Employment Committee- 23 November 2026

Report by: Head of HR and OD

Lead Cllr: Cllr Claffey
Portfolio Holder for Workforce

Wards	Open / Exempt	Key Decision?
All	Open	No

Q2 26-27 Employment Committee Workforce Report

Executive Summary:

The Q2 2026/27 Workforce Report demonstrates employee headcount remaining at 749 and turnover broadly unchanged at 18.91%, remaining below the LGA benchmark, alongside continued strong recruitment activity and positive internal progression. Sickness absence remains a key area of focus, increasing slightly to 10.3 days per FTE, although there has been encouraging progress in reducing long-term absence, with long-term sickness days falling from 1,217 to 1,036 and the number of active long-term cases reducing. Short-term absence has increased, contributing to continued demand on HR support, with the overall HR caseload increasing to 125 cases, predominantly relating to absence management. The HR Team continues to focus on proactive absence management, strengthening recruitment pipelines and workforce capability, reducing reliance on agency and temporary staffing in critical service areas, and ensuring workforce planning supports Local Government Reorganisation.

Members are asked to note the contents of this report

Recommendations

1.1. Managing sickness absence and associated costs
1.2. Strengthening recruitment pipelines in hard-to-fill areas
1.3. Reducing reliance on temporary staffing
1.4. Ensuring workforce plans align with LGR developments

	Key Corporate Plan Priorities
1	*Doing our Core Work Well*

Report Author(s)

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 Employment Committee have requested regular updates on HR matters impacting on the performance of the organisation. This report contains information including staffing levels and sickness absence and updates Members on the latest position and trends.

2. BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

2.1 This report is presented at Employment Committee on a quarterly basis outlining
- Employee Profile.
- Sickness Absence
- HR Caseload
- Accident/Incident Reports

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED & NOT RECOMMENDED

3.1 N/A.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

4.1 N/A

5. POST-DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 N/A

6. IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

6.1 Council Key Priorities and Performance

- Improving quality of life for local people
- Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations
- Doing our core work well

This report supports organisational review of key data to ensure we have the right staff who are supported with the right policies to deliver the Council's key Priorities. This allows HDC to continue to work towards being an employer of choice.

6.2 Financial Implications

This highlights two key challenges that HR is managing
- reliance on temporary staffing in critical service areas.
- long term sickness

6.3 Policy Implications

6.3.1 N/A

6.4 Legal & Constitutional Implications

6.4.1 N/A

6.5 Community Impact

6.5.1 N/A

6.6 Environment & Climate Change Implications

6.6.1 N/A

6.7 Equality & Diversity Implications

6.7.1 A full breakdown of Equalities data is provided in Section 4

6.8 Implications on Resources

6.8.1 N/A

6.9 Health & Wellbeing Implications

6.9.1 Sickness and wellbeing of staff is being actively managed and supported. HR is leading a continued push to upskill/empower/enable managers to manage sickness within their teams, to reduce absence rates across the organisation and to implement wellbeing support in line with the Workforce Strategy and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy

6.10 Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) Implications

6.10.1 Data collation from this report contributes to the progression of the LGR Workforce Workstream.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 We actively monitor the retention rates in line with the risk register.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS– LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

8.1 N/A.

Workforce Report
Quarter Two 2026-27

Report Highlights

Report Section	Measure	Trend	Q1 2026/27	Q2 2026/27
1.1	Headcount	=	749	749
1.1	FTE	⬇	694.73	691.23
1.2	Variable Employees	⬆	399	445
1.4	High Earners	⬆	71	84
1.5	Leavers	=	41	41
1.6	Turnover	⬇	18.97%	18.91%
1.7	Employment Offers Made	⬇	143	115
2.0	Sickness Days Lost per FTE	⬆	10.1	10.3
2.3	Sickness Absence – Long-Term	⬇	70.47%	60.30%
3.0	HR Caseload		79	125
3.1	HR Caseload – Sickness Absence Management		57%	72%
			Q1 Forecast	Q2 Forecast
1.3	Pay bill – Total		£39.7m	£39.6m
1.3	Pay bill – Employees		£37.0m	£36.6m
1.3	Pay bill – Contract & Agency Staff		£2.7m	£2.9m

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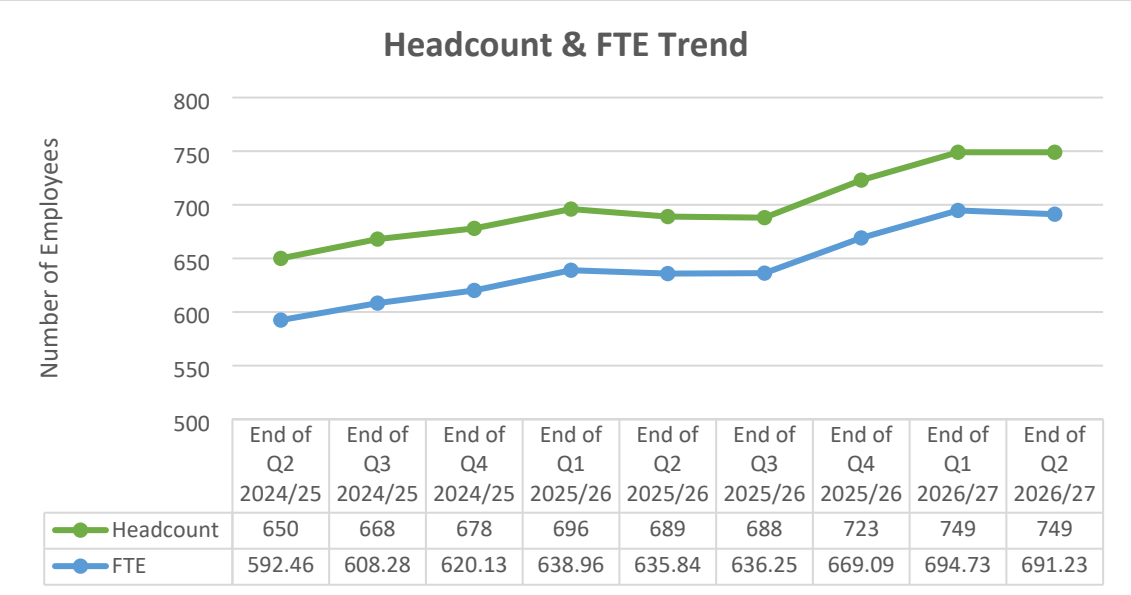
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1.0 EMPLOYEE PROFILE

