Workforce Report Quarter One 2020-21

This report looks at the workforce profile of Huntingdonshire District Council during the first Quarter of the financial year, **1 April – 30 June 2020**. As there was no Q4 2019/2020 report, due to cancellation of last employment committee, the data trend information included in this report includes the results for that quarter.

The key findings from the workforce profile report are:

- The workforce had a headcount of **637** and an FTE (full-time equivalent) count of **580.8** as at 30 June 2020. The total number of employees is the same as at the end of the previous Quarter, with a small increase in the FTE count which had been 580.5 as at 31 March 2020.

- Spend on pay costs for employees in 2020/21 is forecast to be around **£0.9m** less than budgeted for the year.

- The annual average sickness figure has remained the same as for the previous Quarter at 6.5 days lost per FTE but remains low compared to levels in the same quarter in previous years. Note absences linked to Covid 19 – which includes those staff unable to work from home, who isolated or shielded are not counted or recorded within absence records and data was held separately.

- The total number of days lost in Quarter One was lower than in the previous Quarter, with both short term and long-term sickness falling, which reflects the typical trend of lower absences in summer months.

- Just **9%** of the workforce (58 employees) had any sickness absence during Quarter One, which is the lowest level ever recorded. This could reflect that the majority of the non-operational workforce in the previous quarter moved to working remotely at home and this could have improved absence levels as individuals not 100% well would not have had to travel to work or share an office and may continue working.

- **18** employees had long-term sickness (Absences longer than 28 days) in Quarter One. This has fallen from **28** in the previous Quarter.

- The formal HR caseload decreased in Quarter One. **Half** of the active cases related to either long-term or short-term sickness absences. Due to covid 19, employment change activity went on hold and any active cases, although they continued, activity was more challenging due to social distancing restrictions/precautions.

Authors: Business Intelligence and Performance Manager / Strategic HR Manager
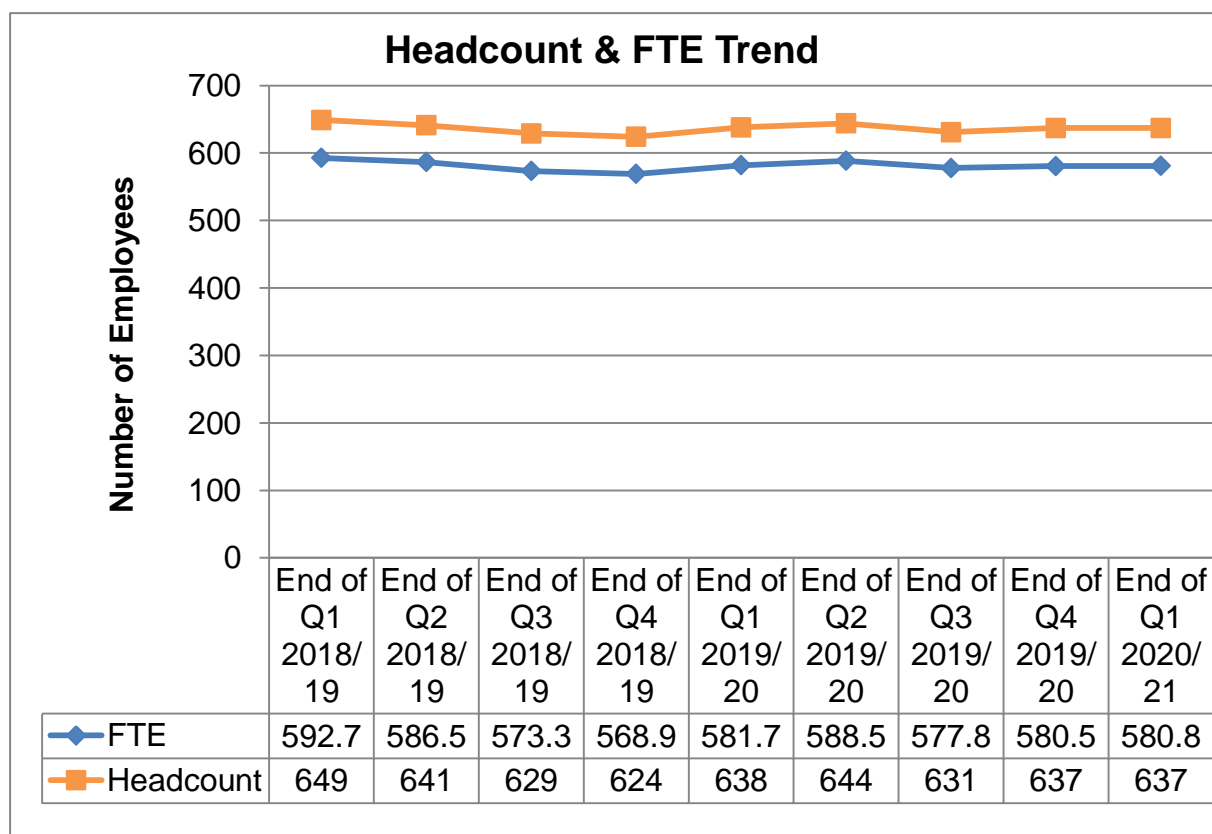Date: August 2020

