

SUBJECT:	Human Resources Update
REPORT OF:	Bob Smith, Chief Executive
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1. Purpose of Report

To update the Committee on:

- Staff turnover and sickness absence within the Councils
- Key HR projects

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. The Joint Staffing Committee is asked to note the report.**

2. Content of Report

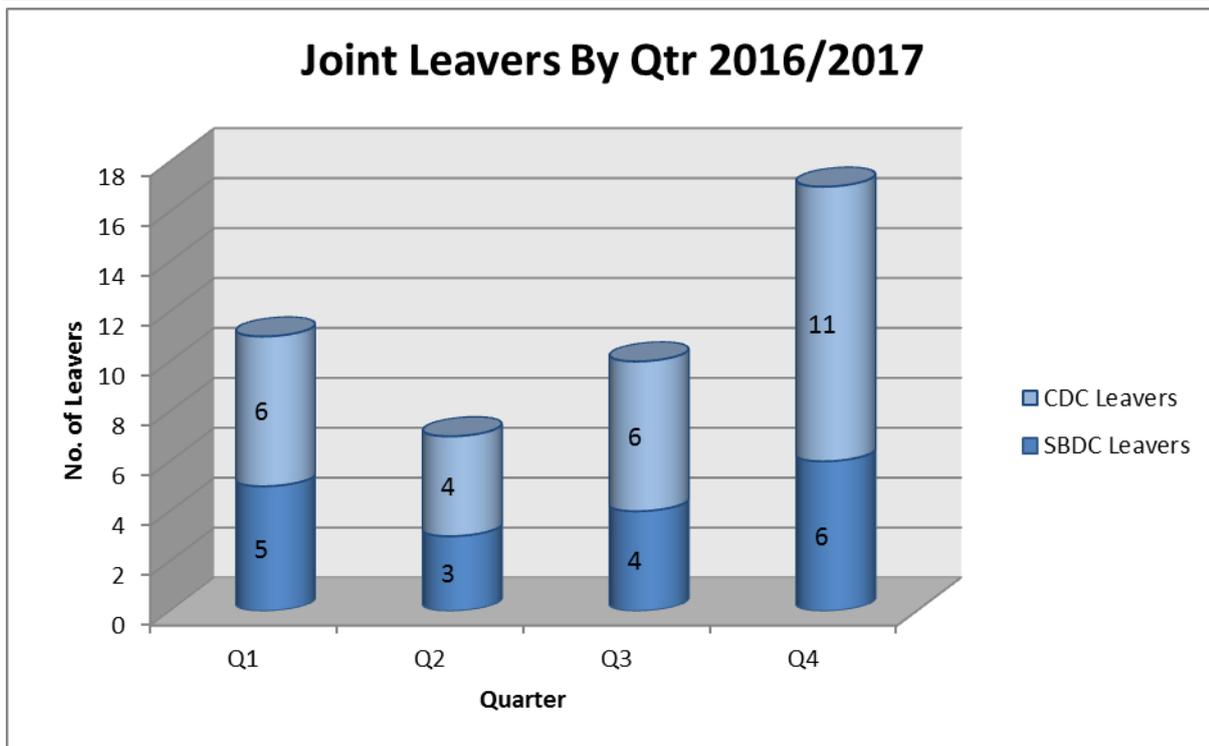
Leavers Figures 2016/17

Monitoring voluntary leavers enables the Council to identify and respond to potential risks associated with employee resourcing levels across the Councils' services.

HR has a key performance indicator for voluntary leavers as a percentage of workforce and the target for 2016/17 was 16%.

Q4 shows an increase in turnover compared to Q3 particularly in CDC. Analysis indicates of the leavers in Q4 were spread across all service areas and across all levels and there is no indication that there is a trend. However, this will be monitored and potential risks will continue to be reported to Management Team with appropriate options for mitigating those risks. A strategic joint approach to resourcing and talent management is a project which has been built in to the HR teams work plan for 2017.

Leavers figures will be affected by staff moving roles across the two Councils. Under the existing process staff are made "leavers" and then "new starters" when moving from a SBDC post to a CDC post and vice versa. From the 1st August a new procedure will be in place. Please see Appendix 1. This will see a slight reduction in the leavers figures going forward.



Recruitment Figures

Turnover rates are more meaningful if considered against the statistics around recruitment. The HR team have moved to a new recruitment database called Vacancy Filler and so we will be able to provide reports from this system from Quarter 1 2017/18. These will be provided at the next meeting of the JSC.

Sickness Absence Figures 2016/17 and 2017/18

The CIPD’s annual absence management report for 2016 found that the average level of absence overall has dropped to its lowest level for 7 years at 6.3 days per employee. In the public sector the average was 8.5 days per employee.