Definition: Headcount is the number of employees working within the Council, counting primary roles only, and excluding casual roles.
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 Two (30th September 2026), the total number of permanent and fixed term employees employed by Huntingdonshire District Council was 749 (excluding those employed on a variable or casual hour basis) with the number of full-time equivalent posts at 691.23



	End of Q2 2024/25	End of Q3 2024/25	End of Q4 2024/25	End of Q1 2025/26	End of Q2 2025/26	End of Q3 2025/26	End of Q4 2025/26	End of Q1 2026/27	End of Q2 2026/27
Headcount	650	668	678	696	689	688	723	749	749
FTE	592.46	608.28	620.13	638.96	635.84	636.25	669.09	694.73	691.23

1.2 WORKFORCE BY CONTRACT TYPE

Data on Variable employees is included in the below table. However, data on Variables are not included in the other areas of the workforce reporting. Variables are typically employed in multiple positions across Leisure services; though a small number of Variables are employed in in other services. At the end of Q2, HDC had 445 variable individuals employed in 964 posts. This is an increase in headcount from Q1.

The numbers in the table below may vary as they include employees with multiple contracts/ positions.

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Employment Type	Q1 2026/27	Q2 2026/27
Fixed Term	39	39
Permanent	684	680
Apprentice	2	2
Secondment/Acting Up	24	28
Grand Total	**749**	**749**
Variable employees	399 (886)	445 (964)

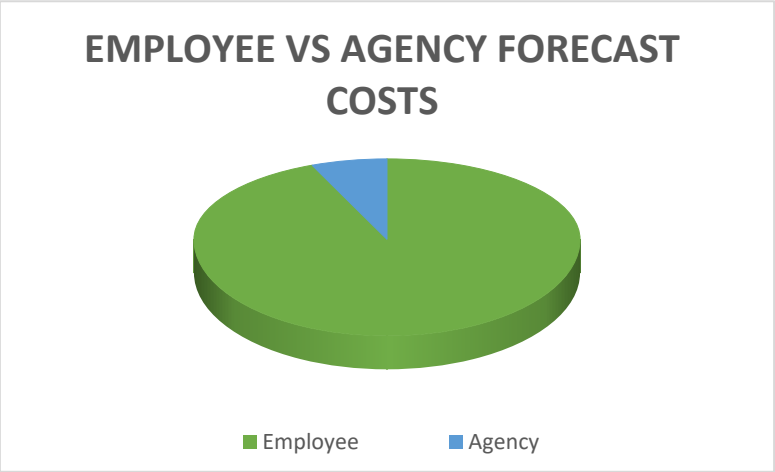


1.3 PAYBILL

The following table shows the employee pay costs over several years. At this stage of 2026/27 the forecast pay bill shows an underspend on all employee costs (staff, contractors and agency workers) of £335.2k. This arises from an underspend on employee salaries of £1.96m, but an overspend of £1.63m on contractors and agency workers against an agency budget of £1.31m.

The majority of our agency spend continues to be centred towards our ICT, Development Management and Operational Services teams.

Year	Employee Paybill Budget (£)	Employee Paybill Actual (£)	Employee Paybill Forecast (£)	FTE at end of Q4
2018/19	25,230,515	23,192,646		586.9
2019/20	24,871,268	23,941,696		580.5
2020/21	25,679,601	24,240,402		604.6
2021/22	25,377,310	25,421,307		656
2022/23	27,330,175	26,467,958		619
2023/24	27,848,427	27,157,627		649
2024/25	30,414,246	32,360,000		678
2025/26	35,988,670	35,811,085		723
2026/27	39,853,087		39,517,846	



1.4 HIGH EARNERS

Definition: High earners are classified as employees who are paid at £50,000 or above. This information is already published annually in line with the Government's commitment to improve transparency across the public sector and the target hasn't changed since it was introduced. The Councils pay policy distinguishes authorisation of salaries over £75,000 per annum.

At the end of Quarter Two, there were 84 employees paid at FTE salaries of £50,000 or above, representing 11.2% of the total workforce. 1.47% of the workforce are paid salaries over £75,000. The total number of employees classed as high earners has increased since the previous Quarter (71). This is primarily due to the application of the NJC pay award which was agreed and applied for staff in September 2026.