CONTENTS

1.0   EMPLOYEE PROFILE

Definition: Headcount is the number of employees working within the Council, counting primary roles only.

A **full time equivalent** (referred to as FTE) is a measure of an employee's workload to make the position comparable across the workforce based on a 37-hour full-time working week. For example, an FTE of 0.5 indicates that the employee works half of a full-time working week (18.5 hours).

1.1   HEADCOUNT AND FTE

At the end of Quarter One (30 June 2020), the total number of employees employed by Huntingdonshire District Council was 637 (excluding those employed on a variable or casual hours basis) with the number of full-time equivalent posts at 580.8.

Headcount & FTE Trend

|	End of Q1 2018/ 19	End of Q2 2018/ 19	End of Q3 2018/ 19	End of Q4 2018/ 19	End of Q1 2019/ 20	End of Q2 2019/ 20	End of Q3 2019/ 20	End of Q4 2019/ 20	End of Q1 2020/ 21
FTE	592.7	586.5	573.3	568.9	581.7	588.5	577.8	580.5	580.8
Headcount	649	641	629	624	638	644	631	637	637

1.2   PAYBILL

The following table shows the Council's budget, actual and forecast spend on pay costs (including National Insurance and pension contributions) for all employees but excluding hired staff (contractors and agency staff). The forecast spend for the year

is currently within 5% of the budget, based on projections by managers at the end of June 2020.

Year:	Budget (£)	Actual (£)	Forecast (£)
2014/15	23,218,072	21,321,729	
2015/16	22,555,973	20,779,737	
2016/17	22,526,917	21,903,947	
2017/18	24,591,631	23,536,053	
2018/19	25,230,515	23,192,646	
2019/20	24,871,268	23,941,696	
2020/21	25,679,601		24,760,539

1.3   WORKFORCE BY AGE AND PAY GRADE

The number of employees by 5-year age band is depicted below by pay grade. Please note that where an employee has two jobs on different grades, they have been counted within their age band against both grades.
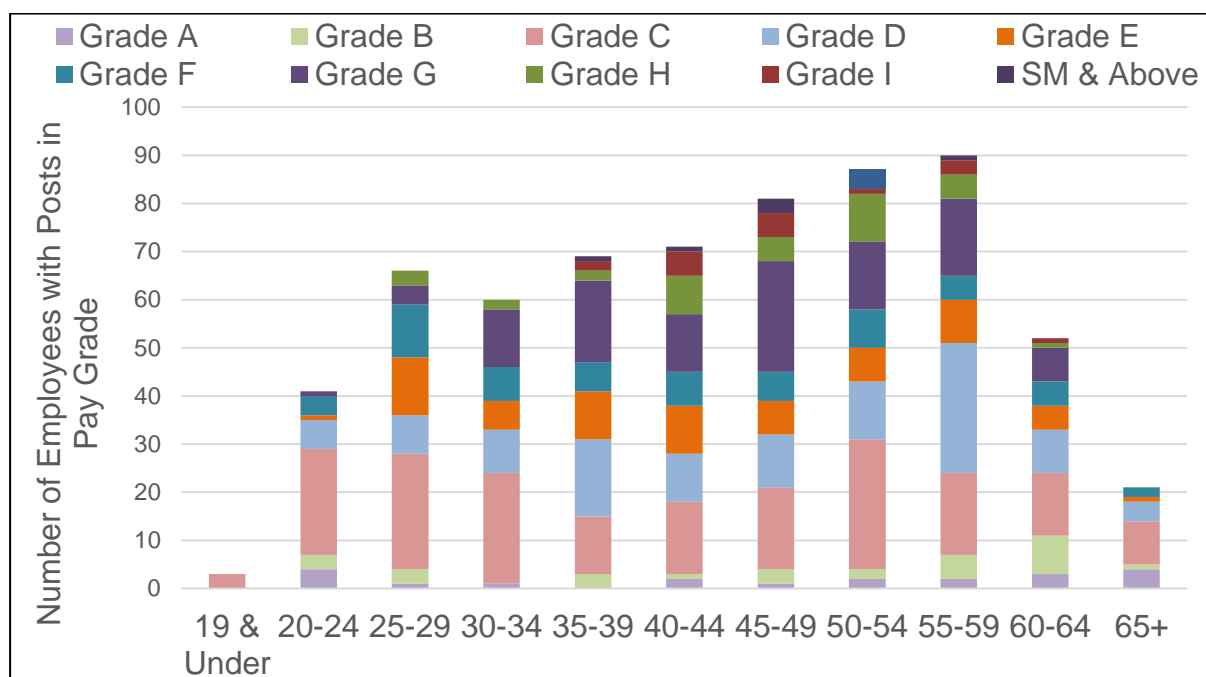
For the purposes of simplifying this graph, employees who have transferred into the Council on existing terms and conditions have been linked to Huntingdonshire District Council pay grades based on their current salaries.

