understanding of values based leadership, and of the skills and personal attributes needed to be a successful value based leader.
- 12.3. The first Leadership Forum, held in January 2023 and attended by around 500 managers in the Town Hall Ballroom, was used to launch our new leadership behaviours. The March 2023 online forum explored how coaching techniques can provide leaders with ways of leading their teams in a values based way. At our most recent Leadership Forum in June, again attended by around 500 managers, we heard from guest speaker Professor Damian Hughes explaining his approach to values based leadership. This is an example of the level of ongoing commitment to embedding values based leadership across our organisation.

### **13. Sickness Absence and Wellbeing**

- 13.1. The average number of days lost due to sickness for the year 22/23 was 9.86 days per FTE which is a decrease of 0.96 days per FTE from the 10.77 days per FTE reported for 2020/21.
- 13.2. This decrease reverses the trend seen during and immediately following the pandemic and brings our average sickness absence per FTE almost within our organisational target of 9.5 days per FTE.
- 13.3. The decrease in sickness absence, reflecting in part a national trend also reflects intervention from line managers, supported by our HR Business Partners. Using data and a detailed knowledge of our good practice sickness absence management policies, HR Business Partners have collaborated with senior managers across the Council to identify areas with significant sickness absence challenges and supported the actions to support colleagues to return to work.
- 13.4. Sickness absence management cases make up the highest proportion of cases within our employee relations case team, and particularly at the more advanced stages, require expert knowledge, clear business understanding and high emotional intelligence to ensure a fair and balanced outcome is achieved.
- 13.5. Sickness absence has a potentially significant impact upon productivity and the variation of sickness absence levels within directorates highlights the opportunity for increased productivity if we can reduce our average levels of sickness absence further.

## 14. Sickness Absence year End Position

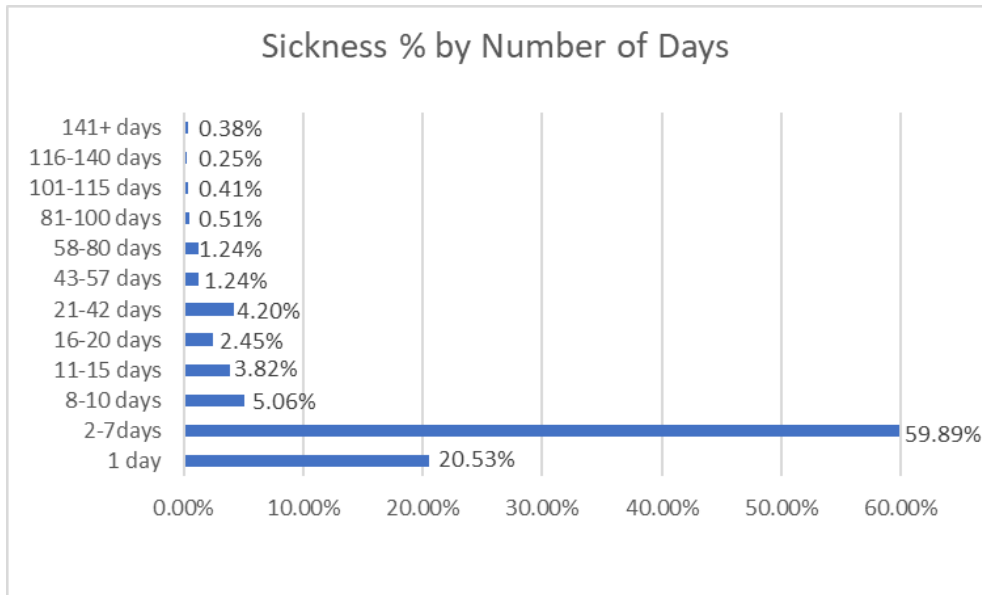
### Year End Position 2021/22

Directorate	Total FTE	Long Term (FTE Days Lost)	Days Lost per FTE (Long Term)	Short Term (FTE Days Lost)	Days Lost per FTE (Short Term)	Grand Total (FTE Days Lost)	Total Days Lost per FE
<b>CSS</b>	907.22	2,232.52	2.46	3,866.20	4.26	6,098.72	6.72
<b>People - Adults</b>	562.96	6,304.35	11.20	5,178.87	9.20	11,483.23	20.40
<b>People – Children's</b>	690.99	3,807.73	5.51	3,456.62	5.00	7,264.35	10.51
<b>Place</b>	311.83	815.99	2.62	1,476.79	4.74	2,292.78	7.35
<b>Public Health</b>	73.78	108.74	1.47	190.86	2.59	299.60	4.06
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,546.78</b>	<b>13,269.34</b>	<b>5.21</b>	<b>14,169.34</b>	<b>5.56</b>	<b>27,438.68</b>	<b>10.77</b>