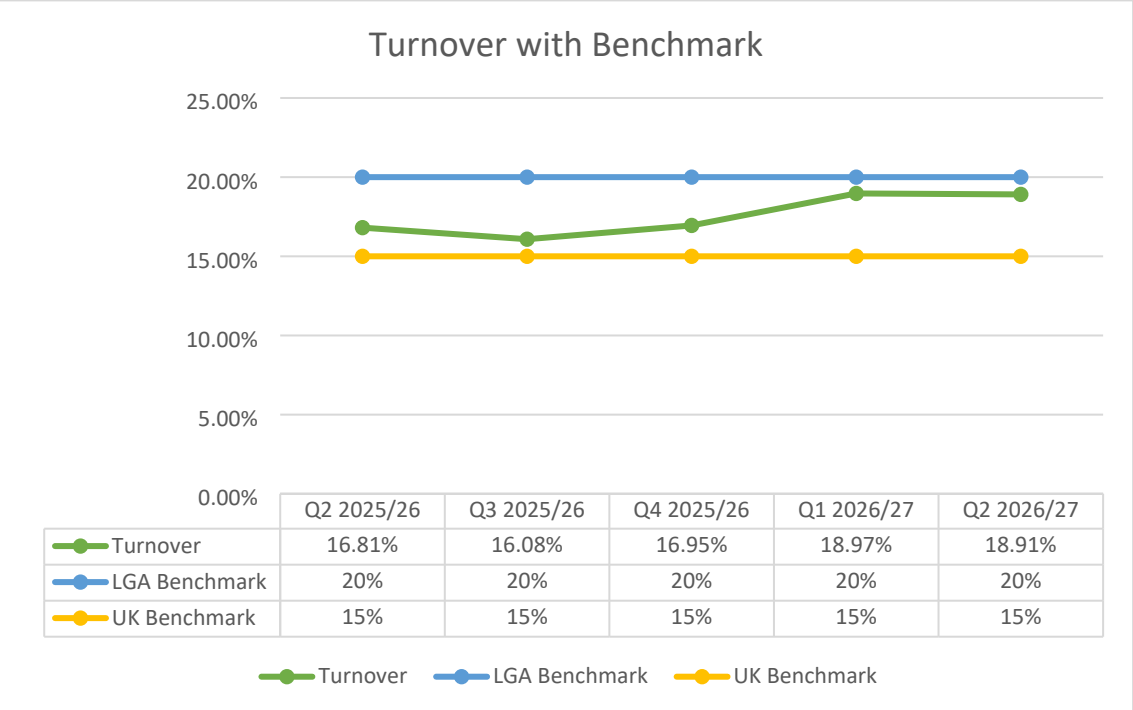
1.5 LEAVERS

During Q2, there were 41 employees on permanent or fixed-term contracts who left the organisation, which is the same as the total leaving in the previous Quarter (41).
15 of the leavers from Q2, resigned to take up other posts with either commercial or public sector employers, this an increase from last quarters report (9). We had 2 retirements during this quarter with a combined service of 45 years.

Leaving Reason	Permanent	Fixed-term
Dismissal Misconduct	2	
Dismissal - Ill Health Retirement	1	
End of Contract		8
Retirement	2	
Settlement Agreement	1	
Voluntary Resignation	23	4
Total	29	12

1.6 TURNOVER

In the 12 months to 30th September 2026, 135 employees left the Council. As a proportion of the average number of permanent/fixed term employees over this period, the overall annual turnover rate for employees is 18.91%, which is very similar to the previous quarter, and remains below the LGA benchmark.



1.7 RECRUITMENT METRICS

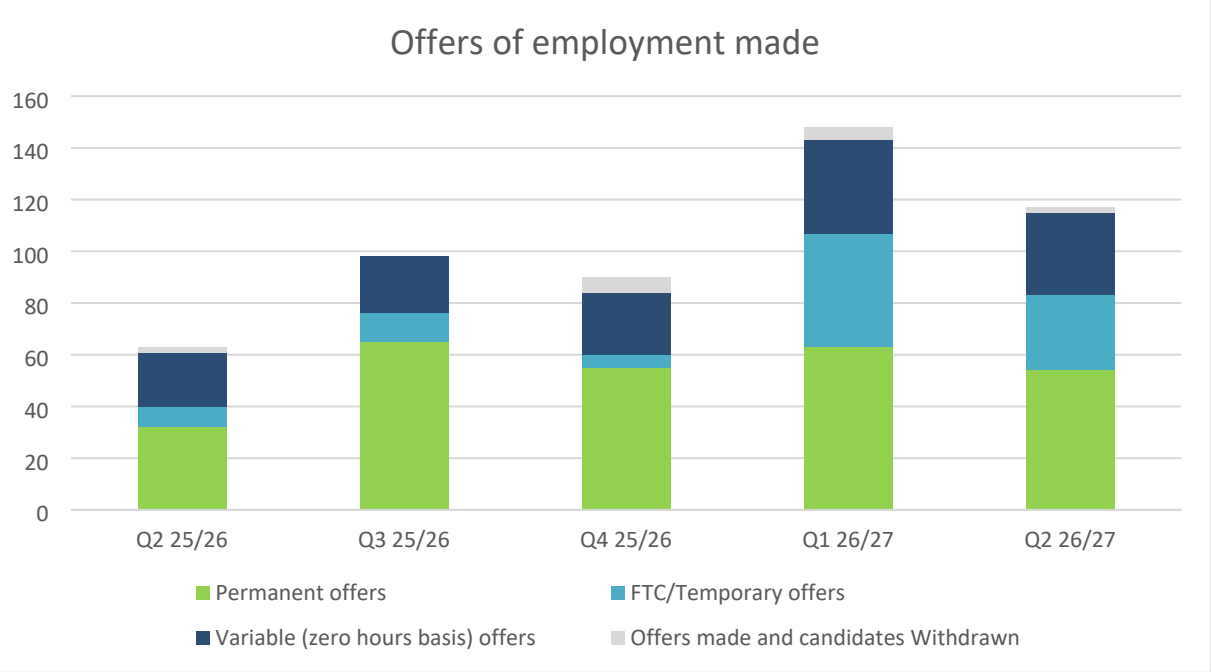
Of the 115 offers made through core recruitment activities, 35 were existing HDC staff, promoted or moving into other positions around the council. The HR team will continue to support the business with creating opportunities to grow and develop our workforce, careers, and mobility around services.
In terms of recruitment metrics, the council advertised 89 roles in Q2 26-27, a decrease from 95 in the previous quarter.