Further analysis will be undertaken in the next quarter, to look at the make-up of those employees over 50 as part of our workforce planning activity.

1.4   HIGH EARNERS

Definition: High earners are classified as employees who are paid at £50,000 or above. This information is published in line with the Government's commitment to improve transparency across the public sector.

At the end of Quarter One, 27 employees (4.2% of the total headcounted workforce) were paid at FTE salaries of £50,000 or above. The total number of employees classed as high earners is greater than the 24 employed at the end of the previous Quarter, partly due to the 2020/21 pay award, which saw the base of Grade I, move above this £50,000 threshold.

1.5   GENDER PAY GAP

Employers with 250 or more employees must publish figures comparing average pay by gender across the organisation. This data is normally produced and published annually in line with regulations. This year the obligation to produce and publish Gender pay Gap data on 31 March 2020 was suspended due to Covid 19 and employers are not required to report until 2021. As there is no change to the pay gap data from that included in previous Workforce reports, this section of the report will instead be updated annually at Q4 or if not available in time, then annually at Q1 (when new data is available).

1.6   LEAVERS

During Quarter One, 17 full-time/part-time employees on permanent or fixed-term contracts left the organisation, which is less than the total leaving in the previous Quarter (31). There were 7 voluntary resignations by employees on permanent contracts from April to June, compared to 22 in the previous Quarter.

Leaving Reason	Service	Total
Death in Service	Chief Operating Officer	1
End of Fixed Term Contract	Corporate Services	1
Retirement	Chief Operating Officer	2
	Leisure & Health	1
	Operations	1
Voluntary Resignation – New Job Offer	Digital & ICT Services	3
	Leisure & Health	2
	Chief Operating Officer	1
	Operations	1
Voluntary Resignation – Better Reward Package	Digital & ICT Services	1
Voluntary Resignation – Work Life Balance	Corporate Services	1
Voluntary Resignation – Other	Operations	2
Grand Total		**17**

The HR team have introduced a new online Leaver Questionnaire (20 August 2020) which is hoped will provide more qualitative and quantitative information on reasons for people leaving.

1.7   TURNOVER

In the 12 months to 30 June 2020, 90 permanent employees left the Council. As a proportion of the average number of permanent employees over this period, the overall turnover rate for permanent employees is 15.1%, which is slightly lower than the 16.6% calculated for the 12 months to 31 March 2020.

LGA's - Local Government Workforce Survey 2017/18, reports a mean average labour turnover for District Councils of 14%. Recruitment Website engine Monster.com, identifies the UK average employee turnover rate as 15% a year, although this varies between industries and is typically lower in public sector.