The Councils have a key performance indicator for absence which is a maximum ceiling of 10 days per employee.

The table below shows the average number of working days lost due to sickness absence in the Councils, in the last quarter, exceeded the public sector average standing at 10 days per employee. However, the average over the year was 9.4 days per employee.

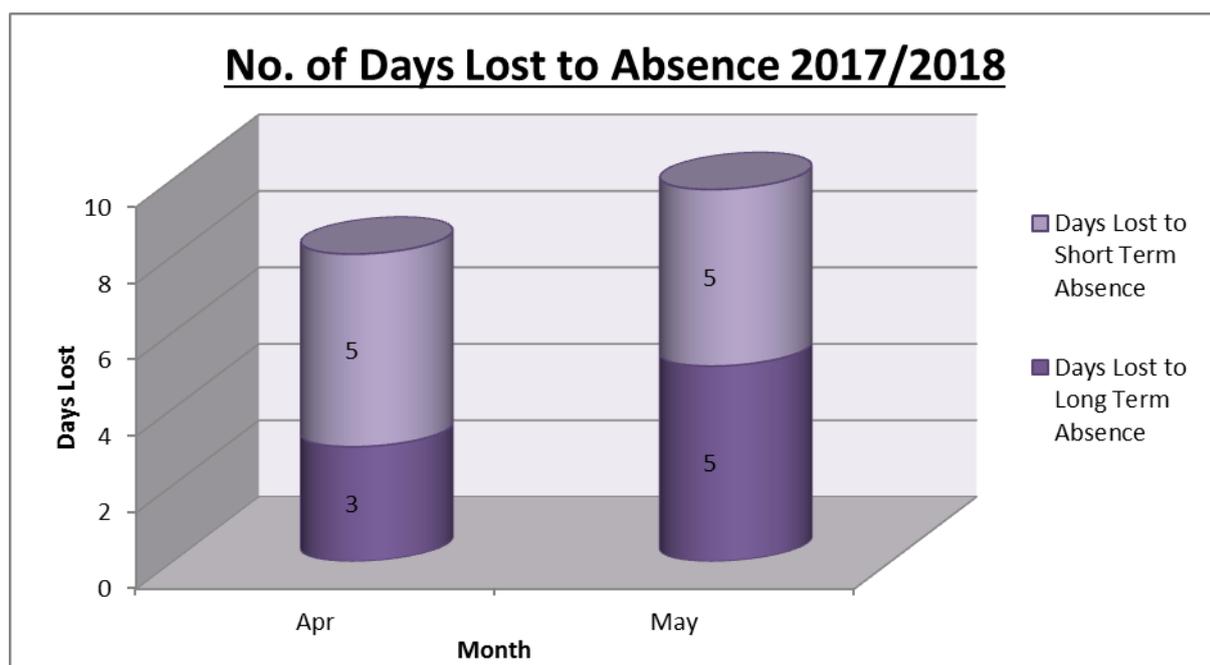
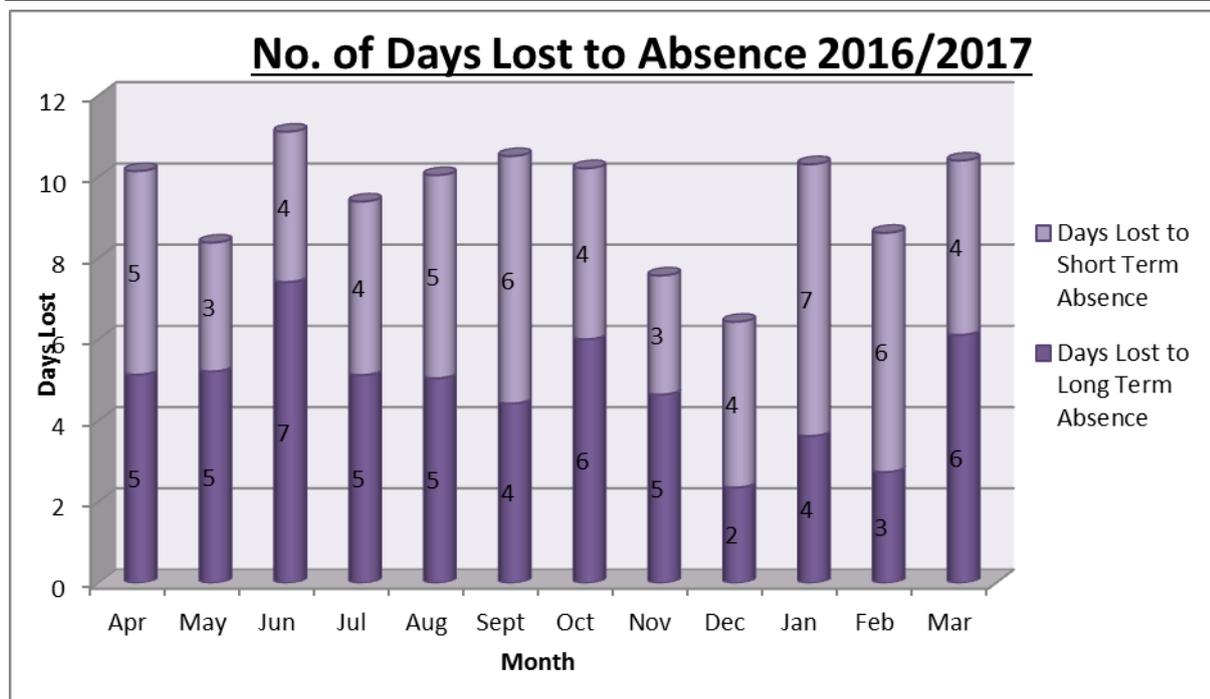
Short term absence is defined as “up to and including 20 working days absence” and long term absence is “over 20 working days absence”.