Advertised Roles	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26	Q1 26/27	Q2 26/27
	59	72	67	95	89

Advertised Roles per business area	Q2 25/26	Q3 25/26	Q4 25/26	Q1 26/27	Q2 26/27
3CICT	7	5	4	1	6

Communities (Communications, Transformation, Customer Services, Revenues and Benefits, Communities and Operational Housing)	9	12	9	34	17
Executive / Corporate Office	1	1	0	0	0
Finance and Resources (HR, Finance, Facilities and Estates, Democratic Services and Elections, Procurement, Audit and Risk)	5	4	2	3	5
Place (Leisure, Health and Environment, Planning, Infrastructure and Public Protection, Operations and Economy, Regeneration and Housing Delivery)	37	54	52	57	61

Number of candidates applied	**Q2 25/26**	**Q3 25/26**	**Q4 25/26**	**Q1 26/27**	**Q2 26/27**
	1032	712	915	1265	1052



1.8 Recruitment Challenges/Successes

Recruitment activity remained high during Q2 2026/27, with 89 roles advertised, compared with 95 in Q1 and 59 during the same period last year. Candidate attraction also remained strong, with 1,052 applications received, down from the exceptionally high 1,265 in Q1 but slightly above the 1,032 received in Q2 2025/26.

A total of 115 offers were made during the quarter, comprising 54 permanent, 29 fixed-term or temporary and 32 variable-hours appointments. Internal progression remained positive, with 35 offers made to existing employees moving into new roles or securing promotions, representing around 30% of all

offers and demonstrating continued opportunities for career development and workforce mobility.

A particularly positive development during the quarter was the recruitment of five apprentices, providing opportunities for individuals to develop their skills and careers while building future capability within the Council. These appointments comprise apprenticeships within Development Management, Urban Design, Planning Enforcement, Planning Business Administration and Grounds Maintenance. The recruitment of four apprentices across Planning is particularly encouraging, supporting the development of a future talent pipeline within a specialist service area where skills can be challenging to source externally.

Candidate retention following offer also improved, with two candidates withdrawing after receiving an offer, compared with five in Q1 and six in Q4 2025/26. This reduction is encouraging given the continued competition within the wider labour market.

The majority of the variable recruitment this quarter was to support frontline service delivery and operational resilience. Of these, 13 were variable lifeguards recruited to provide additional capacity during the busy summer period to the leisure centres and to help cover annual leave and other absences. A small number of variable caretaker appointments were also made to ensure continuity of service during periods of leave and long-term absence. Other appointments included an HR Administrator to provide additional support for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) related activity. We also successfully recruited five variable swimming teachers, a role that continues to be particularly challenging to fill and where additional capacity is critical to maintaining and expanding our swim programme provision. The remaining posts were additional posts for internal staff carrying out shifts at the Aquapark during the summer period, providing those individuals with new challenges and development.

A small number of campaigns did not result in an appointment, spanning specialist, operational and leisure roles, including Planning Change Officer, Business Analyst, Weekend Street Cleanser Driver and positions within One Leisure and Burgess Hall. In two cases, offers were made but subsequently declined, while the remaining campaigns did not identify suitable candidates. This reflects the differing challenges associated with recruiting specialist skills alongside operational roles where shift patterns and working hours can affect candidate attraction.

Overall, Q2 represents another strong quarter for recruitment. Although activity and applications reduced from the particularly high levels seen in Q1, both vacancy and application volumes remain above the equivalent period last year. Strong candidate interest, continued internal progression, investment in apprenticeships and fewer post-offer withdrawals provide a positive overall picture, while targeted approaches will continue to be important for roles where suitable candidates are more difficult to secure.

1.9 LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

During the year, the Learning & Development (L&D) Team coordinated 20 work experience placements across the organisation, supporting students with interests in Leisure, Communications & Engagement, Planning, and Environmental Health. These placements provided valuable workplace experience and increased awareness of career opportunities within local government.

Building on the success of our previous placement through Impact - The Local Government Graduate Programme, a further recruitment campaign was undertaken to support strategic workforce development. Following a competitive selection process, two graduates have been successfully recruited and are now working within the Transformation and Corporate Reporting Team, providing additional capacity to support organisational change and improvement activities while developing their careers within local government.

The L&D Team is working with local training providers to secure CPCA-funded development opportunities as an alternative to apprenticeships. As part of this initiative, eight employees embarked on a nine-month qualification; Level 3 Diploma in Management programme in June/ July, supporting the development of leadership skills and building management capability across the Council.