2.0   SICKNESS ABSENCE

Definition: Long term sickness is classified as a continuous period of absence of 28 or more calendar days. All other periods of absence are defined as **short term**.
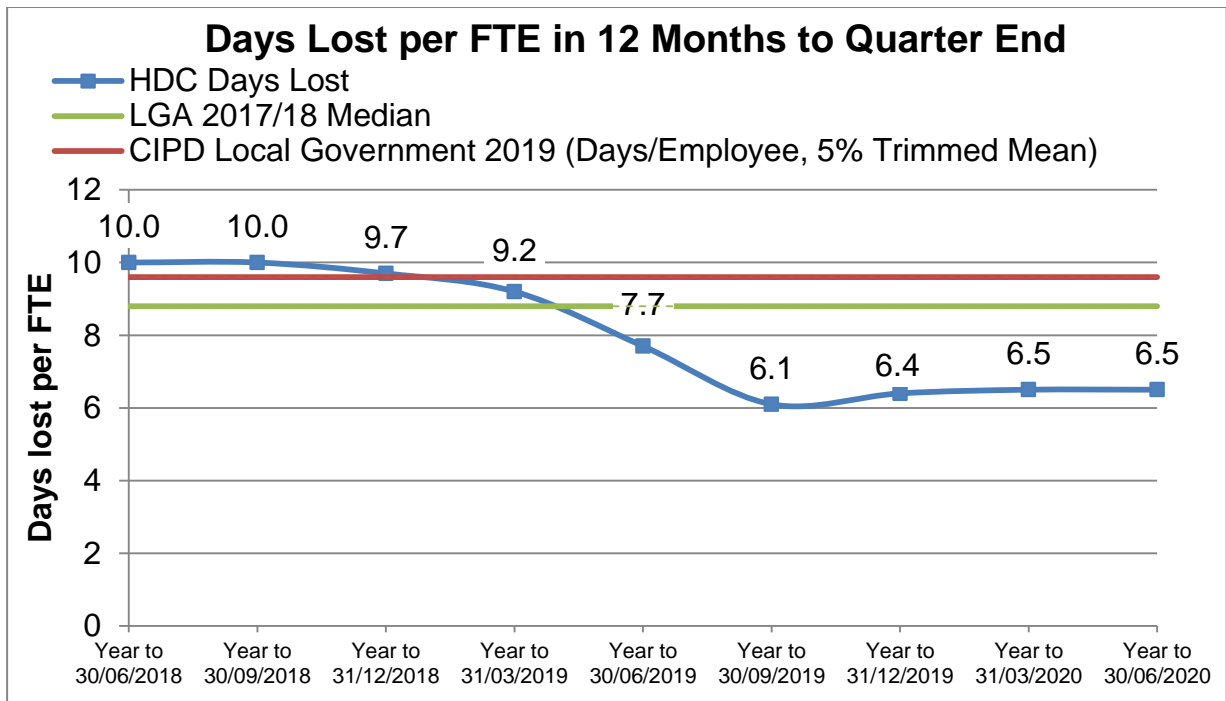
The absence data is calculated per full-time equivalent (FTE) as per the guidelines set out in the previous Best Value Performance Indicators (former statutory dataset) for sickness to account for adjustments in working hours.

Trigger points for management action under HDC policy are as follows:

•   3 or more periods of absence in a rolling 3-month period

•   6 or more periods of absence in a rolling 12-month period

•   8 working days or more in a rolling 12-month period

•   Long term absence of 28 calendar days or more

•   Pattern of absence (e.g. regular Friday and/or Monday; repeated absences linked to holidays)
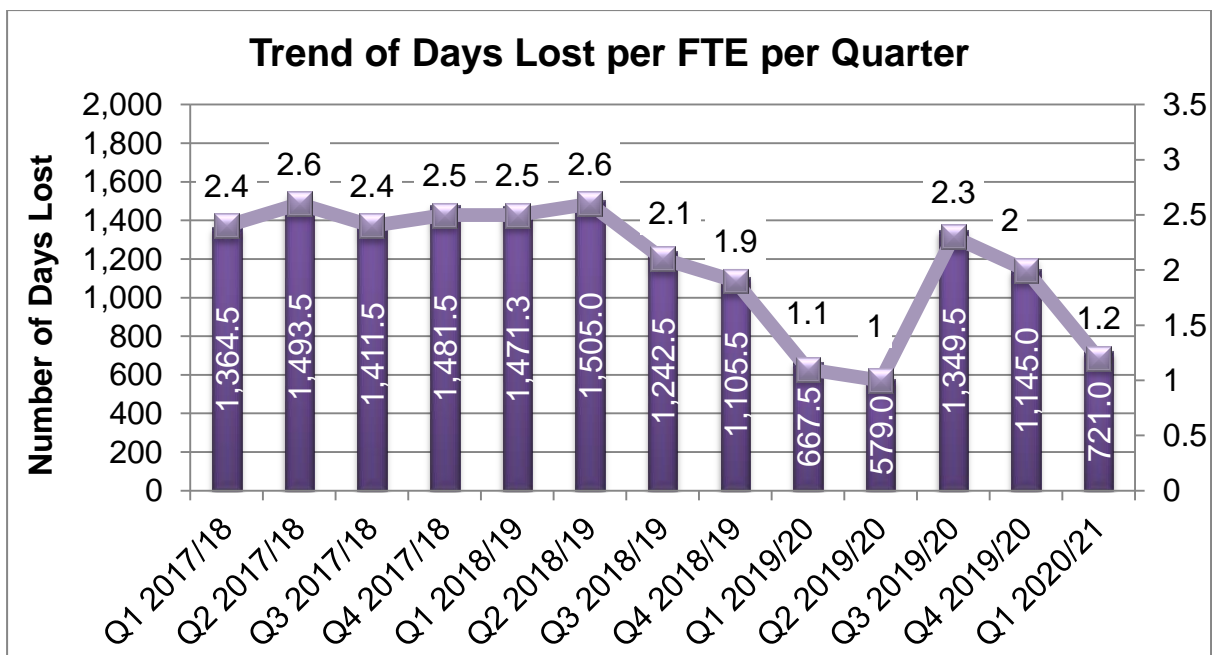
2.1   TREND OF WORKING DAYS LOST ACROSS HDC OVER ROLLING 12 MONTH PERIODS