The Councils deploys a range of approaches to manage absence:-

- The use of occupational health services to get timely advice on how we can assist employees in returning to work e.g. through a phased return, amended duties or adaptations that can be made to the workplace.
- The use of sickness absence procedures which support employees and the management of employees while absent due to sickness and on their return to work. This includes return to work meetings for all employees returning to work regardless of the length of sickness.
- Training and coaching for managers on sickness absence management through HR surgeries and the Management Development Programme.
- Active management of sickness absence stats and sickness review meetings with employees when they meet our internal trigger points.
- Risk assessments.
- Employee Assistance Programme.
- In addition we have been increasing our focus on well-being and developing a more strategic approach to health and well being e.g. initiative to raise awareness of mental health issues, training on personal resilience.

The Councils needs to focus its efforts on managing sickness absence using all the approaches given above and this will be monitored closely over the next year.

The long term sickness absence figures are influenced by a small number of employees who are very poorly.



CURRENT PROJECTS

Organisational Development: Values and Behaviour Framework

We are continuing the work to bring our values to life in our day to day working practices through our Unwritten Ground Rule (UGR) approach. The UGR Champions met on 12th June and shared initiatives and ideas. Healthy Communities had run a very successful World Café Event. Several teams had used suggestion boxes as a means to get feedback on UGR's and ideas for improvement.

We have refreshed our values poster which now includes the customer at the centre. We have also displayed our Leadership and Management Charter as a poster. This charter will be a central theme for discussion and action at a Management Team/Head of Service development event planned for the autumn.

We are currently encouraging everyone to have up to date photos displayed on Outlook and Lync and will be enforcing this from end August. This will enable employees to more easily recognise one another and support the 'Collaborative' value.

Health and Well-Being

The Councils continue to offer a range of advice and support around health and well-being through locally organised initiatives and through our occupational health provider.

Health and Safety Incidents: No recent incidents recorded.

Stress Risk Assessment: We are working with the Corporate Resilience Officer to develop a corporate Stress Risk Assessment to help managers identify triggers for work place stress in individuals and teams and put in place mechanisms to manage the risks and monitor them.

Mental Health First Aiders: A collaboration with MIND enabled the provision of some free training for our staff. Four people attended a two-day course in order to qualify as 'Mental Health First Aiders' - these places were distributed around Customer Service, Environmental Health, Housing and HR. Additionally a further four people attended half-day mental health awareness raising course.

Joint HR Team Processes

Work is continuing to standardise and streamline our processes. For example:-

- Introduced a Record Retention Schedule which complies with the more stringent requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations coming in to force in May 2018.
- Updated our sickness reporting forms and maternity forms.
- Produced harmonised Guidelines on the awarding of Honorariums and Acting Up allowances;
- Standardised the staff gifts and hospitality recording and authorisation process.

We had 4 internal audits this year so far (Harmonised Policies and Procedures, Performance Management, joint HR database, staff Gifts and Hospitality Register). No significant recommendations have arisen from these.

Performance Management

Appraisal scheme: The new harmonised Appraisal scheme was introduced in April 2017. It has been well received by staff and managers. It's a scheme which helps embed our values as all staff will have objectives which identify "what" we have to achieve as well as "how" we should achieve it.

Employee relations case management system: We have now introduced a system in the HR team for centrally managing all employee relations cases which allows us to ensure we provide

consistent advice and take consistent action around these and can provide up to date reporting at any point.

The HR team are holding regular meetings with managers to ensure fair and prompt action is taken. We have also held some “manager surgeries” and are planning to hold a workshop later in the year for all managers around the key policies i.e. sickness absence, capability, disciplinary and grievances.