Last year's leadership and development programme is now embedded into business-as-usual activity as part of the Council's core learning offer, with a number of modules being adapted and updated for in-house delivery to ensure continued access, long-term sustainability, and ongoing value for the organisation.

Apprenticeships

During Q2 we have had a completion for one member of staff in Business Administration Level 3 along with two leavers during Q2 undertaking Level 7 Senior Leadership apprenticeship.

Although no new apprenticeship programmes commenced during this quarter, five new apprentice positions were filled at HDC within the Planning team and Grounds Maintenance with their apprenticeship programmes scheduled to begin during the next quarter. This aligns with external funding arrangements and allows the apprentices time to settle into their new roles and teams before commencing their apprenticeship programme.

The apprenticeship programmes are:

- 2 level 3 Business Administration
- 2 level 4 Town Planning Assistant programmes
- 1 level 2 Horticulture

The figures shown in the table below are as at the end of September 2026.

	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7	Total
New and transferred apprenticeships	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Ongoing	**2**	**3**	**0**	**1**	**2**	**9**

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:

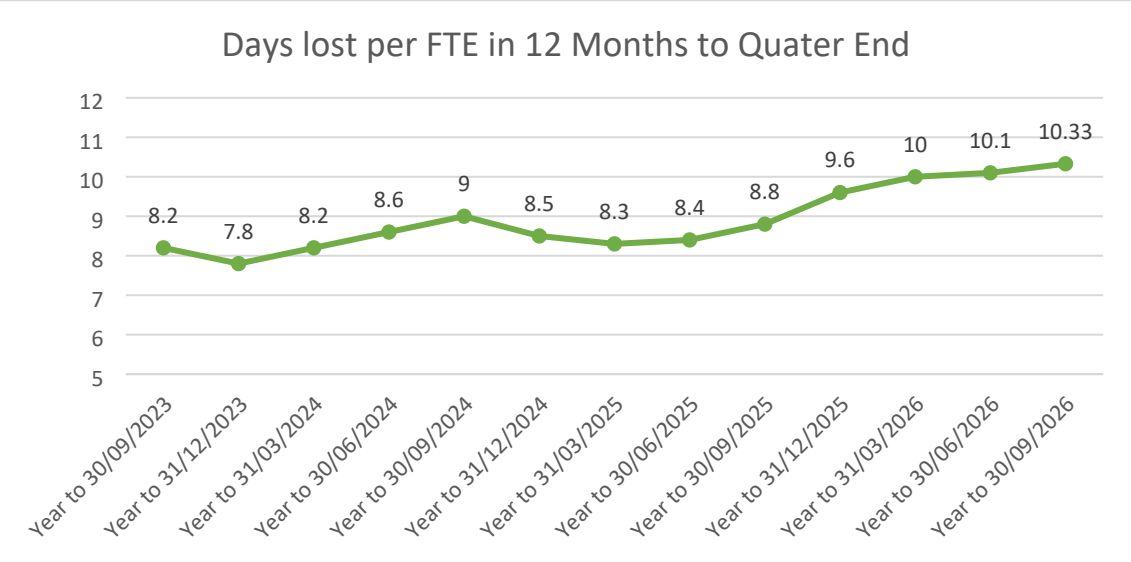
- 3 or more periods of absence in a rolling 3-month period
- 6 or more periods of absence in a rolling 12-month period
- 8 working days or more in a rolling 12-month period
- Long term absence of 28 calendar days or more
- Patterns of absence

(e.g., regular Friday and/or Monday; repeated absences linked to holidays)

2.1 TREND OF WORKING DAYS LOST ACROSS HDC

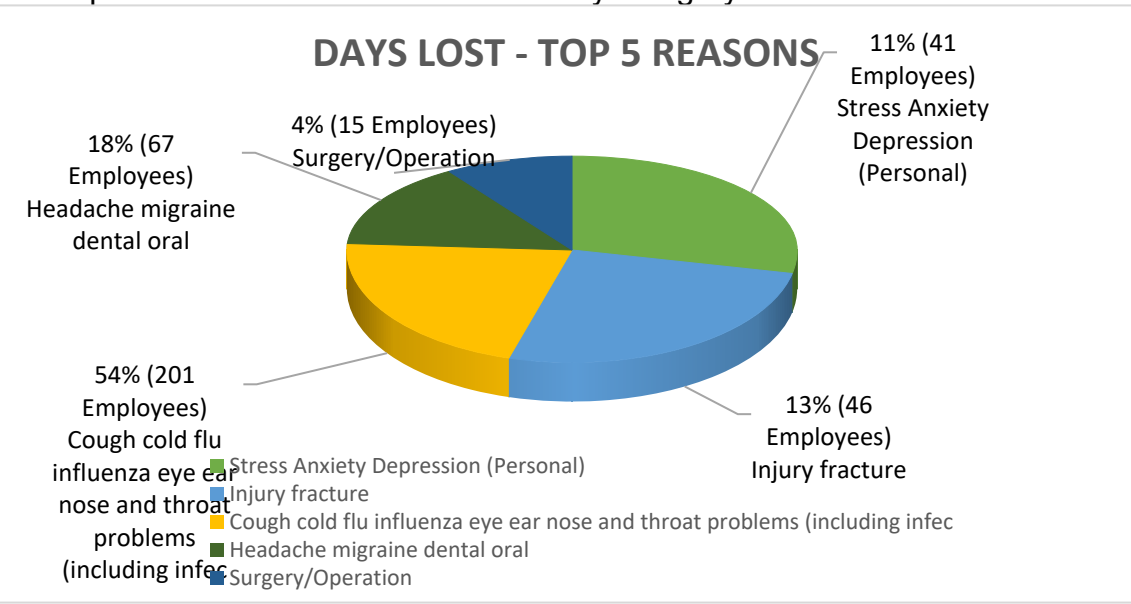
The graph shows the trend in sickness absence per FTE employee over a rolling period to the end of each Quarter since September 2023. It shows that sickness absence to the end of Q2 has seen a slight increase to 10.3 days per FTE, from the previous 10.1 days per FTE last quarter. This is in line with