The graph shows the trend in sickness absence per FTE employee over a rolling 12-month period to the end of each Quarter since June 2018. It shows that sickness absence over the previous Quarter has remained steady at 6.5 days per FTE. This remains low compared to results over recent years.

Days Lost per FTE in 12 Months to Quarter End

Legend:
- HDC Days Lost
- LGA 2017/18 Median
- CIPD Local Government 2019 (Days/Employee, 5% Trimmed Mean)

Data points (Days lost per FTE):
- Year to 30/06/2018: 10.0
- Year to 30/09/2018: 10.0
- Year to 31/12/2018: 9.7
- Year to 31/03/2019: 9.2
- Year to 30/06/2019: 7.7
- Year to 30/09/2019: 6.1
- Year to 31/12/2019: 6.4
- Year to 31/03/2020: 6.5
- Year to 30/06/2020: 6.5

2.2 TREND OF WORKING DAYS LOST ACROSS HDC BY QUARTER

The total number of working days lost in Quarter One is lower than in the previous Quarter and the days lost per FTE has also decreased. This decrease is a typical trend for Quarter One, with lower sickness levels recorded in summer months.

Trend of Days Lost per FTE per Quarter

Quarter	Number of Days Lost	Days Lost per FTE
Q1 2017/18	1,364.5	2.4
Q2 2017/18	1,493.5	2.6
Q3 2017/18	1,411.5	2.4
Q4 2017/18	1,481.5	2.5
Q1 2018/19	1,471.3	2.5
Q2 2018/19	1,505.0	2.6
Q3 2018/19	1,242.5	2.1
Q4 2018/19	1,105.5	1.9
Q1 2019/20	667.5	1.1
Q2 2019/20	579.0	1
Q3 2019/20	1,349.5	2.3
Q4 2019/20	1,145.0	2
Q1 2020/21	721.0	1.2

The number of days lost in Quarter One equates to the workload of almost 12 FTEs based on the 61 working days in the period from 1 April to 30 June.

2.3 REASONS FOR SICKNESS ABSENCE

Please see sickness reporting by category below: -

Sickness reason given:	Quarter One 2020/21		
	Employees	Days lost	%
3rd party accidents	0	0	0%
Asthma, chest, heart, cardiac	2	35	5%
Benign & malignant tumors or cancers	2	89.6	12%
Burns, poisoning, frostbite, hypothermia	0	0	0%
Cough, cold, eye, ENT, infections/viruses	7	12	2%
Endocrine/glandular - diabetes, thyroid	0	0	0%
Gastro - abdominal pain, vomiting	7	43.5	6%
Genito urinary & gynecological	0	0	0%
Headache, migraine, dental, oral	10	13.3	2%
Injury, fracture	8	73.5	10%
Musculoskeletal, including back & neck	12	108.7	15%
Pregnancy related	2	19	3%
Stress, Anxiety, Depression	10	326.5	45%

Compared to the same Quarter last year, there have been fewer days lost for most absence reasons including 'Asthma, chest, heart and cardiac' and 'Cough, cold, eye, ENT, infections/viruses'. This may be linked to lockdown and physical distancing measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19, which the Royal College of General Practitioners has described as the probable cause for fewer cases of common cold, flu and other respiratory diseases in England this year compared to the average.