### Year End Position 2022/23

Directorate	Total FTE	Long Term (FTE Days Lost)	Days Lost per FTE (Long Term)	Short Term (FTE Days Lost)	Days Lost per FTE (Short Term)	Grand Total (FTE Days Lost)	Total Days Lost per FTE
<b>CSS</b>	920.37	3,292.63	3.58	2,983.75	3.24	6,276.38	6.82
<b>People - Adults</b>	551.06	5,720.44	10.38	3,943.24	7.16	9,663.67	17.54
<b>People – Children's</b>	696.26	3,421.76	4.91	2,816.93	4.05	6,238.69	8.96
<b>Place</b>	318.07	1,238.64	3.89	1,154.12	3.63	2,392.76	7.52
<b>Public Health</b>	50.19	315.50	6.29	117.47	2.34	432.97	8.63
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,535.95</b>	<b>13,988.97</b>	<b>5.52</b>	<b>11,015.51</b>	<b>4.34</b>	<b>25,004.48</b>	<b>9.86</b>

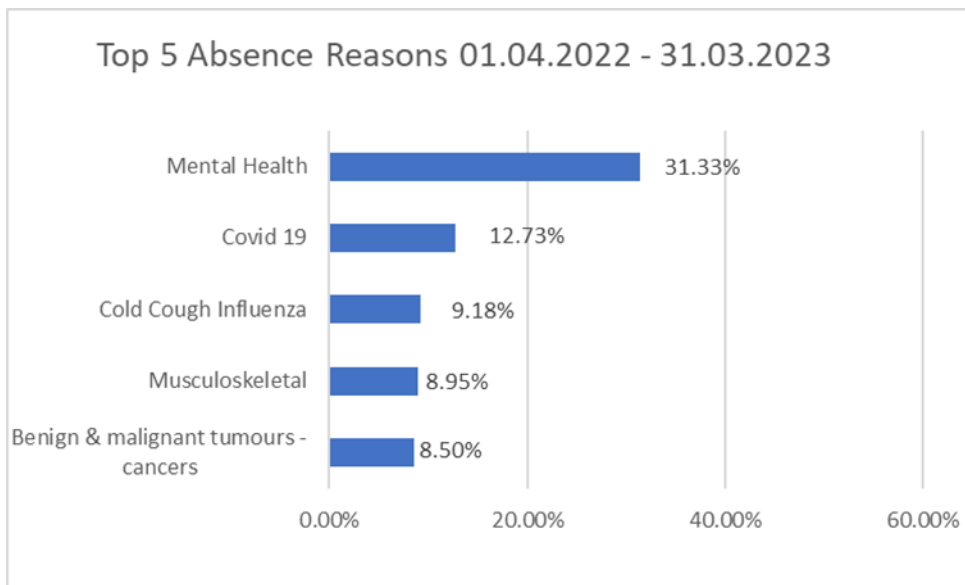
14.1. As noted above, it is encouraging to see the Council average number of days per FTE figure reduce from 10.77 days sickness per annum to 9.86 days sickness per annum. This is almost at the Council target of an average of 9.5 days per FTE.



**Percentages of occurrences by number of days;  
1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023**

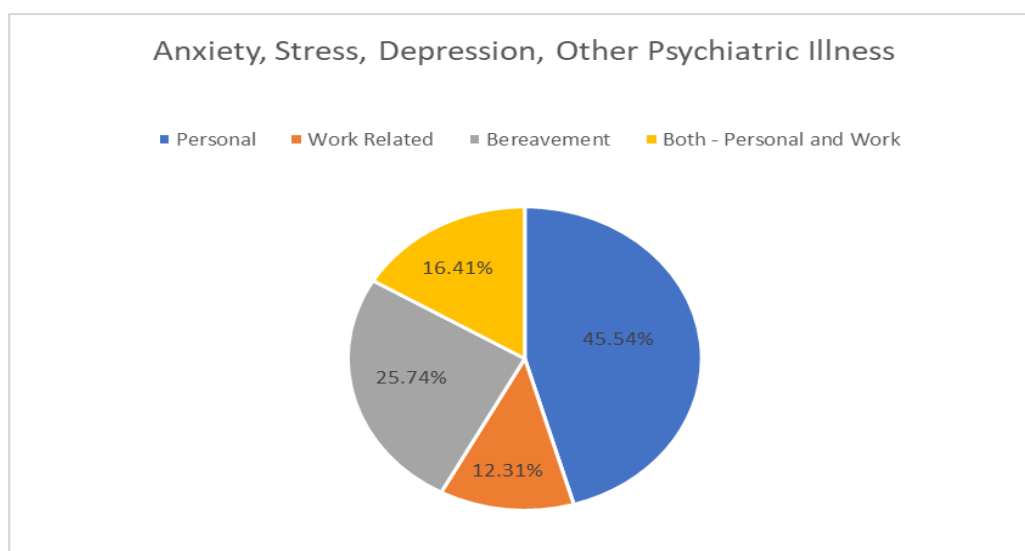
14.2. Not surprisingly, most of our sickness absence (81%) is between 1 day and 7 days, coinciding with the ability to self-certify sickness absence for up to 7 calendar days. This is an increase on the proportion of sick leave up to 7 days during 2021 / 22 (70.94%). We continue to focus on good sickness absence management processes to reduce these figures.