national trends for UK employers across many industries. The year-to-date cost of sickness is £436,427.



2.2 REASONS FOR SICKNESS ABSENCE

The top 5 reasons for sickness absence by category below: -



2.3 SICKNESS ABSENCE BREAKDOWN

Despite there being a reduction in the number of days lost to long-term sickness, the absence figures during Q2 2026/27 continues to be driven primarily by long-term absence which accounted for 60.30% of all working days lost during the quarter. This is a decrease from 70.47% in the previous quarter, with long-term absence days decreasing from 1,217 to 1,036 days. The number of employees absent on a long-term basis has decreased from 29 to 24 as a quarter average with the current long term sickness case load at the end of September being 11 ‘live’ cases. This is a reduction from the previous quarter of

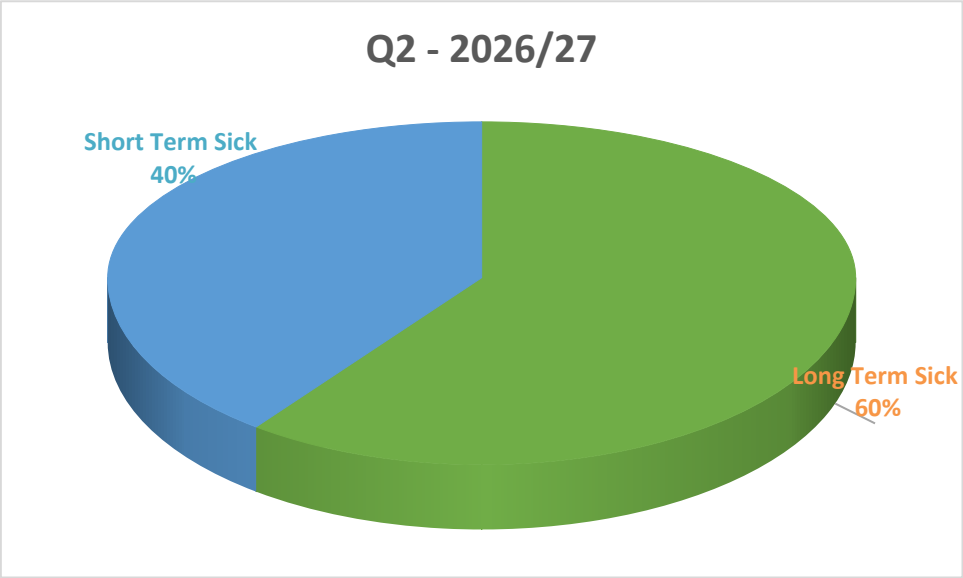
19 members of staff due to staff either returning to work or leaving the organisation. All 11 cases are being managed actively by the line manager supported by the HR Team.

In contrast, short-term absence has increased since the previous quarter from 510 to 682 working days lost and this has primarily been caused by a virus which affected the operations team at the end of Q1 and moving into Q2 and has therefore affected the figures for both quarters.

As is usual practice, the Council started the roll out of free 'flu vaccinations during this quarter with these proving to be popular with staff.

Quarter	Total days of long-term sickness	Total Working days lost (Short term sickness)	% of total absence long-term	% of total absence short-term
Q1 2024/25	859 (22)	449.5	65.60%	34.40%
Q2 2024/25	823 (18)	566.01	59.30%	40.70%
Q3 2024/25	525 (17)	663.29	44.10%	55.90%
Q4 2024/25	716 (22)	599	54.45%	45.55%
Q1 2025/26	750 (21)	600	55.56%	44.44%
Q2 2025/26	962 (22)	616	60.96%	39.04%
Q3 2025/26	978 (24)	684	58.84%	41.16%
Q4 2025/26	1019 (23)	642	61.35%	38.65%
Q1 2026/27	1217 (29)	510	70.47%	29.53%
Q2 2026/27	1036 (24)	682	60.30%	39.70%