The most significant increase in sickness compared to the Quarter One 2019/20 was for days lost due to 'Stress, Anxiety, Depression', which have more than doubled. During Quarter One, 10 employees were absent due 'Stress, Anxiety, Depression' for a total of 326.5 working days lost. 314 (96%) of these were 'long-term' absences of 28 calendar days or more.

Reason for Absence	No of Days Absence	% of Days Absence	No of People
Personal Reasons	110.4	34%	4
Work Related	81	25%	2
Both Work and Personal Reasons	135.1	41%	4
Total	**326.5**	**100%**	**10**

External data sources show that mental health is on the rise and the impact of isolation, lock down, and returning to work have increased anxieties. (**MIND** - 35% of employees describe their MH as 'poor' or 'very poor' and the prospect of returning to work is causing anxiety; **CIPD** 43% of employees state their general MH has worsened since Covid, rising to 52% for those with existing MH conditions).

HDC has continued to invest in Mental health First Aid and focus on employee Wellbeing including mental health over the last few months. We have seen a rise in demand for our Mental Health First Aiders and for our external counselling service. Mental Health First Aiders report an increase in conversations being up 310% from same period last year (May to August – though outside Q1 period, this is included in this report as current at time of writing the report), this trend is in line with BUPA who have had a 300% increase in calls to their helpline.

2.4   NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES WITH ANY DAYS OF SICKNESS ABSENCE IN QUARTER

Only 58 employees were absent due to sickness in Quarter One, which is 9% of all those employed during the period (excluding those with variable/casual posts only).
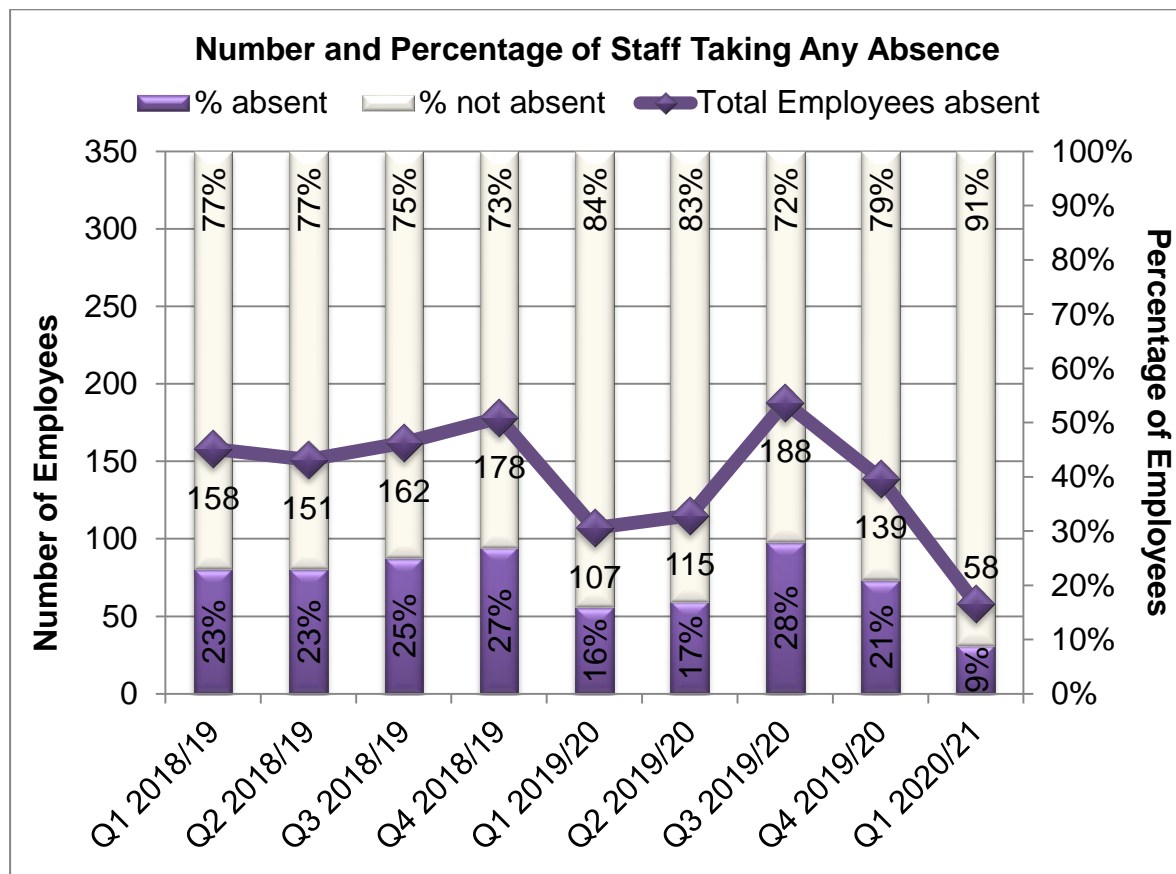
2.5   LONG-TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE BREAKDOWN