14.3. During 2022 / 23 the remaining circa 20% of sickness absence stretches out over a much longer period. However, 15.5% of sickness absence is for between 8 days and 42 days and could represent a further opportunity to reduce the period of sickness absence with wellbeing support and good sickness absence management practice.



**1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023  
Percentage of sickness absence by type**

- 14.4. Mental Health continues to be the primary cause of sickness, with almost a third of sickness absence events notified as being the result of stress, anxiety, depression and other mental health related issues. Again, our experience is similar to that of most other organisations likely to have been impacted by the pandemic and the more recent cost of living challenges.
- 14.5. Although mental health related absence continues to be the top reason for sickness absence, although there is downwards trend, with 43.22% of all sickness absences in 20/21, 34.18% for the year 21/22 and 31.33% for 2022/23.



**Mental health related illness by type 2022/23**

- 14.6. It's extremely welcome to see the overall proportion of mental health related sickness absence reducing, especially as we have an extensive range of wellbeing support available including access to counselling and a 24/7 Colleague Helpline. However, mental health related sickness absence still represents almost a third of our overall sickness absence and we continue to strive to support colleagues with mental health challenges so that they may return to full fitness and work at the earliest opportunity.
- 14.7. The proportion of mental health related sickness absence which colleagues relate to personal stress has maintained relatively stable. The proportion of colleagues indicating that work related stress is the cause of their absence has reduced to 12.31%, last year it was 23.90%. 25% of mental health related sickness absence is attributed to bereavement something that we are exploring, to understand more about. Last year 11.6% of sickness absence was attributed to bereavement, this past year the figure is 25.74%. Our Counselling services are available for all colleagues, including specialist bereavement counsellors.



## 15. Occupational Health Provision

15.1. Occupational Health provision had seen consistent increased in usage from 2016 to 2023, peaking at 808 cases for the year 2021/22. Whilst our occupational health provision is an essential element of our employment wellbeing proposition, particularly as we are more aware of the importance of good mental health and wellbeing, this rate is significantly higher than other equivalent organisations. Starting in 2022 / 23 a programme of work has been undertaken by our Health, Safety and Wellbeing team to ensure Occupational Health referrals that are being made are of good quality and in accordance with organisational guidelines. This has resulted in a decrease in referrals to 705 cases for the year 2022 / 23, representing a financial saving for the council whilst still providing the most appropriate support for our colleague's wellbeing.

## 16. Occupational Health Referrals

Service	YE 17 Referrals	YE 18 Referrals	YE 19 Referrals	YE20 Referrals	YE21 Referrals	YE22 Referrals	YE23 Referrals
OH	485	532	568	551	715	808	705
Counselling	180	236	221	253	230	237	237
Physiotherapy	185	225	186	153	29	95	113

### Occupational Health Referrals 2017 – 2023

16.1. Access to our counselling services sees a consistent level of demand, with 230 cases reported in 20 / 21, 237 for 21/22 and 237 again in 22/23. Physiotherapy has seen a significant increase in provision. 29 cases were supported in 20/21, 95 cases for 21/22 and 113 cases for 22/23., more like the levels seen pre pandemic but not at the peak of 225 cases in 2017 / 18.

## 17. Wellbeing at Work

17.1. To lead our work on wellbeing, the Wellbeing Steering Group, chaired by the Assistant Director, Legal & Democratic Governance exists to develop initiatives to support the health and wellbeing of the council's employees. There has been a focus on growing the membership of and the representation on the Steering Group during 2022/23 so that colleagues' voices from all directorates, including trade union colleagues, and at all levels are heard and can input and share their lived experiences. All the employee network chairs are also either part of the Steering Group or have an open invitation. The number of meetings has also increased to bi-monthly meetings from quarterly meetings with a forward plan for each municipal year.