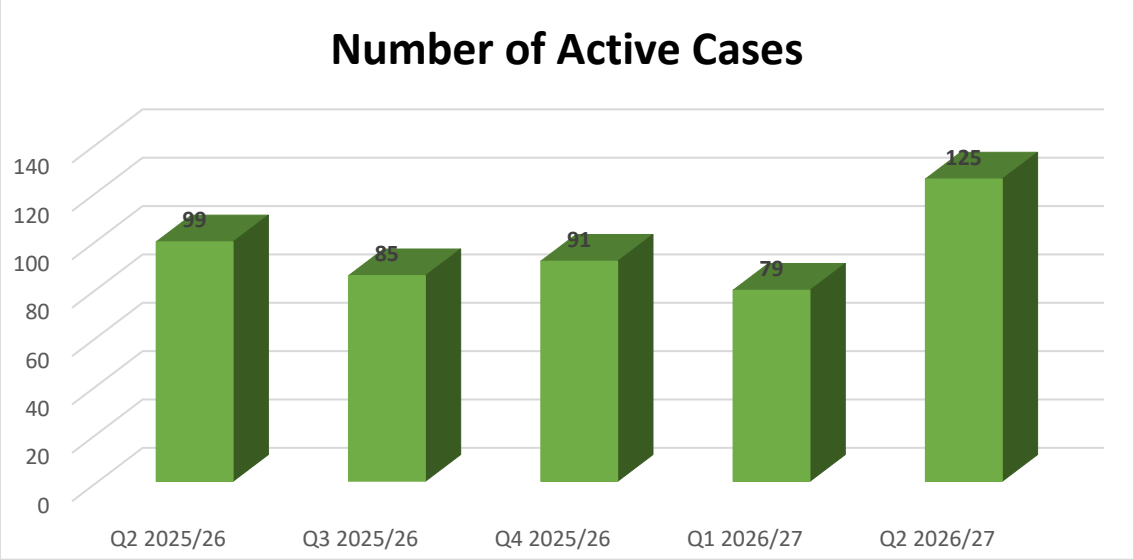
*Brackets denotes number of employees absent.



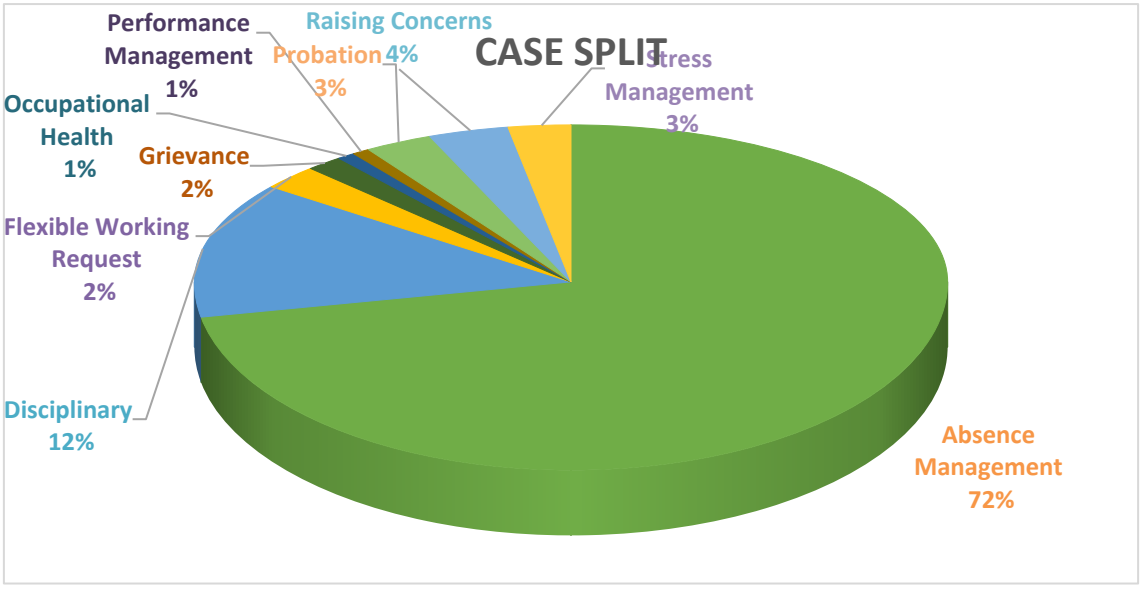
3.0 HR CASELOAD

The caseload is recorded to provide an indicator of the type of HR issues that the organisation has been dealing with over the last 12 months.

3.1 BREAKDOWN OF HR CASES BY TYPE



During Q2 there were 125 cases in progress, of which 45 were dealt with under formal procedures. Absence management continues to be the highest split of casework, with 90 of the 125 cases relating to the management of sickness absence and the resolution of some of the long term absence cases.