Quarter	Employees taking long-term sick leave	Total days of long-term sickness	% of total absence long-term
Q1 2018/19	30 (19% of those sick)	1,015.8	69%
Q2 2018/19	33 (22%)	1136	75%

Quarter	Employees taking long-term sick leave	Total days of long-term sickness	% of total absence long-term
Q3 2018/19	26 (16%)	816	66%
Q4 2018/19	17 (10%)	503	45%
Q1 2019/20	13 (12%)	391.5	55%
Q2 2019/20	12 (10%)	310	50%
Q3 2019/20	26 (14%)	833	59%
Q4 2019/20	28 (20%)	724.1	63%
Q1 2020/21	18 (31%)	551.4	76%

Days lost due to long-term sickness fell when compared to the previous Quarter, but long-term absence accounted for more than three-quarters of all days lost in Quarter One. 18 employees represent less than 3% of the Council's workforce.

Dealing with long-term sickness cases remains a high priority for managers and HR work closely with the managers to advise on sickness cases and to ensure the appropriate guidance and support is in place. Of the 18 employees with long-term sickness during the Quarter, 8 remained absent on 30 June 2020.

2.6   SICKNESS ABSENCE REPORTING BY SERVICE

The table below shows that sickness has decreased overall in nearly all services compared to the previous Quarter. However, long-term sickness has increased in three services. The number of days recorded for the previous Quarter are listed in brackets in the second column.

Service	Total days sick		Days Lost/FTE	Employees absent in Quarter
Chief Operating Officer	115.6 (215.4)	↓	0.7	10 (6% of all in service)
CLT/Exec Support/ Transformation	61 (15.7)	↑	4.1	1 (7%)
Corporate Resources	32.6 (83.2)	↓	0.7	4 (7%)
Digital & ICT Services	103 (120.8)	↓	1.4	8 (9%)
Housing Strategy and Growth	62 (67.5)	⇔	3.0	2 (8%)
Leisure and Health	109.1 (188.6)	↓	1.2	7 (6%)
Operations	237.8 (453.9)	↓	1.3	26 (14%)
OVERALL	721.2 (1,145)	↓	1.2	58 (9% of all HDC employees)

Service	Total days sick – short-term	Days Lost/FTE – short-term	Employees absent in Quarter – short-term sickness

Service	Total days sick		Days Lost/FTE	Employees absent in Quarter
Chief Operating Officer	19 (145.3)	↓	0.1	7 (4% of all in service)
CLT/Exec Support/ Transformation	0 (8.7)	↓	0	0 (0%)
Corporate Resources	26.5 (19.2)	↑	0.6	3 (6%)
Digital & ICT Services	12 (37.8)	↓	0.2	6 (7%)
Housing Strategy and Growth	1 (2.5)	⇔	0	1 (4%)
Leisure and Health	28.4 (31.8)	⇔	0.3	4 (3%)
Operations	82.8 (175.7)	↓	0.5	19 (10%)
OVERALL	**169.7** (420.9)	↓	**0.3**	**40 (6% of all HDC employees)**

Service	Total days sick – long-term		Days Lost/FTE – long-term	Employees absent in Quarter – long-term sickness
Chief Operating Officer	96.6 (70.1)	↑	0.6	3 (2% of all in service)
CLT/Exec Support/ Transformation	61 (7)	↑	4.1	1 (7%)
Corporate Resources	6.1 (64)	↓	0.1	1 (2%)
Digital & ICT Services	91 (83)	↑	1.2	2 (2%)
Housing Strategy and Growth	61 (65)	⇔	2.9	1 (4%)
Leisure and Health	80.7 (156.8)	↓	0.9	3 (2%)
Operations	155 (278.2)	↓	0.9	7 (4%)
OVERALL	**551.4** (724.1)	↓	**1.0**	**18 (3% of all HDC employees)**

Note: Numbers of employees shown as absent in the short-term and long-term tables do not necessarily add up to totals shown in the first table because some individuals had both long-term and short-term absences. Figures for days lost/FTE may not add up to totals due to rounding.