17.2. The Steering Group works to understand organisational issues relating to physical and mental health and wellbeing whilst advocating the range of

support the council offers. The Group oversees a forward plan to both raise awareness of these issues and undertake projects of work to improve the wellbeing of our workforce. The Steering Group chair reports progress to the Corporate Leadership Team and to the Corporate Health & Safety committees at regular intervals.

17.3. Using a dedicated site on the Council's intranet, the Wellbeing Hub promotes the range of wellbeing support we offer as a council. The Steering Group has made great progress over the last 2 years, since it's purpose and approach were refreshed and aligned with the council values following the covid pandemic. The most recent impactful initiatives are:

- In 2022, advocating the positive impact the Destination Go (Virgin Pulse) activity challenge would bring to the work force to address sedentary working habits. In 2023, following the positive response from the workforce, securing it being offered again during July and August 2023 to even more colleagues than the previous year.
- Inputting into the design and implementation of the Feeling Supported Pillar, including, by supporting the Wellbeing Champions Scheme (currently 55 colleagues) across the council who have joined together to be advocates for our Wellbeing Offer; working with Life Leisure regarding their offer to colleagues; inputting into and promoting Wellbeing Week and encouraging and supporting new wellbeing offers such as Stopchordians (the workplace choir), organised wellbeing walks, running club, tai chi, yoga, mindfulness etc..
- Supporting the council's approach to colleagues with menopause and perimenopause symptoms, including setting up a support group for colleagues and offering training/support sessions to individual suffering, managers and those with partners suffering symptoms. Further work will be undertaken to develop a greater understanding of the physical and mental challenges of working during menstruation and the menopause and seeking to create a supportive culture which enables colleagues to be their best at work.

## 18. RECOMMENDATIONS

18.1. CMRG **note** the excellent performance of our recruitment team in improving both the quality and quantity of applicants, and in working with such diligence and commitment to fill hard to fill roles, for example within our Social Care directorates.

18.2. CRMG **note** the progress made in launching and embedding a range of developmental initiatives, including the Leading Stockport framework, our strong apprenticeship programme, our still developing early careers framework, especially for care leavers, vulnerable adults and, where possible our focus, our bold commitment to coaching and coaching skills training, as

well as the development and impending launch of our new appraisal approach, My Conversation.

- 18.3. Going forward, CMRG **endorse** the early work to develop a talent strategy, upon which to base our talent management programme over the next 2 – 5 years, the first phase of this being an Early Careers framework.
- 18.4. CRMG **endorse** the work to understand better the significant challenges and opportunities to improve the employment experience for those with diverse personal characteristics. This includes the work in house, such as a new values based culture programme (Ambitious Stockport) , and also the planned future work to collaborate at a Greater Manchester level to design and implement genuinely innovative frameworks and tools which will improve the lived experience for all employees based upon race and disability.
- 18.5. CRMG **note** the improvement in our sickness absence figure to an average of 9.86 days per FTE and **endorse** the work to further improve our performance in this area, at a Directorate and a Council level.
- 18.6. CRMG **note** the ongoing wellbeing support provided to our employees and the ambition to further build upon opportunities to improve wellbeing, as evidenced by the current work to create a supportive and transparently confident organisational framework of support, and a narrative for those going through the menopause and meeting the ongoing personal challenges from menstruation.

#### BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none.

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Kathryn Rees on [Kathryn.Rees@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:Kathryn.Rees@stockport.gov.uk) or Graham Charsley on [Graham.Charsley@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:Graham.Charsley@stockport.gov.uk)

## Our Values



### JOIN US

- Spend on agency staff
- Vacancy rates, particularly for critical roles
- Social Media engagement
- Time to offer
- Time to hire
- Conversion rates (applications to offers)
- Diversity, gender, sexual orientation, disability conversion rates



### GROW AND THRIVE

- Staff retention rates, by age and grade
- Analysis of reasons for leaving
- Qualifications and Apprenticeship completion
- Training statistics and qualitative feedback
- Completion of PDRs
- Internal promotions



### FEEL SUPPORTED

- Sickness absence data including:
  - Sickness absence reasons
  - Short-term and long-term sickness absence analysis
- Number of employee relations cases, by reason and case length (per directorate)
- Case numbers by diversity, gender, sexual orientation
- Number of coaches



### BELONG HERE

- Workforce make up
- Diversity profile of all key indicators e.g. recruitment, promotions, employer relation cases
- Outcomes of targeted employment schemes e.g. Kick starters, care leavers



### WE LIVE OUR VALUES

- All colleague survey results — level of engagement
- Qualitative feedback
- Resident experience measures
- PDR assessment based upon the What (objectives)
- Achievement of borough's outcomes framework