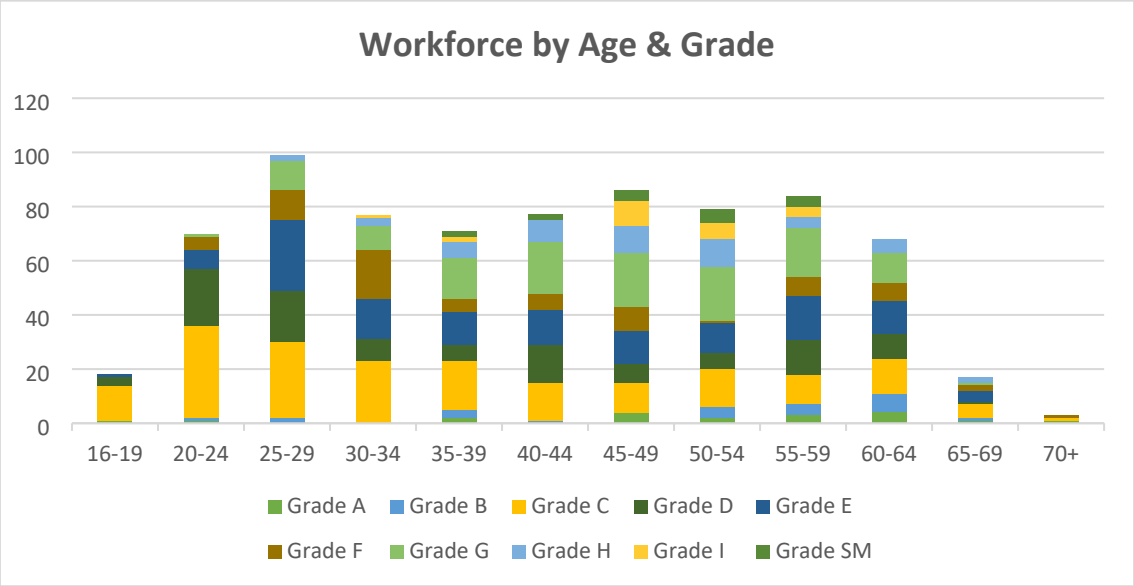

CASE SPLIT
Performance Management 1%
Raising Concerns 4%
Probation 3%
Stress Management 3%
Occupational Health 1%
Grievance 2%
Flexible Working Request 2%
Disciplinary 12%
Absence Management 72%

4.0 EQUALITIES DATA

Equality Data may be presented using percentages and not specific numbers as in some cases the sharing of specific numbers would mean that a small group of people could be easily identified.

4.1 WORKFORCE BY AGE AND 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.

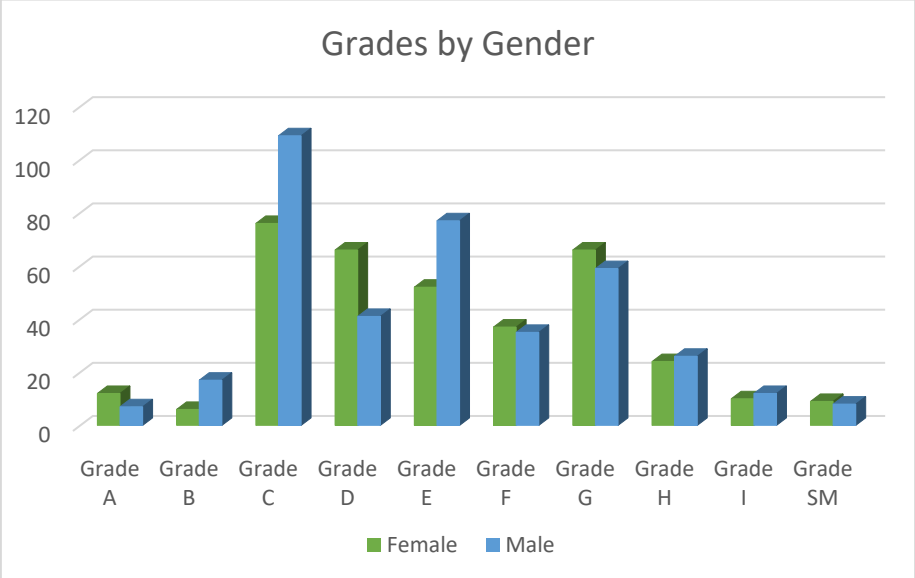


For the purposes of simplifying this graph, employees who have transferred into the Council on existing terms and conditions have been linked to Huntingdonshire District Council pay grades based on their current salary levels.

4.2 WORKFORCE GENDER



4.3 EMPLOYEES BY GRADE AND GENDER



4.4 WORKFORCE BY ETHNICITY

Ethnicity	% of workforce
Asian	2.67%
Black	1.87%
Mixed	1.34%
Not Stated	8.14%
Other Ethnic Groups	0.40%
White	85.58%

4.5 DISABILITY DATA

Disability Status	% of work force
No	77.57%
Not Known	11.48%
Yes	10.95%

5.0 ACCIDENT / INCIDENT REPORTS

This section reports on the number and nature of accidents and incidents occurring in owned, managed and occupied premises or associated with work activities undertaken by the Council's employees, during the period 1st July to 30 September 2026.

Definition: Accidents reported to the Incident Control Centre under the requirements of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations are referred to as RIDDOR accidents.

5.1 OPERATIONS SERVICES

There were no RIDDOR accidents reported.
There were five non-RIDDOR accidents relating to employees recorded.

The table below summarises these by nature and severity:

Type	Category	Severity	No of cases
Non-RIDDOR accident	Fall from a height – height not stated	No First Aid	1
Non-RIDDOR accident	Slips, trips or falls on same level	First Aid	1
Non-RIDDOR accident	Struck by moving, including flying/falling, object	No First Aid	1
Non-RIDDOR accident	Injured while handling, lifting or carrying	Doctor Recommended	1
Non-RIDDOR accident	Struck by moving, including flying/falling, object	Doctor Recommended	1

5.2 OFFICE-BASED PREMISES

There were no RIDDOR or non-RIDDOR accidents reported.

There was one non-RIDDOR accident relating to a CPCA customer recorded.

5.3 ONE LEISURE HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

There were no RIDDOR accidents reported.

There were four non-RIDDOR accidents relating to an employee recorded. The following table summarises these by nature and severity:

Type	Category	Severity	No of cases
Non-RIDDOR accident	Struck by moving, including flying/falling, object	No First Aid	1
Non-RIDDOR accident	Slips, trips or falls on same level	First Aid	2
Non-RIDDOR accident	Exposure to, or contact with, a harmful substance	No First Aid	1

A total of eighty-one accidents were recorded involving non-employees.

There were no RIDDOR reportable accidents involving non-employees recorded.