3.0   HR CASELOAD

The HR Team's caseload is recorded to provide an indicator of the type of HR issues that the organisation has been dealing with over time.

Number of Active Cases
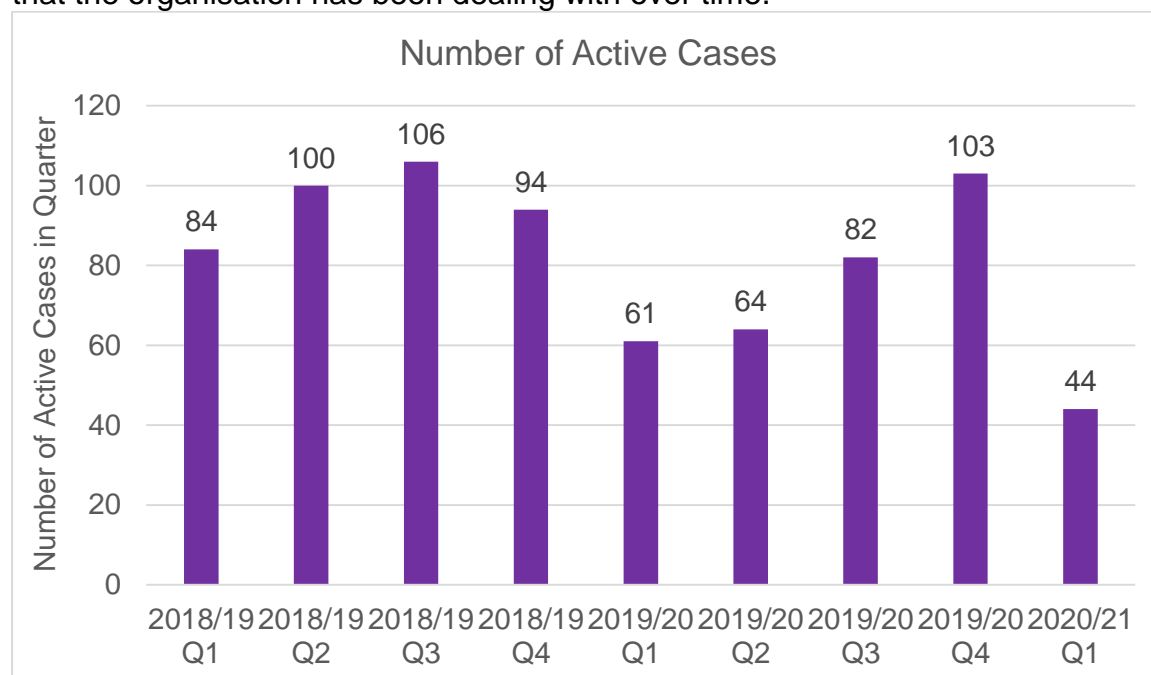
3.1   BREAKDOWN OF HR CASES BY TYPE FOR THE QUARTER

During Quarter One, there were 44 cases in progress, of which 12 were dealt with under formal procedures. The total was lower than in the previous Quarter, with cases for the previous Quarter also shown below for comparison purposes.

Type of Case	Informal Cases	Formal Cases	Total	Previous Quarter
Appeals	0	0	**0**	1
Capability – Long Term Sickness	9	0	**9**	18
Capability – Short Term Sickness	10	3	**13**	49
Capability – Performance	2	2	**4**	4
Consultations (including TUPE)	6	1	**7**	9
Bullying and Harassment (Dignity at Work)	0	2	**2**	4
Disciplinary	1	3	**4**	6
Employment Tribunals	0	0	**0**	3
Grievance	1	1	**2**	3
Probation	0	0	**0**	1
Manager Advice / Support	0	0	**0**	2
Subject Access Request	0	0	**0**	0
Other	3	0	**3**	3

Type of Case	Informal Cases	Formal Cases	Total	Previous Quarter
Total	32	12	44	103

Covid 19 saw formal casework slowing down, in particular business change activities, due to practical reasons such as new virtual/distanced requirements, as well as the organisational focus shifted temporarily to other emerging priorities. The HR teams' activities were focused on responding to new temporary guidance to the challenges presented by Covid 19.