Planning Service Review

The HR project for the Planning Service Review is running successfully and in accordance with the agreed timescales. The new structure is expected to be in place on 16th October 2017 and the new managers appointments will be made by the end of June.

A project plan has also been put in place to commence a team building programme which will help the SBDC and CDC teams work together effectively as joint teams within a single service/single culture. There are also development plans in place to support the three new managers appointed in phase 1.

Staff Survey

Heads of Service are looking at the results of the staff survey and taking action at team/service level. A Staff Working Group has also been set up, made up of 14 staff volunteers and they have twice and will be providing a number of ideas and suggestions which they will present to Management Team in August.

Recruitment

Director of Services: A new Director of Services was appointed and will be starting on 29th July 2017.

Careers Fair: The Councils will be represented at the Careers Fair at Beaconsfield School on 12th July by two newer recruits in Planning Policy and by members of the HR team. We aim to use this as an opportunity to promote the role and profile of the District Councils as an employer of choice and also to gain a better understanding of what young people are looking for in work.

Learning & Development

Staff have access to a wide range of employee, management and leadership training through different channels. Bucks Leadership Academy offer cost effective courses including first line management, essential conversations, leading and managing change and managing stress. Learning Curve, our e-learning platform has a range of courses available for all employees. In addition we are running bespoke, in-house training, see below.

Middle Management Development Programme: In order to upskill our middle managers and ensure consistency of approach a comprehensive management development programme has been developed and 50 employees have been invited to participate. The programme consists of a combination of externally delivered workshops (Getting the Best from Others (including Managing in an Agile Environment), Managing People Within the Law, Coaching Skills, Commercial Awareness and Negotiation and Leading and Managing Change) and internally delivered workshops (The Democratic Process, Managing Safely, Finance for Non-Financial Managers and Fraud Awareness & Risk Management).

These workshops will take place between June '17 and February '18 and will be interspersed by meetings of small Action Learning Sets to allow delegates to learn from one another and build networks.

Successful completion of the programme will result in attendees being awarded an ILM (Institute of Leadership and Management) certificate as this will be an ILM approved programme, equivalent to a level 4 qualification.

MT/HOS Development Event: We are planning a development event for Management Team and Heads of Service in the autumn. This will focus on the Leadership and Management Charter and the key results of the staff survey and consider how we as a senior leadership team empower, motivate and engage staff to continue to be successful through the coming years.

Stress Management: Heads of Service have identified a need for personal resilience workshops to help some members of staff develop better coping strategies for dealing with workplace stress. Providers are currently being evaluated with a view to running these workshops in early autumn.

Learning Pool: We have been updating the look and feel of the Learning Pool, our e-learning system and are in the process of reviewing the course content. We will launch the site at the end of the year to promote the learning and development opportunities on offer for staff. This approach is aligned with the move to adopting more agile methods of working as the course content can be accessed remotely on phones, tablets and PCs.

Collaborative Working WDC

We meet regularly with our counterparts at Wycombe District Council and have been exploring collaboration in a number of areas in order to make savings through economies of scale e.g. coaching and mentoring scheme, occupational health contract, agency contracts.

Apprenticeships

The Apprenticeship Levy was introduced in April 17 and will be charged at a rate of 0.5% of our pay bill. Each Council will receive an allowance of £15,000 to offset against their levy payment.

This allowance is available can be used to fund apprenticeship training. Under this new scheme 'apprentices' can be of any age and can complete qualifications up to and including degree-level. The scheme can be used to upskill existing employees or to recruit new staff. Apprentices must spend at least 20% of their time engaged in study.

There are a very wide range of apprenticeship training providers and we are still evaluating their various offerings. The allowance is available for two years, so a measured decision can be taken about which route to pursue.

Policies

The Equality Policy is the last policy to be harmonised.

Projects Coming Up for 2017/18

Develop a Health and Well Being Strategy which promotes the well-being benefits on offer and develops our communication to staff and initiatives on offer around mental health and well being.

Update the Induction programme.

Develop a recruitment pack/approach which promotes the full range of reward and benefits.

Develop a Workforce Development Strategy

On-going work to update intranet and internet

3. Consultation

N/A

4. Options

N/A

5. Corporate Implications

Good management of resources including employees leads to efficient and effective use of council finances and improved delivery of council services.

6. Links to Council Policy Objectives

Monitoring staff turnover, recruitment and sickness absences and ensuring all Council policies, procedures and practices are current, underpin the delivery of the Council's aims and management principles and ensure legislative compliance and best practice.

7. Next Step

Continue to monitor and update Committee Members on a quarterly basis.

Background Papers:	It is a legal requirement that we make available any background papers relied on to prepare the report and should be listed at the end of the report (copies of Part 1 background papers for executive decisions must be provided to Democratic Services)
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